

Career Research & Development

the NICEC journal: making practice thoughtful and theory practical

The Social Web and Careers Work

Michael LARBALESTIER

Destinations® and Beyond the PhD

Jessica March, David Stanbury
and Catherine Reynolds

An analysis of the design and use of information and communication technology in career guidance from 1990 to 2009

James P. Sampson, Jr., Jon D. Shy,
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Developing e-guidance competences: the outcomes of a two-year European project to transform the professional development of career guidance practitioners

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and A.G. Watts

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Guidelines for contributors

Contributions are welcomed. Main articles should normally be 1,000-3,000 words in length. They should be submitted to the editor by post or email at the above address. Taped contributions are welcomed.

Career Research and Development: the NICEC Journal is published by CRAC: The Career Development Organisation, an independent educational charity founded in 1964. CRAC aims to promote the importance of and encourage active career development and career-related learning for the benefit of individuals, the economy and society.

Aims and scope

Career Research and Development: the NICEC Journal is published for:

- Career practitioners working in schools, colleges, Connexions/IAG services, higher education careers services, adult guidance agencies, companies, community organisations, etc.
- Trainers, lecturers, advisers and consultants working with career practitioners.
- Individuals working towards qualifications in career education, career guidance and career management.
- Government departments and business and community organisations with an interest in the work of career practitioners.

It sets out to:

- Promote evidence-based practice by making theory, policy and the results of research and development more accessible to career practitioners in their day-to-day work.
- Encourage discussion and debate of current issues in career research and development.
- Disseminate good practice.
- Support continuing professional development for career practitioners.
- Help practitioners to develop and manage career education and guidance provision in the organisations in which they work.

Editorial

Just how far have we moved on in our use of ICT in careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG)? In the early days of computing, the technology push was dominant: to get ever more powerful hardware. Even then, a few organisations were thinking about the pedagogy and the effective use of ICT in enhancing career learning and development. In the schools sector, Careersoft stands out as a company with a careers education vision that displayed itself in its simulations for the BBC computer and more recently in programs such as ani-mods for animated e-learning.

Still, I can't escape the feeling that the creative and innovative use of ICT in CEIAG is patchy, especially at the institutional level. Where are the 'thought leaders' among careers coordinators in schools who are aware of developments in ICT and learning methods and are actively thinking of how to connect CEIAG to the mainstream?

Michael Larbalestier makes the case strongly why careers and personal advisers need to understand the social web so that they can help their clients engage with it responsibly and effectively. The organisation of personal identity has always been recognised as one of the foundation stones of career development. In the internet age, this takes on new meaning as more and more people extend their social and support networks online. Individuals need to learn how to manage their presence on the social web as it is a way of presenting themselves to potential selectors, demonstrating a track record and finding out about and applying for opportunities that interest them. Getting it wrong can seriously damage an individual's wellbeing and reputation.

March, Stanbury and Reynolds write about innovative website design at the Centre for Career Management Skills (CCMS) at the University of Reading. They show the potential of different types of websites designed as learning tools to enhance the career learning and development of students.

Sampson, Shy, Offer and Dozier provide an analysis of the design and use of information and communication technology in career guidance from 1990 to 2009. Literature reviews are very helpful in highlighting progress (and lack of it) in professional practice as well as pointing up gaps in the evidence base which policy-makers need to act on by commissioning future research. We have clearly made progress in our use of ICT in guidance in the last twenty years, but, as the authors point out, we are still failing to achieve the potential of this new medium in our work.

Barnes, La Gro and Watts report on the achievements of the two-year ICT Skills 2 project funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the Education and Cultural DG of the European Union. The aim of this project was to develop a framework of professional learning outcomes or competencies that practitioners need in order to use ICT effectively in their work; and to pilot a training needs analysis, practitioner profile and training programme using a mix of e-learning and face-to-face methods. With the setting up of the Career Profession Task Force in England in January 2010, it is particularly timely to have evidence from the project which might be presented to the Task Force of the kind of professional development needs that careers professionals will have as the use of ICT in their work expands in the future.

Watts discusses policy issues relating to the use of ICT in lifelong guidance in a paper which he presented to the Sixth European Conference on e-Guidance, as part of a common plenary session with a Plenary Meeting of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, held at Riga, Latvia, on 17 September 2009. He concludes that the potential of ICT to act as an agent of transformational change is greater than ever before and if the concept of lifelong guidance is to be converted into effective practice through public policy, ICT has a pivotal role to play.

The Pugh and Sadler report on the development of a new post-graduate qualification in career guidance and development in Scotland is particularly timely. They outline the structure of the qualification and its important features, especially the use of blended learning, employer engagement and the role of the practice tutor.

Rakovska charts the rapid progress that has been made in Bulgaria in the last five years to establish a career counselling profession. Many will recognise the challenge of improving the transition from education to the labour market, especially for young people, in the current global economic climate.

Weber explains the development of a competence-based Masters programme for counsellors by Professor Schiersmann and her team at the University of Heidelberg. He elaborates on the scientific concept and framework that underpins the Masters programme, the counselling competences that they have developed and the structure and delivery of the modules of the MA.

Watts, in a paper written for Careers England, cites international evidence to urge caution on the implementation of the Milburn proposals for funding careers services for young people. In January 2010, the Government published *Unleashing Aspiration*, its response to Milburn, deferring action on the restructuring of careers services for young people. Effectively, the Government has put Connexions services (and Local Authorities) on notice to improve their record.

Anthony Barnes, *Guest Editor*

The Social Web and Careers Work

Michael Larbalestier

Whether you like it or not, you probably have a social web footprint – most people have one! Even if you don't belong to any online social networks, and have never left a comment at any website, other people may have mentioned your name in passing – perhaps in minutes of meetings or in a caption to a photo. A growing range of 'people search' tools help users locate details of someone's identity and activities (see Endnote 1).

The implication for careers and advice work is that every client we offer advice and guidance to has a social web footprint, the content of which might help us understand the client better. More importantly, their footprint may help or hinder them in their future job search or career development. Thirdly, the social web opens up networking opportunities for both clients and advisers, enabling connections, referrals and introductions which can help people access opportunities and obtain advice and support directly from their network. This should bring the social web firmly into the realm of the professional adviser, but for many reasons advisers have tended to shy away from getting involved with this aspect of the client's identity.

The rise of the social web

We need to recognise that people's behaviour online has changed dramatically in recent years. The web is now primarily social and interactive in nature, rather than being a collection of expert-published content to be read or otherwise passively consumed by viewers. People now prefer connecting with others, discovering information collaboratively and sharing ideas and resources. In the United States research found 29% (40m) of American broadband users over the age of 13 now regularly contribute to social networking sites. Over three quarters - 76% (105m) - contribute to the social web while only 24% (33m) of passive consumers don't contribute (Netpop, 2008). Advice services which ignore these trends, risk a shrinking audience for the content they publish. Use of the social web does correlate with age, and younger people spend more time and are more engaged as social web contributors than the general population. 75% of 18-24 year-olds use social networking sites. Other

age groups are catching up: 57% of 25-34 year-olds, 30% of 35-44 year-olds, 19% of 45-54 year-olds, 10% of 55-64 year-olds and 7% of those 65+ use social networking (Lenhart, 2009).

How young people use the social web

The social web activities young users report they are engaged with are not hugely surprising. They like to keep in touch with friends and family; share content, such as photos, video, and audio; make new contacts; hang out, surf, just pass the time; explore their identity; and sometimes they might even engage in a little informal learning (NYA, 2008).

The 'Digital Youth project' found social networkers were mainly connected to the same friends they have in real life. They simply use social networking sites as a convenient means of keeping track, communicating and extending real world friendships. This runs contrary to the views espoused by scaremongers that social networking teens are in danger because they build relationships with complete strangers. Young people like to connect in order to talk about shared niche interests. They like building their online reputation with their peer group and beyond. They see the possibility of sharing their accomplishments much more widely, through the viral nature of the social web. This study also found some evidence of peer to peer learning, and concluded there is a real role for adults facilitating interest driven use of the social web by young people (Mizuko *et al.*, 2008).

Allaying the concerns of personal advisers towards the social web

I surveyed a group of personal advisers in 2008 to ask them about what their concerns were in relation to use of the social web. Some of the issues emerging included a lack of staff confidence in using social web tools. There was also a concern that encouraging staff to use this technology might lead to lost productivity. Some were concerned of the danger of identity theft and impersonation. A few mentioned service provider liabilities and some felt the danger of exposing clients to social media might put them at risk from sexual predators. Many felt cyber bullying would be a problem, and that asking advisers to go onto social networking sites would amount to an invasion of teenage space. By far the most widely held concern though was about reliability of information. Advisers feel concerned that the social web is full of misinformation (Larbalestier, 2008).

These concerns are frequently used to justify non-engagement by personal advisers and, in some organisations, the total banning or blocking of certain types of social content. This unfortunately denies advisers from accessing an enormous wealth of information, and

contacts. It also means they may not be able to help clients make best use of the social web, due to their unfamiliarity with the medium. There is no doubt that everyone who uses the social web needs to be aware of issues around online safety. Thankfully, there are many resources to support teenagers and the professionals working with them, which provide excellent information to educate internet users on how to use the web safely (see Endnote 2).

Why 'managing your online presence' should be part of young people's careers education today

Management of online presence is becoming more important because much of the social web is public. Employers can see what their employees say and do online. Staff see what their colleagues do. Recruiters are actively checking people out online, and using this information for headhunting, and candidate screening. Customers can see what a company's staff say online, and authorities can see what people do and say. Job seekers, those researching careers and those seeking career development can all develop their online presence positively through blogging and updating social network pages in order to improve their chances of employment. A blog (short for weblog) is a type of website, where people add regular entries – text, images, video, or audio, link to other blogs and web content, and usually encourage comment, feedback and discussion. In some cases bloggers publish 'news' or comment about specific topics of personal interest or passion. For others, their blog is more of an online journal or diary.

Producing a blog, or updating your social networking site pages can help people establish greater control of their online identity. At present many employers and admissions tutors search online to see what they can find out about individual applicants to supplement application forms and CVs. Such searches might trawl up *Facebook* entries, photographs, *YouTube* clips, as well as professional profiles on sites like *XING* or *LinkedIn*. If you are active blogger, any web search could also draw recruiters or those searching for you to your content.

As careers professionals, we should be well placed to help our clients audit their online identity. We can help clients re-evaluate their web presence from a recruiter's perspective. We can discuss a number of attributes of online identity: presence, what's being shared, reputation development and the relationships with others that are exposed.

Key issues for individuals managing their identity on the social web

For many people, 'presence' could be important as recruiters are looking to see whether they are engaged in the social web at all. Not being 'present' could mean an

individual not being shortlisted for a job, and a reduction in their chance of being approached by headhunters.

What individuals share is important too - the links, files, content, ideas that they post. They should be reflecting on whether they post content which is meaningful, legal, and relevant to the identity they seek to create.

Activity on the social web builds personal and professional reputation. If others comment positively on your blog posts, or give feedback on your *Facebook* profile, or refer to your content from their own sites, you may be considered knowledgeable or expert in your field!

The social web also reveals details of our relationships. In a blog, people often display a 'blogroll' or list of other bloggers they like to read. In social networking sites, people's contacts or friend lists are often displayed to anyone visiting someone's profile.

The relationships we make visible online say something about us. For example if you follow industry leaders, employees from a company you want to work for, it demonstrates you are keeping yourself updated professionally, and might have some insight into how the company operates, and its values and priorities. Following people in your industry, or the career specialism you aspire to gives you access to social labour market information. This is different from the statistics about employment in different fields which some advisers share with their clients. You cannot interact with employment statistics, but you can ask a direct question of a blogger, or fellow member of a special interest group in *Facebook*. You can also comment on what others say in their blogs or social network profiles.

Recruiters are growing more interested in who you are linked with, who inspires and influences us. For example a relevant professional network could mean you'll be perceived as well connected - someone who can bring business with them to a new employer, or be able to solve problems more easily because you can call upon your network for support.

Views vary wildly on the extent of social web vetting. A recent recruitment firm survey found that 20% of employers said they checked out applicants online (Rowe, 2007). The study also listed the top ten social networking turn-offs for recruiters:

1. References to drug abuse
2. Extreme or intolerant views, especially racism and sexism
3. Criminal activity
4. Evidence of excessive alcohol consumption
5. Inappropriate pictures, including nudity
6. Foul language
7. Links to unsuitable websites
8. Lewd jokes
9. Silly e-mail addresses
10. Membership of pointless or silly groups.

These simple but avoidable mistakes offer advisers a practical checklist with which to help clients enhance their online identity.

Ways to use the social web in a careers context

There are a number of simple ways to use the social web in a careers context with clients:

- Social web footprint audits: help your clients evaluate their social web presence, and identify how to develop an online 'personal brand' which supports their aspirations.
- Online Groups: signpost clients to join or launch online groups of people interested in their chosen fields. Most social networks provide the facility to create or join existing niche interest groups. On Facebook there are more than 500 occupationally specific groups and many related to specific employers and organisations.
- Answers sites: encourage clients to talk with an adviser and evaluate the answers they receive from web communities. *Yahoo Answers* is one of a number of Q&A focused communities. The site allow anyone to put their question out to the world-wide web. It is possible to ask people in your chosen career field for views on your career plans. The advice users receive certainly does not conform to any IAG standards or frameworks, but our clients are accessing this content every day. You can get almost instant response to any question, so there's no need to wait for an appointment next week with a careers adviser. Answers can be very subjective, there's often a lot of missing information about the question and questioner, and may not always consider diversity issues important.
- Blog feeds: A quick search at *Technorati.com* can lead you to find and subscribe to blog feeds from people who work in a sector of interest. This can be valuable for professional advisers as they seek to keep updated with developments in specific industries.
- Online Video: *YouTube* is probably the most well known video sharing site. Here users can view a video clip from recruiters, or unofficial university video guides, and see work experience reports from students.

Abilitynet has criticised the popular social web sites in the past for failing to address accessibility in their tools. It is fair to say that some of the bigger sites have made some improvements over the last few years, but they still have a long way to go if they are to be truly inclusive (*Abilitynet*, 2008).

The need to be there

The social web offers huge potential benefits to users – but there are also risks. Learners are already out there in force, using the social web to support their career and education decision making. Careers and personal advisers need to be there too. They need to gain greater

awareness and confidence in working with the social web. Advisers can promote and model safe, productive use of the social web, help learners interpret the advice and opinions they find online, help clients make better use of the connections their networks create and shape their online personal brand to support not hinder their career aspirations.

Endnotes:

(1) Example people search sites: <http://www.pipl.com>, <http://www.123people.com/>, <http://www.zoominfo.com>

(2) Online safety resources: <http://www.chatdanger.com>; <http://www.childnet-int.org>; <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>

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Destinations® and Beyond the PhD

Jessica March, David Stanbury and Catherine Reynolds

*The Centre for Career Management Skills (CCMS) at the University of Reading
a Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)*

The Centre for Career Management Skills (CCMS) at the University of Reading CETL has created two different web resources for two different audiences – taking two different approaches. *Destinations®* is a teaching and learning website addressing generic careers themes and is licensed to universities and colleges. *Beyond the PhD*, on the other hand, is a non-didactic resource tailored specifically for arts and humanities PhDs, and is open access.

Both sites illustrate the different advantages of using information communication technology in a careers context and apply broad principals of web design to different career learning tasks. Both approaches are alert to the distinct requirements of the autonomous and the guided user, and both resources have been developed to be used independently and in group work.

Content *Beyond the PhD*

Arts and humanities PhDs do not have well trodden career paths, it may be argued, when compared to those in engineering and the sciences. Other than in academic related careers, where do people with arts and humanities PhDs tend to work? *Beyond the PhD* was conceived and developed to address this question. It brings together a desire to make visible what happens to postgraduate researchers after they graduate and an ambition to avoid easy prescriptions of 'getting your perfect job'.

Beyond the PhD offers a rare opportunity to listen in on the experiences of 28 people from HEIs across the UK, at different ages and stages of life, who have been through the PhD in an arts and humanities discipline and made the transition into a variety of work, both in and outside academia. Their candid personal reflections on facing challenges, responding to opportunities and reaching decisions are captured in almost 300 audio clips.

Audio was the chosen medium for these career stories for a variety of reasons. PhD researchers, the main target audience, spend most of their time reading and looking at computer screens, so we purposefully provided an alternative medium in *Beyond the PhD*. Additionally, by literally giving voice to the experience of the postgraduate researcher, the narratives we captured have the ring of authenticity. It is arguably more compelling to listen to someone describe the highs and lows of their career

development than to read a mediated and abridged account of them. For those who want to skim or read the interview clip instead of listening, or before listening, each clip is accompanied by a full transcript.

Each interview is segmented into clips which can be searched and organised in a variety of ways: by keyword search; by viewing each interviewee's clips on their profile page; or by browsing clips by theme. These options give the end user the option of following one career story or picking a topic and seeing how different people talk about it.

While the project team was alert to the importance of being representative, it would never have been possible to include a comprehensive spread of PhD disciplines and career paths – indeed the possible combinations are as multifarious as the people you could interview. We did achieve a good scatter of subjects, disciplines, ages, employment sectors, genders etc, but it was never our intention for users to find their exact fit among the profiles – even if the repository of interviews was inexhaustible, there would simply be too many variables and conditioning influences for this to be possible.

In addition to biographical interviews, this site also features articles by those with a personal or professional interest in the career development of PhD researchers. Addressing the postgraduate user, they tackle questions about, for example, how to interpret the statistical data about the career destinations of arts and humanities PhDs, and how employers outside academia perceive PhD researchers in the arts and humanities. There are also video clips of small groups in discussion about similar issues from a professional perspective. The purpose of these video discussions is to make the user privy to the types of discussions that tend to go on *about* them, rather than *with* them. In the first group, careers advisers focus on the nature of career guidance and what PhD researchers might expect to gain from it; the range of work that arts and humanities postgraduates are drawn into; and how the PhD thesis can be reframed, and the postgraduate experience translated, in applications for non-academic jobs.

In the second discussion group, academic skills trainers focus on the government agenda for skills training for postgraduates in the arts and humanities and how this is being realised in universities; the particular limits and challenges of skills training in arts and humanities disciplines; the role of supervisors in equipping postgraduates for academic careers, and the growing professionalisation of academia.

Beyond the PhD aims to complement rather than replace the existing support for PhD researchers, and a select list of online and print resources covering a range of postgraduate career related issues is available via our 'Links' page.

Voice

Site-text is solely (and economically) employed to guide the user around the site and to enable them to find and access relevant material as easily as possible. There is no 'voice of authority' but this is not to say that the site is wholly neutral. Rather it contains a range of authoritative voices, audible in the view points and opinions expressed across the articles, videoed discussions and audio content.

Beyond the PhD seeks to address the kinds of questions that preoccupy postgraduate researchers, to which the only possible answers are subjective ones: how do people reach the decision to pursue an academic career or to explore other options? How do those with a clear sense of direction get to where they want to be? What is the impact on an individual's career direction when they don't get shortlisted for the first few jobs they apply for? How long do people cleave to long-held career aspirations in the face of pragmatic pressures like paying the bills? When do people decide to take a job outside academia, and how do they reconcile that with the academic identity that has been under construction during the years of postgraduate study?

Beyond the PhD is a departure from approaches to careers resources which offer a "how to" methodology. It borrows from the constructivist approach endorsed by those such as Polly Parker who writes that "[i]n a 'boundaryless' career world, it is the internally generated subjective career, rather than the externally directed objective career, that can best guide the individual" (Parker, 2006, 179). The subjective voice that Parker refers to here is that of the person *exploring* their career, but *Beyond the PhD* employs the subjective voices of those who have *been through* the transition from PhD to life afterwards. The person who is *exploring* can therefore assess and reassess their subjective reality in light of someone else's – namely the person or persons whose experience resonates with their own. It is through listening to the choices and dilemmas faced by someone else, and hearing how they retrospectively make sense of them, which induces the listener's own powers of discernment. In short, other people's experiences have the potential to throw light on our own – our own predicament becomes more clearly understood when we have recognised it as someone else's.

Uses

Beyond the PhD has received over 11,000 visitors since its launch in January 2009, and has gained enthusiastic feedback. A PhD researcher recently wrote: "the site ... offers a balanced and surprising selection of comments. It

was great to hear people assessing all the options involved in staying in academia or going out into the 'real' world. This is a very comforting and encouraging website which I'll be dipping into over the next year or so."

Additionally, careers professionals are using *Beyond the PhD* in group sessions, selecting interviews to demonstrate different stages, approaches, attitudes and emotional responses to career development at different stages of the PhD process. Learning aims from sessions such as these might typically involve learners:

- Interrogating and developing their own concept of career
- Envisaging and evaluating some alternative futures
- Thinking creatively about how their subject discipline supports their approach to career learning
- Learning about resources to support their career development

At the University of Sussex, all of these aims have been met in group sessions using *Beyond the PhD* as the main resource. Clips from the career stories of PhDs are used to stimulate discussion and generate new ideas. Participants in these sessions enjoy the authentic voices of their peers and value the honesty of their stories. The style of the resource suits very well PhDs in the arts and humanities who habitually de-construct language to elicit meaning and so discussions stimulated by the audio clips are interesting, meaningful and lengthy.

An advantage of the resource in practical terms is that it gives careers services access to a range and variety of different experiences without having to invite in so many individual speakers.

Further development

The site is coherent as it stands but there is scope for further development. We plan to add new interviews, covering more disciplines and career areas, for example, and we are exploring ways to develop additional resources to support professional educators to design group sessions based around the site. These might include session plans, handouts and clusters of complementary clips. Updating the site will keep it fresh and add value. We are also developing interactive functionality so that the Postgraduate researcher user can make their own contribution to the bank of experiences. *Beyond the PhD* has also laid the foundations for similar resources to be developed for other PGR communities.

Content destinations®

Destinations® covers broad career themes, including decision making, opportunity awareness, transition learning and self-awareness, delivered through 16 topics,

such as: 'Managing your career' and 'Postgraduate directions'. Typically, each topic is subdivided into 5-7 sections, with each section composed of a number of pages. The look, layout and content of the site aims to enhance learner engagement. 'Click-and-reveal' text entices users to find out more by uncovering hidden text or answering questions. The pages provide a range of resources: worksheets that can be downloaded and completed off-line, such as forms for work experience reflection; on-screen activities, such as card-sort exercises; and embedded videos of employers, alumni and students drawn from a range of UK universities. In all there are 50 downloads and 150 video clips which can be found easily using a searchable library.

Site structure is based on re-usable learning objects; 're-usable' by virtue of being entirely self-contained, each page makes sense on its own and none of the core pages specifically refers to any other page.

Designing pages as re-usable learning objects means that there is no prescribed path through the site. Someone browsing the site can choose their own route, and pages that strike a user as irrelevant can be bypassed. Rather than requiring the reader to progress through a fixed pathway that 'pushes' information at the user, the site enables the user to 'pull' down only those pages that appeal.

This approach also has important implications for curriculum purposes. The site has a dedicated staff area which contains lesson ideas, assessment examples and curriculum models. The site design and navigation has consistently been positively rated by focus groups as appealing and easy to use.

Voice

Destinations® adopts a tone that is informal without being overly casual. It is written in plain English and avoids idiomatic expressions. The text aims to encourage an attitude to career development that is positive without being naively optimistic. The writing is active and engaging. Readers are enjoined to consider how they wish to respond to the text rather than being told they 'must' act in a particular way.

The voice is that of an informed professional mirroring the accepting non-directive stance used in careers guidance. Nevertheless, the site inevitably adopts a position. It assumes, for example, that a broadly planful and reflective approach aided by accurate up-to-date information is likely to be conducive to career development. Similarly, it embodies many other cultural assumptions, about, for example, individual choice and client autonomy. In this regard the 'neutrality' of the voice in *Destinations*® is more apparent than actual. Its value-free appearance is deceptive because, of course, no communication can be completely devoid of values. The voice of the 'objective' author of the

site, however, is shared with other voices from the unscripted videos of students, alumni and employers.

Uses

For teaching and learning purposes the site is intended to be used as a resource that students are directed to through a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) such as Blackboard or Moodle. A VLE provides a dedicated space for a particular course – a course module – that is only accessible to those enrolled on the course. A VLE module enables a tutor to create a series of linked pages that contain course information, learning activities and links to relevant resources. Because *Destinations*® is composed of re-usable learning objects, it can be 'deep-linked' to from a VLE using hyper-links. In this way a tutor can pick out those pages that are specifically applicable to the course learning outcomes.

This flexibility to adapt to the needs of very different careers education programmes enables *Destinations*® to support a diverse range of curriculum initiatives. At the University of Reading, *Destinations*® underpins delivery of a five credit module component – Career Management Skills – via Blackboard, to around 40 programme areas. *Destinations*® has also been licensed to 45 other educational organisations in the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

The original intention for *Destinations*® was to improve the design and delivery of careers education by providing extensive, flexible resources that could be adapted by different institutions. The anticipated gains from *Destinations*® focused upon improvements to student learning and the creation of bespoke courses of careers education that were more responsive to the needs of different student groups. However, *Destinations*® has also led to a wider range of unanticipated benefits. One such gain has seen careers staff further develop a pedagogically aware approach to careers education. To a significant extent this development has been triggered by the structure of *Destinations*®. Where careers services have used *Destinations*® with a VLE to deliver careers education there has often been a deeper engagement of staff with teaching and learning issues. This has been because the non-directional nature of the site requires staff to carefully select which parts of the site to direct their students to. This simple but fundamental feature has led to a more deliberative attitude to the deployment of web-based resources by staff. They have had to carefully link learning activities and resources with course learning outcomes. Furthermore, using a VLE places a priority upon the sequence of online learning activities to ensure that students are introduced to resources in the optimal order. Additionally, the impetus provided by *Destinations*® has propelled many careers services to enthusiastically embrace use of a VLE, where previously VLE use was marginal to careers practice.

Another unanticipated impact of *Destinations*[®] has been at an institutional level. In a number of instances the acquisition of *Destinations*[®] by a careers service has helped the service project itself onto a wider stage within its university. Services have attributed this to several features of *Destinations*[®]: the fact that *Destinations*[®] is a teaching and learning resource (rather than a collection of advice and information); the quality of the product; the fact that it is owned and controlled by the service (rather than by another part of the university); and the right for institutions to edit and add to the content, as well as change the appearance to fit the local context; Birmingham University and Bradford University, for example, have incorporated videos of local students and employers into the site.

Together these factors have provided a credible platform for careers services to strategically engage with their institutions' teaching and learning agenda. *Destinations*[®] lends its self to diverse curricula and extra-curricula uses ranging from one-off workshops to substantial programmes of careers education. The University of Ulster's Career Development Centre (CDC) for example, is using *Destinations*[®] to support careers education work with multiple undergraduate programmes across the arts, humanities, sciences and social sciences, as well as with taught masters and PhD students. These interventions encompass credit bearing modules that CDC owns, designs and assesses, as well as assessed modules that CDC contributes to, and non-assessed workshops.

Practically, use of *Destinations*[®] plays out in different ways. For example, a tutor could ask students to view videos *before* a lecture, complete worksheets from the site *during* the session and require students to read parts of the site *afterwards* for an assignment.

The site also has an important role in facilitating the exchange of material and expertise between careers educators. Institutions that have the site are encouraged to support each other by belonging to the *Destinations*[®] Community. Members of the community have access to the *Destinations*[®] Community Google Group. Using this online forum, members can upload and share curriculum material and new content for *Destinations*[®]. Limerick University, which has extensively modified *Destinations*[®] to the Irish graduate labour market, strikingly illustrates the possibilities for collaborative working, having shared their material with 15 other institutions in the Republic of Ireland.

Supporting individual users is another important dimension of *Destinations*[®]. Many institutions are starting to draw on the site when providing individual guidance to clients. An exciting innovation that will make this easier is the recent development of advice pages. These advice pages, jointly produced by CCMS and the University of Roehampton, address questions students typically raise during advice sessions. For example, questions about seeking work

experience, developing career plans and preparing for assessment centres. Each advice page takes one such question and addresses it by referring the reader to relevant sections within *Destinations*[®]. In this way the advice pages help to direct the unguided reader to relevant resources using a needs-based learning approach.

Further development

CCMS is currently adding to *Destinations*[®]. We are in the process of writing two new Topics ('Using Recruitment Agencies' and 'Making the Transition into HE') and commissioning a suite of supporting videos. On top of this, CCMS expects to be able to release further material and interactive exercises in the coming year. We hope that the *Destinations*[®] Community will play a key part in further extending and renewing the site through becoming a fully fledged community of practice. If everyone in the community, for example, added one extra item a year (a few pages, a video, etc) the whole community would benefit from around 40 possible additions and updates to the site on an annual basis. Thus it could become an open, collaborative resource which is nonetheless tailored for (and at) each institution.

Conclusion

Both *Destinations*[®] and *Beyond the PhD* illustrate different advantages of using information communication technology in a careers context and both approaches are alert to the distinct requirements of the autonomous and the guided user, but the approaches, as we have demonstrated, are not the same. *Destinations* is locally owned by its users and can be adapted by them. By contrast, *Beyond the PhD* is centrally owned and can only be adapted and updated by CCMS. *Beyond the PhD* is audio-led with adjunct text and video, while *Destinations*[®] is text-led with adjunct audio and video. *Destinations*[®] is aimed at educational course design, with the potential to also be used by independent users. *Beyond the PhD* is primarily designed for independent use, but also has applications in group settings or educational courses. *Destinations*[®] aims at an objective neutral style while *Beyond the PhD* explicitly brings together a range of subjective voices and experiences as a vehicle for reflection and exploration.

Indeed, what both sites demonstrate is that careers education is not limited to being one thing done in one particular way. *Destinations*[®] covers much territory and is 'comprehensive', becoming increasingly so as its users add further material. *Beyond the PhD* cannot and will not evolve in this way because of the discrete nature of the content. The 'careers' emphasis in *Beyond the PhD* is contemplative rather than didactically pragmatic; it is more about life stories than 'finding and securing employment'. Personal stories do feature in *Destinations*[®] but with a different purpose and with a secondary emphasis.

The story of *Destinations*® shows that a teaching tool has the potential to catalyze wider innovations and to impact on the changing professional identity of careers staff as careers educators. As for *Beyond the PhD*, while it is a more humble enterprise, it opens up new ways of envisaging how postgraduate researchers and other student communities can engage with employability and career-related learning. In this way it has enormous potential to influence and even revolutionise other career websites and forms of learning through engagement with personal narratives and life stories, especially those mediated through the use of audio.

An analysis of the design and use of information and communication technology in career guidance from 1990 to 2009

James P. Sampson, Jr., Jon D. Shy, Marcus Offer, V. Casey Dozier

Introduction

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in career guidance is an important element in the provision of career resources and services offered face-to-face or at a distance (Harris-Bowlsbey & Sampson, 2005; Offer & Chiru, 2005; Offer, Sampson, & Watts, 2001; Sampson, 2008; Vuorinen, 2006). The professional literature on the design and use of ICT in career guidance is at least a partial reflection of the applications available in schools, agencies, and originations, as well as applications available on a self-help basis. Given the widespread use of ICT in career guidance, it is important to periodically evaluate the current state-of the-art as indicated in the professional literature. By conducting a content analysis of the literature on ICT and career guidance it will be possible to examine the nature of applications available, how the applications are used, issues with the technology, the extent to which the effectiveness of the technology has been evaluated. Implications for the future design and use of ICT in career guidance can then be drawn from the analysis.

Information and communication technology integrates the *delivery of information* via the Internet with the capability of users to *communicate* with guidance professionals and each other for assistance in locating, understanding, and using the information they need. The goal of using ICT-based career guidance resources and services is to help young people and adults to make informed and careful occupational, educational, training, and employment decisions (Sampson, 2008). *Information* delivered via ICT facilitates the clarification of self-knowledge or knowledge of options for the person seeking assistance in solving problems and making decisions. Completing practitioner-assisted or self-help career assessments via ICT provides a resource for clarifying self-knowledge about values, interests, skills, aptitudes, and employment preferences. Using occupational, educational, training, and employment information provides a resource for enhancing knowledge of options. *Communication* among and between career guidance practitioners and individuals served provides opportunities to facilitate use of the overwhelming amount of information that is now available.

Several types of ICT applications in career guidance currently exist. These applications include a) self assessment or awareness-raising exercises and psychometric tests; b) facilities to retrieve information

about training and work opportunities relevant to the user; c) decision aids; d) training/distance-learning materials for job seekers; e) CV and resume writing programs or templates; f) matching systems relating the user's input to work and/or learning opportunities; g) dedicated experience-exchange mechanisms, such as email lists, chat rooms and discussion forums; h) gateways or portals providing signposting to resources for work and learning; and i) dedicated authoring systems, including blogging and web page creation software (Offer, 1997; 2001).

This paper begins with a description of the methodology used in the content analysis. After the results are described and discussed, implications are presented for the future.

Methodology

A content analysis was used to identify key elements presented in the literature on the design and use of ICT in career guidance. A similar method of content analysis was used by Loveland, Buboltz, & Gibson (2006) to examine the content of articles appearing in the *Career Development Quarterly*. The process used to conduct the analysis included the following five steps.

The first step in the analysis was to select a time period for the review. Given the substantial change in ICT because of the Internet, the period from 1990 to 2009 was selected to balance established practice with the recent evolution of the design and use of ICT in the provision of career guidance resources and services.

The second step was to select the type of publications that would be used in the analysis. Nine types of publications were identified as typically providing information on the design and use of ICT in career guidance. These publications included: 1) refereed print journals, 2) refereed Internet journals, 3) Internet documents, 4) professional association documents, 5) conference, symposium, and workshop papers, 6) technical reports available in print, 7) technical reports available on the Internet, 8) books available in print, and 9) book chapters available in print. These publications vary considerably in the amount of scrutiny they receive before publication. Articles published in refereed journals are anonymously reviewed by at least two qualified professionals and are not necessarily accepted for publication. Professional association documents are typically reviewed by two or more qualified

professionals, although reviews are typically not anonymous. Books and book chapters may have an anonymous review prior to publication. Conference, symposium, and workshop papers, Internet documents, and technical reports may or may not be independently reviewed prior to publication and the decision to publish may be made a single individual, including the author.

The third step involved developing content categories for the data analysis by reviewing 40 randomly selected publications across the nine types of publications described above. Seven distinct themes in the design and use of ICT in career guidance became the content categories used in the investigation. Subcategories were also identified for six of the content categories. Loveland, Buboltz, Schwartz, and Gibson (2006) used fourteen categories to guide their content analysis.

In the fourth step, a literature search was conducted to identify publications for inclusion in the analysis using the seven content categories developed in the prior step. Following the identification of the content categories, appropriate print or Internet-based publications were identified. Publications included in the analysis had to deal with at least one aspect of the design or use of ICT in career guidance, such as the delivery of labor-market information on the Internet. Reference databases such as PsychInfo and ERIC, as well as the library at the Center for the Study of Technology in Counseling and Career Development at Florida State University, were used to identify the publications for review. The reference sections of these publications were then used as a guide to identify additional publications.

The fifth step involved reading and coding each publication by type and category. One, or multiple content categories, could be identified for a single publication. During the analysis, it became apparent that the seven content categories were not adequately identifying the range of content included in the publications. As a result, the categories, "Perceived benefits and limitations" and "Technology trends influencing ICT-based career guidance resources and services" were added. All publications previously examined were reanalyzed. The final schema for this study included nine content categories that were further divided into twenty-nine related subcategories.

Results

A total of 189 publications on the design and use of ICT in career guidance were examined for this content analysis. Citations for these publications are presented in Appendix A. The frequencies and percentages for the nine different types of publications that were reviewed are presented in Table 1. The most to least common type of publication was as follows: Internet documents, articles in refereed print journals, articles in refereed Internet journals, technical

reports in print, book chapters in print, technical reports on the Internet, print standards on the Internet, books in print, and papers presented at conferences, symposia, and workshops.

Table 1

Type of Publications on the Topic of ICT-Based Career Guidance

Type of Publication	N	%
Refereed Journal article available in print	49	26
Refereed Journal article available on the Internet	21	11
Document available on the Internet	66	35
Professional standards available on the Internet	5	3
Conference, symposium, and workshop paper available on the Internet	2	1
Technical report available in print	19	10
Technical report available on the Internet	12	6
Book available in print	4	2
Book chapter available in print	11	6

Table 2 presents the frequencies and percentages of publications according to the nine content categories and twenty-nine subcategories. Because each publication could be coded according to multiple content categories, the percentages add up to more than 100.

Table 2

Content categories for publications on the design and use of ICT in career guidance

Content category	N	%
<i>Design of ICT-based career guidance applications</i>		
Conceptual design of the resource		
Content	5	3
Career theory	3	2
Total for conceptual design of the application	8	4
Technological design of the application		
Features	12	6
Process of development	4	2
Usability analyses (formative evaluation)	8	4
Total for technological design of the application	23	12

Type of technology used in the application		
Web-site-based	79	42
Personal Computer-based	19	10
E-Mail-based	11	6
Telephone-based	6	3
Videoconference-based	3	2
<i>Total for type of technology used in the application</i>	118	62
<i>Total for design of ICT-based career guidance application</i>	149	79
<i>ICT-based assessment and information resources</i>		
Content of ICT-based assessments (Values, interests, skills, and aptitudes)	7	4
Validity of ICT-Based Assessment	5	3
Content of ICT-Based Information (Occupational, Educational, Training, and Employment)	61	32
Validity of ICT-Based Information	4	2
<i>Total for ICT-Based Assessment and Information Resources</i>	76	40
<i>Services using ICT-based career guidance applications</i>		
Individual Counseling	25	13
Brief Counseling	8	4
Workshops	2	1
<i>Total for services using ICT</i>	35	19
<i>Implementation of ICT-based career guidance resources and services</i>		
Recommendations for implementation	36	19
Example of implementing ICT-based resources	9	5
Practitioner training as part of implementation	31	17
<i>Total Publications on Implementation</i>	76	40
<i>Efficacy of ICT-based career guidance resources and services</i>		
Evaluation of ICT-based career guidance services (summative evaluation)	16	8
Perceived benefits and limitations of resources	26	14
<i>Total Publications on Efficacy</i>	42	22
<i>Ethical issues in designing and using ICT-based career guidance resources and services</i>		
	23	12
<i>Professional standards that include the design and use of ICT-based career guidance resources and services</i>		
Ethics	24	13
Practitioner Competencies and Training	39	21
Design	8	4
Service Delivery	38	20
Evaluation	18	9
<i>Total Publications on Professional Standards</i>	125	66

<i>Public policy and ICT-based career guidance resources and services</i>	6	3
<i>Technology trends influencing ICT-based career resources and services</i>	70	37

The nine content categories on the design and use of ICT in career guidance can be placed into four distinct groups according to frequency. "Professional standards that include the design and use of ICT-based career guidance resources and services" was included in 69% of the publications. In the second group, "The design of ICT-based applications," "ICT-based assessment and information resources," "Implementation of ICT-based career resources and services," and "Technology trends influencing ICT-based career guidance resources and services" was dealt with in 56%, 41%, 40%, and 39% of the publications. For the third group, the percentage frequency for content categories was 23% for "Efficacy of ICT-based career guidance resources and services," 20% for "Services using ICT-based applications," and 12% for "Ethical issues in designing and using ICT-based career guidance resources and services" "Public policy and ICT-based career guidance resources and services" was only included in 3% of the publications.

The most frequent content (15% or more) in subcategories was the use of Web based technology in application design (44%), information content in ICT applications (32%), standards related to practitioner competencies and training (23%), standards related to service delivery (23%), recommendations for implementation (19%), practitioner training as part of implementation (17%), and evidence of the perceived benefits of and limitations of resources (15%). Content infrequently included (3% or less) was conceptual design in terms of content (3%), process of designing the application (2%), use of telephone-based technology in the application (3%), conceptual design in terms of career theory (2%), use of videoconference-based technology in the application (2%), and use of workshops in ICT-based career guidance (1%).

The frequency of research and evaluation content was not equal across type of publication. Twenty-three percent of the publications presented research or evaluation data. The percentage of total publications that included data-based research and evaluation was as follows: 17 (10%) in refereed print journals, 5 (3%) in refereed Internet journals, 4 (2%) in Internet documents, 2 (1%) in conference, symposia, and workshop papers, and 14 (8%) in technical reports.

In examining the data, there was a clear trend in the technology used to deliver career guidance applications. As one might expect, the number of publications across content categories has shifted substantially from personal computer applications to Internet-based applications.

Discussion

Information on the design and use of ICT in career guidance is available from a wide variety of publications. The availability of refereed publications helps to ensure that the observations and conclusions contained in a document are appropriate for the content and the data presented. It is encouraging that a large portion of data-based research and evaluation studies were published in refereed journals. The common use of technical reports for dissemination of studies provides a good opportunity for in-depth analysis and interpretation of data. The availability of publications on the Internet increases the likelihood that publications will be accessed and used. However, it is surprising how few documents from conferences, symposia, and workshops are available on the Internet. The failure to make these documents public is a missed opportunity for disseminating knowledge. There are few books available on ICT applications in career guidance. This is unfortunate in that books provide an opportunity for in-depth exploration of content that is not possible with shorter publications. Edited books, categorized as book chapters in this analysis, do provide a breadth of topic coverage and integration of content. However, books still provide more of an opportunity to analyze a topic in detail.

Publications focusing on the technological aspects of ICT applications in career guidance have the problem of becoming quickly out-of-date. Publications focusing on counseling and implementation strategies for ICT applications, as well as ethical issues, are less likely to be dated quickly. The lower costs associated with Internet publishing, in comparison with print publications, may encourage more frequent revision of publications on ICT applications in career guidance.

The content of publications on ICT applications in career guidance is both diverse and important. It is encouraging that a substantial percentage of publications in this study included content on professional standards. Professionals appear to be concerned about potential problems in the design and use of ICT applications and are willing to be proactive in maximizing success and minimizing problems with this technology. The content of information available in ICT applications was often described, potentially helping readers to better understand how this technology might be used in practice.

Not all of the findings in this study are encouraging. Little attention in publications was paid to the theoretical basis of applications. Even if a pragmatic approach was taken and no formal theory was used for development of an application, explicit or implicit concepts are still part of the design process and need to be described. This type of conceptual information is needed to effectively design interventions, implement applications, and create resources for evaluation and research. In addition, there was little mention of the "communication" aspect of ICT in the design or use of applications. Initial experience in providing

career information and services to individuals at a distance has been positive (Malone, 2007; Watts & Dent, 2006). Publications need to explore how guidance interventions can be provided to young people and adults while they are using a Web site.

The lack of attention in publications to the validity of information is troubling. Invalid information can lead to serious consequences given the magnitude of the occupational, educational, training, and employment choices made by users. The lack of interest in information validity is incongruous given the emphasis in professional standards on the need to demonstrate evidence of information validity. Also, the discussion of content dealt with the topics that were included in the application, with little attention as to how the information was presented. Good information is useless when presented in a way that is difficult to understand. This issue is especially important when the application is intended to be used by a wide variety of individuals with diverse learning styles and capabilities.

In the literature, individual counseling was the dominant service delivery option for young people and adults who used ICT applications. Given the need to provide cost-effective resources and services to the large number of young people and adults who need career guidance (Sampson, 2009), the limited number of descriptions of brief counseling, group counseling, workshops, and courses is problematic. Also, the use of ICT applications as a self-help resource was rarely mentioned. While the efficacy of ICT applications was emphasized in the literature, most publications used staff perceptions as the source of data rather than quantitative or qualitative data obtained from young persons or adults actually using the applications. More systematic studies are needed to verify the efficacy of applications and to identify factors that influence the effectiveness of applications. Finally, there was little discussion in the literature on the public policy that is needed to place the design and use of ICT applications within the context of facilitating education and employment, as well as promoting economic development and social welfare.

Limitations

It is impossible in any content analysis of a large body of literature to identify all possible publications, especially papers and presentations at conferences. Dissertations and theses that are not subsequently published or presented pose similar problems. Any omission of relevant literature in this study was inadvertent. However, we believe the sample of publications obtained is large enough to adequately reflect the current ICT literature in career guidance. A second limitation is that by focusing on a wide range of content topics, an in-depth exploration of the nature of content in subcategories was not possible. A more in-depth exploration could lead to a more detailed discussion of the results and more explicit

recommendations. Third, only English language publications were included in this study. Important content on this topic has been written in other languages. It is possible that the nature and frequency of content in publications is influenced by differences among countries in guidance resources and services, as well as differences in public policy. Fourth, it was not possible to determine the refereed status of some of the documents, including: a) Internet documents, b) conference, symposia, and workshop papers, c) books, or d) book chapters. It might be that the proportion of refereed publications was greater than presented in this analysis.

Implications

A variety of implications can be drawn from this study. These include implications for practice, ICT development, research, and public policy.

Implications for practice

Practitioners need to make informed and careful choices in selecting and using ICT applications in career guidance. One strategy is for practitioners to use the purchasing power they have before they select an application. The willingness of developers to provide the information necessary to effectively select and use their applications can be strongly influenced by the conditions practitioners set for purchase. This of course assumes that practitioners have a choice in applications, which may not be the case. It is important as well that practitioners develop and document cost-effective group and self-help interventions. In addition, practitioners need to take the time necessary to publish documents from conferences, symposia, and workshops where they are presenting. Finally, practitioners also need to use the information that is available in the literature in their work. Published information is ineffectual if it is not used.

Implications for ICT development

Developers have a responsibility to regularly document design improvements, validation of assessments and information, use of their application in practice, implementation strategies, and efficacy of the application. Special attention needs to be paid to validity of assessments and information, as well as the application of theory or conceptual models in the design and use of an application. The creation of text and multimedia-based resources for educating and training practitioners should also be a priority. Developers also need to indicate of how their application meets applicable professional standards. Indicating how their applications are congruent with education and employment policy, as well as initiatives to promote economic development and social welfare is also important. Finally, developers also need to put more effort toward utilizing the "communication" aspect of ICT in designing future systems.

Implications for research

Whenever possible, researchers need to submit their work for peer review before publication. Making documents readily available on the Internet should also be a priority. Researchers need to examine both the design and use of ICT applications in career guidance in order to influence future system development and innovative practice. Particular attention needs to be paid to identifying individual and organizational characteristics that influence the effectiveness of ICT applications in career guidance.

Implications for public policy

Policy makers in government can influence the design and use of ICT applications in career guidance by requiring developers to provide adequate supporting information to practitioners, researchers, educators, and trainers as part of the requirements to receive funding. Similar requirements should exist for practitioners. In order to receive funding for purchasing ICT applications and delivering ICT-based services, practitioners should be required to provide realistic plans for implementation. Policy makers should also establish and enforce clear standards for the design and use applications that are consistent across educational, training, and employment services. Professional associations need to develop standards for ICT design that includes stipulating the type of evidence necessary to establish that ICT applications are valid and appropriately designed.

Conclusion

Periodic review of the professional literature provides a useful perspective on the state-of-the-art in the design and use of ICT in career guidance. It is clear, however, that the literature examined in this study does not reflect the full range of content necessary to help practitioners, ICT developers, researchers, educators and trainers, and policy makers to achieve the full benefit of this technology in meeting the career guidance needs of young people and adults. All parties involved need to be proactive to help ensure that information on appropriate topics is easily available to the professionals who are involved in the design and use of ICT in career guidance.

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Appendix A

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Developing e-guidance competences: the outcomes of a two-year European project to transform the professional development of career guidance practitioners

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Across Europe, career guidance services are being challenged and potentially transformed by the power of information and communication technologies (ICT). Some view ICT as an alternative to such services; some as a tool; some as an agent of change (Watts, 1996). If career practitioners are to sustain support for their work, it is important that they are equipped to harness its potential to the full. Their e-guidance competences are accordingly crucial to their future as a profession.

Over two years, from November 2007 to October 2009, the ICT Skills 2 project has been funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the Education and Cultural DG of the European Union to design, plan, implement and evaluate a new training path for career guidance practitioners in lifelong learning systems, focusing on their use of ICT media and software. This article briefly explains the background to the project, its rationale and underlying conceptual model, the progress of the UK training pilot and what has been achieved so far. It also discusses wider issues relating to the dissemination of the project and the challenge of achieving synergies between related projects at European level.

Rationale for the project

ICT Skills 2 is the continuation of an earlier EU project (ICT Skills) that developed a methodology for analysing the ICT-related guidance competences required by practitioners. This earlier project carried out an initial mapping and definition of competences relevant to the practitioner role. These were reported in a full project report (Cogoi, 2005) and summarised in two NICEC briefings (Offer & Chiru, 2006; Hawthorn, 2006). The ICT Skills project was commended by the EU as one of its top 50 projects in 2006.

Nine partners from four countries (Italy, Romania, Spain, UK) participated in the second project. The project was led by Aster in Italy, and each of the partners took responsibility for particular project roles (see Box 1).

Box 1: Partners in the ICT Skills 2 project and their main project roles

ASTER (Italy)*

Consortium promoting science, technology and business composed of the Emilia-Romagna regional government, five universities, three national research centres and the entrepreneurial associations of the region. Key tasks:
Project leadership
Dissemination and exploitation of results
Financial issues

MELIUS srl (Italy)

Independent consultancy working in the field of educational and vocational guidance and of lifelong learning. Key tasks:
Project co-ordinator
Skills self-assessment tool
E-practitioner profile
E-portfolio

CYBORG (Italy)

Information technology specialists. Key tasks:
Moodle learning platform for the training pilots
Online forum for project management and communication between partners

CRAC/NICEC (UK)*

NICEC is a Cambridge-based independent organisation of Fellows involved in national and international research and development projects across all sectors of career guidance. Key tasks:
Project quality and evaluation
Revision of competency framework
National context paper

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES (Romania)*

A national institute for research and development in education. Key tasks:
Analysis of the context
Romanian pilot
National context paper

CENTRO STUDI PLURIVERSUM (Italy)
Private-sector vocational training and guidance centre for young people and unemployed adults. Key tasks:
Siena pilot
National context paper

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON (UK)
The School of Psychology at the University of East London (UEL) is one of the main centres in the UK for training careers advisers.
Key tasks:
Joint leadership of pilots
UK pilot

FOREM Confederal (Spain)
Not-for-profit training organisation set up by the Comisiones Obreras Trade Union Confederation. Key tasks:
National context paper
Joint leadership of pilots

UNIVERSITY OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA (Spain)*
The Faculty of Educational Sciences runs a Master's degree course in vocational guidance. Key tasks:
Training path
Joint leadership of pilots
Spanish pilot
National context paper

Note
* = Partners who participated in the earlier ICT Skills project

The key operational stages in the ICT Skills 2 project were seven-fold:

- To update the national context information for each country, publishing the reports on the new project website (<http://www.ictskills2.org>) and partners' own organisation websites.
- To revise the map of ICT-related guidance competences as a basis for the development of a training path.
- To design a training path based on the map of competences.
- To develop an online platform (Moodle) complete with a self-assessment tool, an e-practitioner profile, an e-portfolio and training resources linked to the modules in the training path.
- To run pilot training programmes based on part or all of the training path.
- To evaluate the pilots and revise the project tools in the light of them.
- To disseminate and exploit the results of the project nationally and internationally.

The revised map of competences

The original map of competences devised in the earlier ICT Skills project was based on a matrix with three axes:

- Seven guidance tasks, selected from a list of general guidance competences developed by the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (Repetto, 2008). These comprised: assessment; educational guidance; career development; counselling; information management; consultation and co-ordination; research and evaluation; and placement.
- Three sets of competences which guidance practitioners might require for using ICT in guidance: as a *resource* within their direct relationship with the client; as a *medium* for communicating with the client (e.g. email, telephone, videoconferencing); and to *develop* ICT-based guidance materials.
- Eight ICT tools: email, chat, newsgroup, website, SMS, telephone, software, videoconferencing. It was envisaged that as other technologies emerged, they could be added to the matrix.

Competences were defined as being an amalgam of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

In adapting this map for the purposes of designing a training path, the ICT Skills 2 project sought a more parsimonious structure, rationalising and reducing the number of competences in order to minimise repetition and reduce the burden of assessment. In addition, the project introduced a number of further modifications:

- Recognising that the role of the guidance practitioner incorporated activities and tasks related not only to developing but also to managing the use of ICT in guidance.
- Acknowledging that the map needed to encompass new media and software with emerging applications in guidance. Web 2.0 technologies, for instance, have developed rapidly since the earlier project, and individual guidance practitioners are becoming increasingly aware that they need to accommodate the widening expectations of clients who use the social web in their everyday lives.
- Distinguishing four interrelated areas where the use of ICT can enhance the client's career learning and development. The analysis is taken from Lim & Tay (2003) who developed a framework for showing how ICT can be used to engage elementary-school students in higher-order thinking. The four areas are:
 - informing – the use of ICT to help clients access and make use of careers information, e.g. courses and jobs databases;
 - experiencing – the use of ICT to help clients learn from virtual experiences, e.g. online simulations;

- constructing – the use of ICT to help clients understand themselves and their situation, e.g. e-portfolios, online assessment tests;
- communicating – the use of ICT to help clients access their networks of support and make moves, e.g. video calls, emails, online application forms.

A summary of the revised map is presented in Box 2. The map has two units, six elements and 28 sub-elements. The complete training path based on this map consists of 30 training modules, where each module equates to 25 hours work and is rated at 30 ECTS credits (equivalent to 750 hours of study).

Box 2: Summary of the ICT Skills 2 map of ICT-related competences for guidance practitioners

Unit 1: Use ICT to deliver guidance

1.1: Use ICT media and software in the guidance process to meet clients' information needs

- 1.1.1: Select and use visual, audio and text-based information
- 1.1.2: Make visual, audio and text-based information for clients
- 1.1.3: Enable clients to select and use visual, audio and text-based information for themselves
- 1.1.4: Enable clients to create visual, audio and text-based information
- 1.1.5: Share information with other partners in clients' networks of support

1.2: Use ICT media and software in the guidance process to meet clients' experiential learning needs

- 1.2.1: Select and use ICT media and software that will give your clients access to virtual and simulated career experiences and situations
- 1.2.2: Create experiential learning activities and simulations for your clients using ICT
- 1.2.3: Enable clients to access virtual and simulated career experiences and situations using ICT media and software

1.3: Use ICT media and software in the guidance process to meet clients' constructivist learning needs

- 1.3.1: Select and use ICT media and software to assist clients in structuring and managing their career thinking and development
- 1.3.2: Create activities and resources using ICT media and software that will assist clients in structuring and managing their career thinking and development
- 1.3.3: Enable clients to use ICT media and software to assist them in structuring and managing their career thinking and development

1.4: Use ICT media and software in the guidance process to meet clients' communication needs

- 1.4.1: Select and use ICT media and software for establishing and maintaining client communications
- 1.4.2: Create activities and resources using ICT media and software for establishing and maintaining client communications
- 1.4.3: Enable clients to use ICT media and software to establish and maintain communications with you and others who can help them in their careers
- 1.4.4: Select appropriate channels for communicating and consulting with others who can support the client in the guidance process

Unit 2: Develop and manage the use of ICT in guidance

2.1: Develop your use of ICT-related guidance solutions

- 2.1.1: Use ICT media and software in different combinations to achieve guidance objectives
- 2.1.2: Integrate ICT and face-to-face approaches, where appropriate, to ensure an effective guidance process for clients
- 2.1.3: Identify the training and support needs of clients to enable their use of ICT in guidance
- 2.1.4: Carry out administrative tasks related to the use of ICT media and software
- 2.1.5: Monitor, review and evaluate ICT-related guidance solutions using ICT
- 2.1.6: Address your own training and support needs to enable you to use ICT in guidance

2.2: Manage your use of ICT-related guidance solutions in a service context

- 2.2.1: Identify opportunities and constraints in the service's use of ICT in guidance
- 2.2.2: Apply safeguards to protect clients using ICT for guidance purposes
- 2.2.3: Identify ways of ensuring fairness and inclusion in providing a guidance service using ICT
- 2.2.4: Maintain service records using ICT-based management information systems
- 2.2.5: Promote community awareness and take-up of the service's ICT-related guidance provision
- 2.2.6: Collaborate with professional colleagues in the delivery and development of ICT-related guidance
- 2.2.7: Collaborate with ICT developers in the organisation and development of ICT-supported client services

The role of the career guidance practitioner as envisaged in the map, therefore, is to combine the appropriate ICT media and software (phone, internet, email, etc.) with the appropriate guidance interventions (giving information, holding conversations, running small-group work, etc.) to enable the career learning and development processes of

informing, experiencing, constructing and communicating. This further involves taking into account the characteristics of the clients, the work setting and the nature of the service being offered, all of which have implications for delivery.

The map provided the basis not only for the training programmes but also for some other tools developed to support the programmes. These included an e-practitioner profile, a skills assessment tool to be used before and after the programme (where the 28 sub-elements were broken down further into 140 self-assessment items), and an e-portfolio.

The pilot training programmes

An important feature of the project has been the way in which the *medium* of the project has mirrored its *message*. The working methodology of the project, for example, combined six-monthly face-to-face transnational meetings with an online forum for day-to-day exchanges, supplemented by conferences on Skype as and when required. The forums proved to be an effective way of managing the 'work packages' or tasks of the project. Whichever partner was leading on a particular work package took responsibility for posting documents and messages in the section of the forum created for the purpose.

Similarly, in the training pilots, the choice between face-to-face and distance contact (text-only and/or audio and/or video), and the blending of different formats within the training provision, have in principle provided opportunities for reflecting upon how similar choices/blending might be applied (a) with guidance clients and (b) in professional/organisational practice with colleagues. An example was the view that face-to-face contact was important where possible for building relationships, which could then provide a base for continued distance contact (such issues in a guidance context might provide the basis for a future research project).

The UK pilot, based at the University of East London, was one of five training programmes. Each pilot was set up differently, and varied in terms of the number of participants, the sectors that participants came from, the balance of face-to-face and e-learning elements, and the models of assessment, accreditation and evaluation. Some of the key similarities and differences are summarised in Box 3. These differences of approach accommodated local needs and requirements, demonstrating that the map of competences was flexible and versatile enough to be used internationally.

Box 3: Similarities and differences between local pilot training programmes

Course structure	Most of the pilots adopted a modular structure for the course content based on the 28 sub-elements of the competence framework. The UK pilot opted for a smaller number of topics made up of groupings of sub-elements/modules.
Training content	The pilots in Milan and Santiago followed a training schedule which covered the whole of the framework. The pilot in Siena focused on selected elements of the framework for group training. The UK pilot also selected elements of the framework but personalised participants' learning further by enabling them to identify their own 'focus for development'.
Blended learning	The Romanian pilot was launched with three days of initial face-to-face training followed up by e-learning. The Milan pilot ran for four months with face-to-face training mostly on Saturdays; some practitioners participated in the weekend training by teleconference. The five-week UK pilot started and finished with a face-to-face session.
Assessment model	Several pilots used a competence-based model of assessment. The UK pilot re-framed the competence statements as learning outcomes.
Accreditation model	Milan and Santiago offered participants university accreditation. The UK pilot awarded certificates of participation pending further discussions about setting up an accredited course in the future.
Evaluation model	The Siena pilot used a pre- and post-programme self-assessment questionnaire which used a numerical scale to measure impact. The Santiago pilot opted for a quantitative evaluation based on a post-programme questionnaire with rating scales. The UK pilot adopted a reflective method based on an open-ended questionnaire and focus group.

Box 4: UK pilot topics	
Topic	Related training path modules
1. The range of ICT media and software relevant to organisation and client needs	1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.3.1, 1.4.1
2. Supporting clients' use of selected media and software (mediated) and enabling clients' independent use of resources (non-mediated within the guidance process)	1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4, 1.1.5, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 1.4.1, 1.4.2, 1.4.3, 1.4.4
3. Fairness and inclusion in access to media and software	2.2.3
4. Current and future developments in the use of ICT in guidance	2.2.6, 2.2.7
5. Methods for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the use of ICT in guidance	1.1.1, 1.1.5, 2.1.1,

The UK pilot comprised ten participants working mainly in the 14-19 sector (Connexions) but also in higher education and with adults. The aim was to offer a five-week course, equivalent to 25 study hours, based on a selection of modules in the training path (see Box 4).

Participants would have liked more time and several said that they would continue to use the platform after the pilot. They also made helpful suggestions about how the platform and the tools could be improved. They readily acknowledged the value and relevance of the learning and felt that ICT was an area that needed to be further addressed within the guidance community. The comments of one participant reflect this general feeling:

'Once I got into the project I really enjoyed it. I was not quite sure what to expect from the project when I volunteered to be involved and was secretly hoping for something new and wonderful as an ICT tool to help my in my work. The realisation as I undertook various tasks was that the idea was to become aware of what I already knew and the huge amount that I did not, to gain a better understanding of the range of ICT related things out there that I was aware of only in name (like wikis and blogs) and how much these were being used by some of the clients I could be working with and the potential effectiveness if I could incorporate these into my work which will be much more necessary as time moves on and technologies continue to move on at a pace.'

Issues arising from the UK pilot and from the project

The professional formation of guidance practitioners

A key issue for the project has been how to ensure that the ideas and resources created by the project have an influence on the professional formation of career guidance practitioners at both national and European levels. In the UK, for example, the two units created by the ICT Skills 2 project lend themselves to being incorporated into an initial professional development framework for

guidance practitioners or to being used in continuing professional development contexts in various ways. They could, for instance, be used to create a specialist, stand-alone qualification in the use of ICT in guidance; or they could be used in the design of a postgraduate module as part of a wider qualification such as a Master's degree in career guidance.

Until now, professional development frameworks and occupational standards for career guidance practitioners have regarded the acquisition of ICT skills as a discrete area of technical competence. Separating it out as a core or foundation competence allows ICT to be marginalised as a bolted-on skill rather than one which permeates and is an integral part of all other competences. Arguably it should be viewed as a transversal competence.

Far from being an occasionally relevant tool, ICT is a powerful medium through which career guidance practice can be transformed. Some advisers are still ambivalent about this. Issues of motivation, confidence and vision affect the take-up by individuals of new technologies in guidance, as does lack of clarity about what effective practice in ICT-mediated career guidance looks like in guidance services. Recognition of the strategic role of ICT in powering change in the career guidance field is beginning to be recognised in a number of countries (Watts, in preparation), but it must also be reflected in the provision of wider training in ICT-related skills for practitioners.

From 'provider-led' to 'user-led' guidance services

Discussions with participants in the UK pilot highlighted the tension between 'provider-led' and 'user-led' guidance service design (see Box 5). Young people, in particular, have a fluency in using the 'social web' which is not matched by guidance practitioners at large. Not only are individual practitioners involved in a game of 'catch up' but some services are lagging behind in adopting innovative service delivery models. This is partly linked to uncertain policy-making at different levels but also to a lack of evidence-based practice about the relative effectiveness of different e-guidance approaches.

Box 5: 'Provider-led' and 'user-led' services		
	Provider-led services	User-led services
Accessibility of the service	Opening hours that are convenient for the provider, typically Monday-Friday, 9.00-5.00	Extended opening hours, into evenings and weekends
Location of the service	In provider-owned spaces, e.g. careers centre	In shared spaces, e.g. on the Web, in shopping centres
Use of ICT	Supportive, e.g. e-mail, information databases, matching programmes, record-keeping and tracking	Transformative, e.g. instant messaging and texting, user-generated content, networking, paperless

Return on investment

The use of ICT in guidance raises important issues about impact, productivity and return on investment. The cost of training staff and providing ICT-based services has to be set against the comparative cost of providing traditional services as well as any additional benefits related to access. This is a relatively little-addressed area in the UK and one which would benefit from further research (Watts & Dent, 2007; Barnes, 2008; Sampson, 2009).

The European impulse and the dissemination and exploitation of results

A number of European policies and initiatives have provided a strong measure of support for enhancing career guidance based in part on developing the potential of ICT both as a medium and as a resource for guidance. These include the establishment of a Lifelong Guidance Expert Group (2000), the issuing of two Council of Ministers resolutions (2004 and 2008) and the setting up of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (2007). These developments have raised the policy profile of career guidance and have made it more important that projects such as ICT Skills 2 disseminate and exploit their results.

The ICT Skills 2 partners are actively pursuing the idea of creating new partnerships among themselves and with

new partners to disseminate and exploit the results of the project at both national and European levels. Added impetus for this came from participants in the pilots who indicated that they would have liked to extend the use of the international room on the Moodle platform and to meet participants and trainers from other countries face-to-face. Such collaboration over training has become more feasible since the introduction of the European Training Credits Framework.

In the UK, national actions taken so far have included initial contacts with ENTO, the body which develops individuals in the workplace through the use of national occupational standards, and with Lifelong Learning UK, which is reviewing the qualifications for career guidance practitioners.

The ICT Skills 2 project has overlapped at least partially with a number of related European projects (see Box 6). Concerted efforts have been made to achieve synergies with these projects. Various factors have helped to support these links including personnel and organisations common to more than one project, the use of existing international professional networks and the enhanced emphasis of national and European policy-makers on achieving improved dissemination and exploitation of results.

Box 6: Some related European projects
<i>European Accreditation Scheme (EAS)</i> (EAS, 2008). This EU-funded project (2006-08) involved 40 organisations/associations with the aim of improving professional qualifications and identifying minimum occupational standards for guidance practitioners. The project identified a number of competences for assessment that were common to all tasks that a practitioner might be expected to undertake, one of which was 'use ICT for guidance purposes'. This approach to embedding the use of ICT in all guidance activities is consistent with the ICT Skills 2 methodology. The additional detail provided by the ICT Skills 2 competence framework enables training providers to plan a comprehensive programme of professional learning and development activities for guidance practitioners.
<i>European Career Guidance Certificate (ECGC)</i> . This EU-funded project (2007-09) has ten partners and is led by Melius, the co-ordinator of the ICT Skills 2 project. The aim is to develop a standardised and internationally transferable certification system for career guidance practitioners. The ECGC partners have built on the MEVOC project and on ICT Skills 1 and 2 in carrying out their project.

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Professionalising career guidance – practitioner competences and qualification routes in Europe (CEDEFOP, 2009). This survey of the variability of training provision for career guidance staff across Europe proposes a competence framework which could be used flexibly to achieve greater consistency in training provision for such staff. Consistent with the EAS approach, this report identifies the ability to use ‘information and communication technologies’ as one of six foundation competences. Trainees and their trainers and assessors are able to identify ways in which ICT could be used to demonstrate the performance of other client interaction and supporting competences. The ICT Skills 2 framework complements this approach very well. In a sense, it reverses the perspective by offering a more explicit focus on the applied ICT skills needed to transform career guidance practice. It foregrounds the use of ICT to support the development of e-guidance and blended guidance solutions.

eguidance and e-government services (egos). This project (2008-11) is co-funded by the European Commission and involves 22 partner organisations from four countries. It aims to provide e-guidance to all-age clients in their homes over the internet and from indoor and outdoor kiosks in public centres and remote areas. E-guidance practitioners will be trained using the ICT Skills 2 competence framework, self-assessment tool, e-portfolio and e-learning platform.

What next?

The transformation of the professional development of career guidance practitioners is far from complete. Several options have been considered at the end of the ICT Skills 2 project for continuing the developments that are under way. The project’s open-source platform will continue to be hosted by one of the partners, making it accessible to partners and guests. It is also likely in the case of the UK pilot that the content will be transferred to the University of East London’s own e-learning platform as and when an accredited course is developed in the future. Several partners are interested in establishing multi-lateral agreements with each other and to collaborate on a new project (ICT Skills 3?) which would enhance training and accreditation, ideally including the involvement of some new partners.

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Policy issues relating to the use of ICT in lifelong guidance

A.G. Watts

A paper presented to the Sixth European Conference on e-Guidance, as part of a common plenary session with a Plenary Meeting of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, held at Riga, Latvia, on 17 September 2009

Introduction

This morning's discussions represent an exciting intersection between two important initiatives in supporting the development of lifelong guidance within Europe. One is the series of ad hoc conferences on the use of ICT in guidance, of which the event that started yesterday and will conclude today is the sixth. The other initiative is the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, whose fifth Plenary Meeting starts today.

I plan to say a little about the origins and nature of both initiatives. I will then outline some of the ways in which ICT has been addressed in ELGPN activities to date. Next, I will explore some of the ways in which the transformational potential of ICT is being addressed in a number of all-age services that I regard as being at the cutting edge of current service-delivery development. Finally, I will discuss a few topical issues emerging from these and other case-studies.

The European conferences on ICT in guidance

The first European conference on ICT in guidance was held at Brussels in 1985. This was followed by Cambridge in 1989 (with a teleconference link with a simultaneous conference held in the USA), by Nürnberg in 1992, by Dublin in 1996, and by Gothenburg in 2001. Each has been an autonomous event, but with an element of continuity to enhance their quality and impact.

In the course of the six conferences, the focus of our attention has shifted. In the first three, the main focus was on computer-aided guidance systems, developed by publicly-funded projects or by commercial providers, for guidance services to make available to their clients. In the Dublin conference of 1996, the main focus shifted to the Internet, but mainly still with national or even international websites, and how – in comparison with the previous computer-aided systems – they could be made available to end-users much more immediately and accessibly.

Then in Gothenburg in 2001, the focus moved to the digital era, in which the hitherto separate analogue streams of the computer, television and telephone were increasingly merging. This enabled a wider range of

technologies to be considered in a more integrated way. It also meant that attention was now paid to ICT not just as a *resource* for counsellors and clients to use, but also as a *medium* through which direct counsellor-client interactions could be conducted – whether synchronously (e.g. telephone) or asynchronously (e.g. email).

Now, in 2009, this sixth conference needs to shift at least part of its focus once again, to take account of Web 2.0 technology and its potential for social networking. I will make a few brief comments on this later.

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that while the focus of attention has changed, the core underlying issue has remained much the same. In a paper I presented at the first conference in Brussels in 1985, I suggested that ICT could be seen in three ways: as a tool, as an alternative, or as an agent of change (Watts, 1986). In my view, this remains the key policy issue. Policy-makers have often tended to view it in one of the first two guises: either as a supplement to existing services or as a potentially cheaper substitute for such services. But the dramatic technological changes I have mentioned greatly increase the potential of ICT for transforming the nature of guidance services and the ways in which they are delivered. I will indicate later in the paper some examples of the ways in which this potential is being addressed, and some issues which this poses.

The ELGPN

The roots of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) can be traced back to the historic meeting of the European Council at Lisbon in March 2000, which declared the European Union's aspiration to become 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based society in the world' by the year 2010. Engagement in lifelong learning was acknowledged as one of the key ways through which this goal could be achieved. The Commission's subsequent Communication on Lifelong Learning (EC, 2001) emphasised the key role of lifelong access to guidance in this respect.

The Communication included a recommendation that a European Guidance Forum be established. In the event, this was deferred, and instead the Commission established an Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance. This group operated from 2002 to 2007, and provided a focal point for a number of significant developments. In particular, it developed common reference tools for use by member-states on the aims and principles of lifelong guidance

provision, criteria for assessing quality, and key features of a lifelong guidance system: these were designed to encourage convergence of guidance delivery systems. The reference tools were included in the policy handbook published jointly with OECD (OECD/EC, 2004).

The Expert Group also played an important role in fostering a Resolution of the EU Council of Education Ministers passed under the Irish Presidency in 2004. Particularly significant was its strong affirmation of a proactive approach, under which use of guidance services was to be positively promoted. The Resolution stated that: 'Services need to be available at times and in forms which will encourage all citizens to continue to develop their skills and competences throughout their lives, linked to changing needs in the labour market.' It added: 'Such services need to be viewed as an active tool, and individuals should be positively encouraged to use them.' This is a crucial statement, which potentially places extending access to services through ICT at the heart of the policy discourse.

The Expert Group did much valuable work. Its chief weakness, however, was that it was not representative of all the member-states, and therefore had difficulties in translating its efforts into effective action at member-state level. The Commission, recognising these limitations, indicated its willingness to support the development of a voluntary European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network which would be led by the member-states themselves and would also be open to candidate and European Economic Area countries. The member-states agreed to adopt this suggestion, and the Network was established in 2007.

The ELGPN was given formal recognition in a further Resolution of the Council of Education Ministers passed under the French Presidency in 2008. This set the agenda for the Network's current two-year programme, which includes four major Work Packages:

- Career management skills (WP1). What are the skills and competences which are needed for career development, at different stages? Should the development of these skills and competences be the main goal of lifelong guidance services? How can they best be developed? How can their development be addressed in the training of guidance practitioners and teachers?
- Access (WP2). How can citizens' access to lifelong guidance be extended? What is the role of technology in this respect, and of marketing of services? How can effective balances be struck between universal services available to all and targeted services addressed to those with distinctive and pressing needs?

- Quality (WP4). How is the quality of lifelong guidance services best assured? Could a common EU quality-assurance framework be created? How can a stronger evidence base for such quality assurance be developed, including better impact measures?
- Co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms in guidance practice and policy development (WP3). A number of participating countries have set up national guidance forums and similar co-ordination mechanisms (see CEDEFOP, 2008). What are the key roles of such mechanisms? How can their links with policy development be refined?

The relationship between these four themes is outlined in Figure 1. In brief, WP3 (co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms) addresses the policy process; WP2 (access) and WP4 (quality) examine two key cross-sectoral policy issues; WP1 (career management skills) addresses the sought citizen outcomes; and the other part of WP4 (impact measures) addresses the sought policy outcomes.

In addition, as indicated in Figure 2, there are two Task Groups, which operate transversally across the thematic activities of the Work Packages. The first is concerned with monitoring EU education/training and employment policy development from a lifelong guidance perspective. The second is concerned with promoting synergy between EU-funded projects on lifelong guidance and establishing closer links between these projects and public policy both at EU level and within member countries.

Attention paid by ELGPN to ICT

The present event is of particular relevance to the work of the second ELGPN Task Group, in two respects. First, the conference on e-guidance has been the result of discussions within an EU-funded project on ICT skills for guidance counsellors, as part of its programme both for dissemination and for building synergies with other projects related to the use of ICT skills in guidance. Second, today's programme is concerned directly with addressing some of the policy issues raised by these projects. Thus the event reflects both parts of the Task Group's brief.

The ICT skills project addresses a key policy issue. If guidance practitioners are to transform their services to take advantage of the potential provided by ICT, it is crucial that they should be trained in ICT skills. The first ICT skills project developed a methodology for analysing the ICT-related guidance competences required by practitioners (Cogoi, 2005). This has been followed by a second project, just being completed, which has developed a training path based on a modification of this methodology. Both projects have been led by Aster in Italy; partners in the second project were from Italy, Romania, Spain and the UK. Synergies have been established with four other European

projects concerned with the training and accreditation of guidance practitioners, including the eGOS project which is a co-organiser of this event. In addition, strong attention has been paid to four aspects of so-called 'exploitation', which the project has helpfully distinguished:

- *Sustainability*: ensuring that the work of the project can be sustained in the partner countries beyond the project's life. This includes:
 - *Maintenance*: sustaining the training provision trialled in the project pilots.
 - *Multiplication*: ensuring that the work of the project is adopted by other training providers within the partner countries.
 - *Mainstreaming*: ensuring that the work of the project is reflected in relevant professional standards, accreditation structures etc. within the partner countries.
- *Transferability*: ensuring that the benefits of the project can be transferred to other European countries.

In all of these respects, the project has positive outcomes to report. It thus provides an example of good practice for ELGPN's Task Group 2 to draw upon.

In addition to this, all four of the ELGPN Work Packages have paid some attention to the role of ICT. In relation to WP1 on career management skills, for example, a Reflection Note on the initial discussions has pointed out that the opportunities being provided by ICT are increasingly being exploited to change the usual delivery paradigm. It refers, as an example, to the way in which Careers Scotland is making good use of webcasts, videoconferencing and social networking (such as Facebook) to ensure 24/7 access (Sultana, 2009a, p.9).

In the case of WP4, ICT has not been given specific attention in the papers that have emerged so far. But important issues for WP4 include how quality-assurance systems need to be adapted to apply to ICT-based services, and how evidence of their relative impact in relation to more conventional face-to-face services can be collected.

The issue of ICT is perhaps of particular importance in relation to the work of WP2 on access. In the Briefing Note based on a SWOT analysis carried out by some of the WP2 participants, ICT-based approaches were listed by all respondents as the key tools for extending access (Akkök, 2009a). The Reflection Note on WP2's first meeting (Akkök, 2009b) indicated that new technology – in the form of web-based services, telephone services, databases and e-guidance – had great potential for making access both more possible and cheaper, generating innovative and flexible service delivery linked to self-access and self-help

modes. But it also noted that care was needed not to reduce everything to self-help. Qualified staff were required to support access to information and making good use of it. Also, it pointed out, excessive use of ICT could reinforce access problems for some groups in society that were already at risk of social exclusion.

Finally, ICT has also emerged, perhaps more unexpectedly, as a significant theme in relation to the work of WP3 on co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms. The Reflection Note on WP3's first meeting (Watts, 2009b) indicated that an important issue arising from the Slovenian case-study (which provided one of the focal points of the meeting) was the integrative potential of ICT. This case-study is of particular relevance to our discussions here, and therefore merits more detailed attention.

The integrative potential of ICT

In Slovenia, a common web portal is being developed by a number of partner organisations representing different sectors of education, training and employment. Entitled 'My Choice', it brings together a number of different databases, with a 'front end' constructed from the viewpoint of the user. This is based on an acknowledgement that much of the information that users seek in constructing their careers is about pathways across these different sectors. Sector-based provision does not therefore address their needs.

The web portal is jointly funded and jointly owned by the partner organisations. Their formal agreement includes attention to updating and sustainability. Some of the development funding has been provided by the EU, through DG Employment. The portal is being designed initially to address the needs of young people, but within a lifelong context. It includes a personal portfolio, which is password-protected. Attention is being given to strengthening cross-paths across the databases (on, for example, the vocational implications of educational choices).

The main merits of this approach are three-fold:

- That it shares costs.
- That it places the needs of the user at the centre of service design, and is therefore more likely to attract users.
- That in both of these respects, each partner gains added value from the involvement of the others.

There might be three levels at which such a system could be developed:

- Boundary-drawing: avoiding overlaps.
- Co-ordinated: with a common front-end.

- Integrated: designed on the basis of common principles, with strong cross-paths across the databases.

The potential implications of such a system could however be much more extensive, especially if:

- All pupils were introduced to, and encouraged to use, the web portal as part of their school curriculum, including setting up their e-portfolio.
- Training was provided to all career guidance staff on how to make effective use of the web portal and incorporate it in their service provision.
- The websites included 'hot links' to interactive e-counselling support through telephone, web chat or email (in the Slovenian case, this is currently limited to a few opportunities for email contact).
- They also included strong references to supportive face-to-face career counselling resources wherever they existed, thus making the lifelong guidance system transparent to the user.
- This was linked to jointly agreed quality standards (only provision meeting these standards was listed).
- The quality standards were linked to a brand which provided a basis for joint marketing.

If such steps were taken, ICT would be acting not just as a tool but also as a powerful agent of change in the development of a more integrated lifelong guidance system. It could thus be the means through which service providers could transform their separate, sector-based and provider-centred provision into a user-centred lifelong guidance system, with the website (including the user's e-portfolio) conceptually at the centre, supported by co-ordinated sectoral provision. A national forum or other co-ordination mechanism could help to realise its potential in this respect.

The integrative potential of ICT is also being explored, for example, in Turkey. Here a web-based all-age career information system has been in the process of development, based on close co-operation between a number of governmental and social partners plus other stakeholders. A memorandum of understanding has been signed defining the roles of different parties in sharing their databases and contributing to the updating and sustainability of the system. This memorandum could provide the seeds for a national forum. Funding for the system has so far, however, been provided by a donor initiative: a key issue is how to sustain it once this funding ceases.

ICT as an agent of strategic change

For further case-studies, I want to draw upon three all-age careers services which I have reviewed over the last few years, in Scotland (Watts, 2005), Wales (Watts, 2009) and

New Zealand (Watts, 2007). These three services represent, in my view, the three leading examples of such all-age services in the world. They are of particular interest in relation to strategic change because one of their strengths is that they are able to think more broadly and more systematically about the nature and applicability of their professionalism, the allocation of their resources across the whole population, and the links between career guidance and public policy, than is the case with age-segmented services, particularly those that are embedded in particular service sectors (e.g. schools and colleges). Working in close partnership with other guidance providers (including schools, colleges, universities, public employment services, employers, the voluntary and community sector, and the private sector), they can provide a professional spine for a lifelong guidance system (Watts, in press). In my reviews, all emerged very strongly in relation to the benchmarks provided by the OECD Career Guidance Policy Review (OECD, 2004), suggesting that such all-age services may make it easier to develop a strong a coherent lifelong guidance system than in countries which do not have a spine of this kind. In all three cases, the use of ICT as an agent of strategic change is currently being given significant attention.

Careers Wales indicates an existing example of some of the ways in which services might develop if ICT is used strategically, along the lines I have suggested in relation to Slovenia. From an early stage it viewed its web-based services, Careers Wales On-Line (CWOL), as being core to its service delivery. This includes a variety of databases and career planning tools. The databases cover educational, occupational and labour market information. At the heart of the site is an e-portfolio, designed to enable users to record, review and reflect on their career and learning journey. The vision, as declared in the CWOL brochure, is 'to enable everyone in Wales to develop their career and learning skills through their own e-portfolio and supporting site content'.

Of particular significance is the fact that while CWOL has been designed as a guidance tool, it is currently being adopted as the key administrative tool for supporting the structure of Learning Pathways that is being introduced for all 14-19-year-olds. Learners will have to make their choices through the system; schools and networks will then be able to download these choices into their management information systems, where they can use the data to support their timetabling.

This potentially places CWOL in particular and Careers Wales in general in a pivotal position. The vast majority of young people are likely in future to be using CWOL continuously between the ages of 14 and 19. Because it has been designed initially as a guidance tool rather than an administrative tool, it is learner-centred and user-friendly. Since their e-portfolio is housed there, potentially as the basis for sustaining their curriculum vitae, and including the individual's personal bank of relevant information resources, there is a chance that they will

continue to use it. In which case, it could genuinely become the basis for their lifelong career development, with their e-portfolio surrounded by other resources – including signposts to other Careers Wales services – that they can access for support. The key will be whether they regard their e-portfolio as something they own, and therefore want to maintain; or as something they associate with school and with obligation, and accordingly want to leave behind. In principle, however, it provides a strong base on which to build, especially if further ‘hooks’ can be developed to encourage them to use it post-19 (Watts, 2009a).

In the case of Scotland, the all-age service provided by Careers Scotland is currently being integrated with some other organisations into a new body called Skills Development Scotland. The new organisation is seeking to transform its services through investment in innovative technology. For individuals, the key goal is defined as being to foster career agility and career self-management skills. The route into self-management of lifelong learning is to be through a web-based resource entitled My Learning Space. This will include a variety of self-diagnostic tools and other resources, including an e-portfolio and access to a section termed My Learning Account, which will ultimately provide a single entry point to skills and learning funding across the skills and learning system – a further example of an administrative usage which can incentivise the use of a guidance resource. My Learning Space will be complemented by a resource to be called My Coach which will provide live, 24/7, person-to-person access to information, advice and guidance through a range of channels that will include the telephone, live internet, and face-to-face contact in learning centres and careers centres (Skills Development Scotland, 2009). The two resources are seen as being mutually supportive.

Broadly similar changes are under way in New Zealand. The aim is to extend the services to many more New Zealanders, and to do so on the basis of being cost-effective and providing value for money. The core goal is defined as being building or supporting ‘career literacy’, defined as ‘the ability for people to self-manage their careers in the future’. Effective use of ICT is seen as crucial to the strategy. The proposed delivery model is based on a shift in resource allocation over time from regional face-to-face activity to centralised web- and telephone-based personal services. The regional face-to-face activity will focus more strongly on building the career-development skills of others and providing guidance to those most in need.

Some issues

Five issues related to these various examples are worth noting.

First, the focus on what in Scotland is called ‘career agility’ and in New Zealand ‘career literacy’ has a clear link to the focus of ELGPN’s Work Package 1 on career management skills. Such skills need to be significantly developed in schools, and enhanced thereafter. Some policy-makers may be tempted to think that if this approach is adopted, it will obviate the need for personal one-to-one services. Experience suggests, however, that the reverse is the case: that one of the key career management skills is to know when and how to access such services – including ICT-mediated services. The result should be not the replacement of such services but enabling their usage to be more effective and more client-driven.

Second, ICT is clearly seen as critical to scaling up the supply of services on a cost-effective basis. This requires attention to productivity: achieving greater outputs from inputs (Watts & Dent, 2006). In these terms, an important distinction needs to be drawn between ICT-mediated counsellor-client interactions, through such media as the telephone, email and online chat, and standardised ICT-based resources like websites which can be repeatedly used by different users without additional resource costs (Watts, 2002).

Evidence from the UK suggests that well-designed websites may have the effect both of substantially increasing levels of usage, and of enabling use of counsellor time to be more selective and sophisticated. The impressive user volumes of the Careers Advice Service (formerly LearnDirect Advice) represent a particularly strong response to the EU Resolution’s injunction on access. It is interesting to note, however, that over recent years its numbers of web sessions have increased massively (to over 12 million web sessions a year), that its number of telephone sessions has reduced a little (from over a million a year to a little under a million), and that its telephone sessions are increasingly used for in-depth guidance rather than relatively straightforward information and advice (Watts & Dent, 2008).

Third, the telephone supported by callcentre technology remains an important and, in some countries, still significantly underdeveloped resource. A number of European countries are currently developing career guidance callcentres, or considering their development: these include Finland, France and Germany. A non-European country which is also exploring this at present is South Africa. One of the key arguments there has been that, while many people in disadvantaged communities do not have access to the web, most of them do have telephone access through the pervasive use of mobile phones (Walters *et al.*, 2009). For the same reason, some Public Employment Services in European countries (e.g. Spain) are giving or lending mobile phones to the unemployed in order to facilitate the dissemination of relevant information, and to help them to keep linked both

to their PES adviser and to potential employers (Sultana, 2009b). As mobile phones become multimedia devices able to transport not just voice but text, pictures, software programs, access to the internet, and anything else coded in digital format, they are increasingly taking over from stationary PCs and mobile laptops.

Fourth, the issue of whether the service structure for ICT-based services should be centralised or localised remains an important policy question. The trend seems to be towards centralisation, chiefly on grounds of cost and efficiency. This is the case in New Zealand, as noted earlier. It is also true in Wales, where four regional callcentres have been merged into one, on the basis that the cost-efficiency arguments outweighed those in favour of local knowledge. Nonetheless, in Wales some calls are transferred to locally-based services, thus building a sense of collective ownership of an integrated service (Watts, 2009).

Finally, a key issue for all services is how to utilise the new opportunities offered by Web 2.0 technology and social networking. The Scottish plan includes reference to using this technology to capture and make available up-to-date user-generated information. A number of sites in the UK and elsewhere already offer opportunities for people to converse with others in a similar situation to themselves, and/or those with experience of particular courses or occupations that they want to consider (Skills Commission, 2008). Good career guidance services have always seen part of their role as being to place their clients in contact with such resources. But the new technology enables such practices to be massively increased. More fundamentally, it challenges the power elements built into the traditional expert-client relationship, and – extended by the next generation of technological changes, beginning to be discussed as Web 3.0 technology – could significantly reshape this relationship in career guidance as in other fields.

Conclusions

The potential of ICT to act as an agent of transformational change is greater than ever before. Sampson (2009) has recently suggested that the two aspects of guidance service delivery with which the ELGPN is concerned – access and quality – might at times be in some tension with one another. He has argued that extending access is a social-justice issue, and that careers practitioners need to remodel their practices and their concepts of quality to take account of the needs not only of clients who come through the door, but of all citizens who need help with career choices, at whatever points through their lives. If the concept of lifelong guidance is to be converted into effective practice through public policy, ICT has a pivotal role to play.

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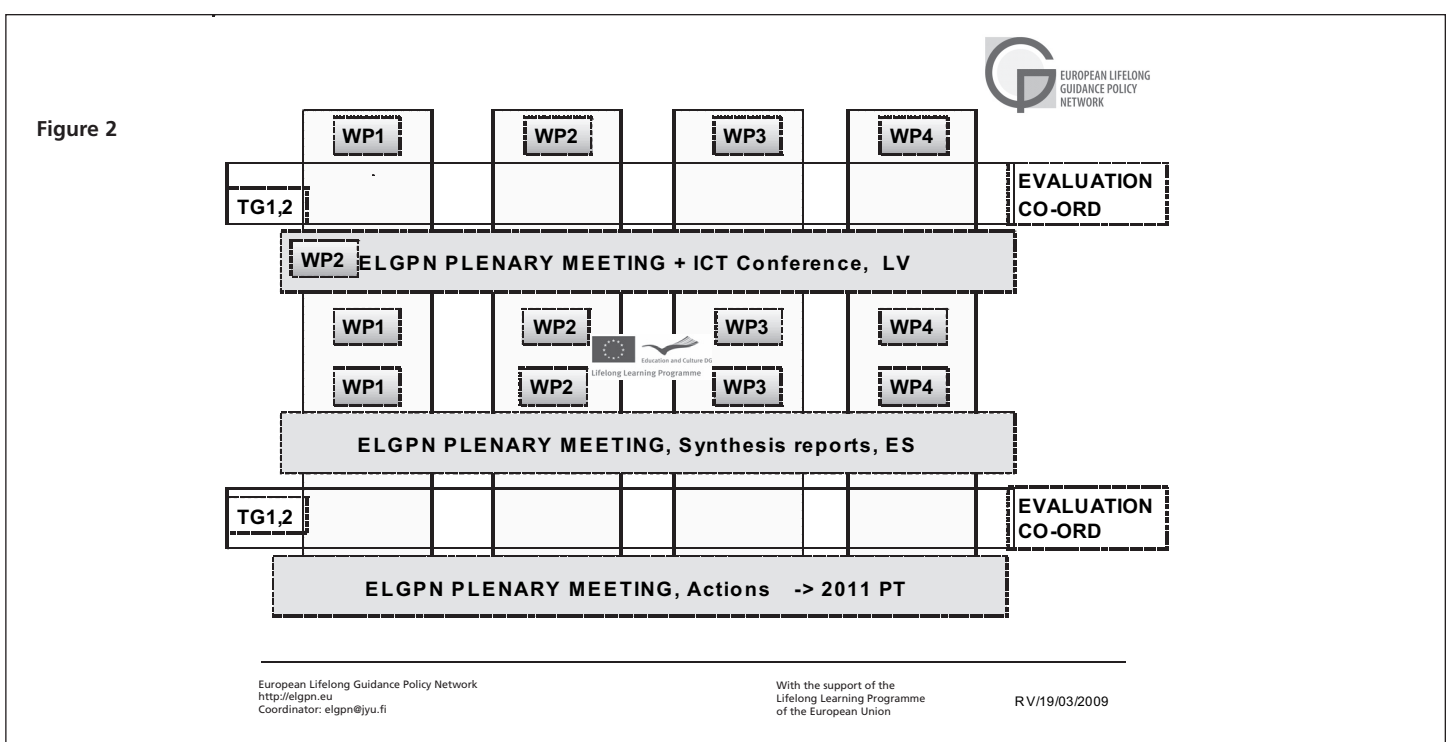
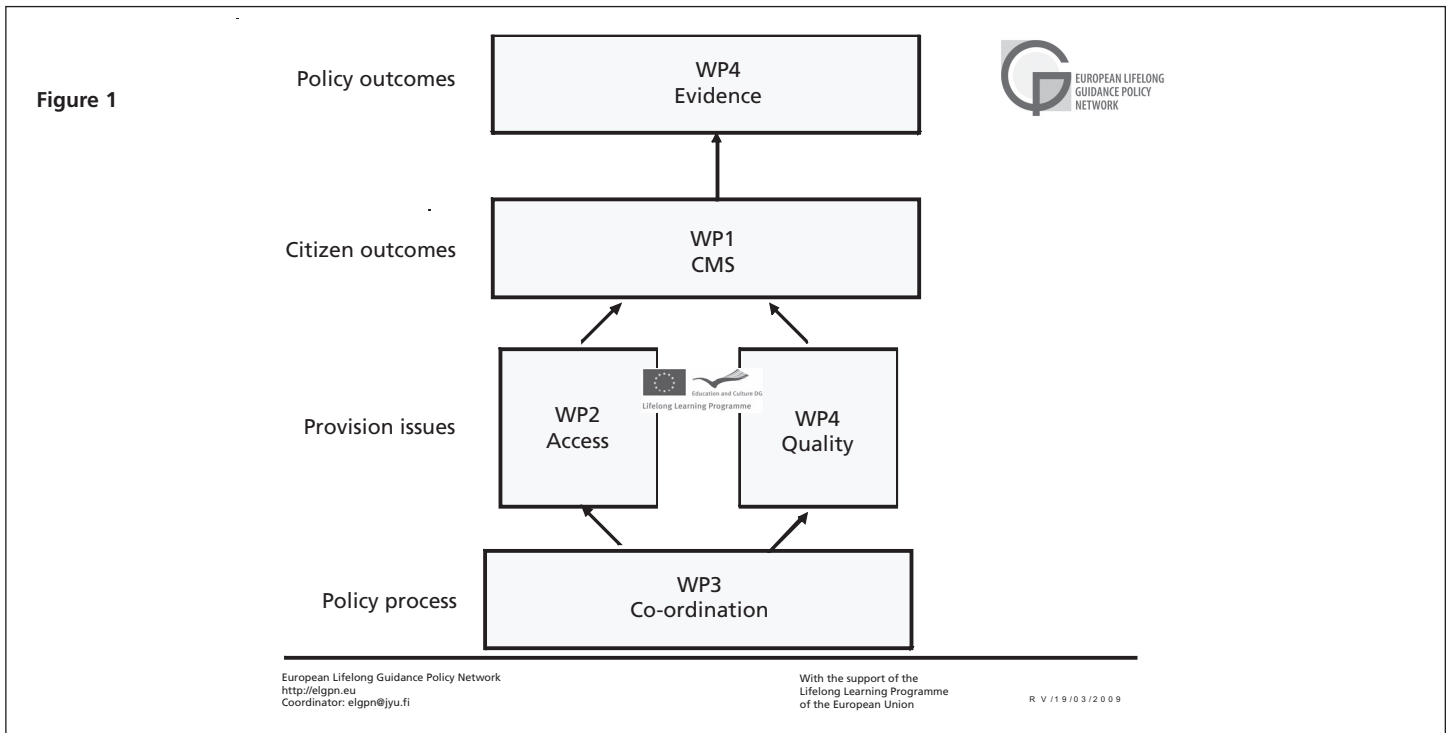
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Career education in Scotland – who’s minding the store?

Graham Allan

Introduction

Career education in Scottish secondary schools has received a great deal of attention in the last decade with the publication of numerous policies and guidelines (Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, 1997 & 1999; Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2001; Scottish Executive, 2002, 2004a, 2004b & 2007; Scottish Government, 2008a, 2008b & 2009). There has also been additional input to careers work in schools from Careers Scotland, the statutory provider of career guidance in Scotland, which employed dedicated enterprise in education (EiE) advisers to support schools in developing and sustaining their career programmes. Additional funding was also made available for schools through an initiative known as *Determined to Succeed* (Scottish Executive, 2002, 2003, 2004a & 2007). However we now appear to be moving from a period when careers work in schools had a high profile to one where it may have few supporters and will have to compete for attention in schools - hence the question, ‘who’s minding the store?’

The raised profile of career education

The *Determined to Succeed* (DtS) initiative was established to promote ‘enterprising learning and teaching, entrepreneurial learning, work-based vocational learning, and appropriately focused career education’ and substantial funding over recent years - £42m to 2006 and a further £44m to 2008 (Brownlow, in Semple, 2008) - has provided an additional impetus for schools to develop and run a range of enterprising and career related activities. Careers work in schools was also underpinned by two important national frameworks which provided schools with comprehensive guidelines on how to develop and evaluate their career related learning and education-industry links. The first of these documents, *Education Industry Links in Scotland – A National Framework* (Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, 1999), focused on the benefits of links between education and industry and identified a series of activities that could be developed to create a progressive programme in schools from age 5 to 18. The follow-up document, the *Career Education National Framework* (Learning and Teaching

Scotland, 2001) similarly identified activities on the DOTS model from age 5 to 18 and highlighted the need to both permeate career activities into the curriculum and to deliver additional discrete lessons:

‘The core career education programme will normally be provided through discrete career lessons and activities. However, these need to be supported by careers links to other parts of the curriculum. Career work is relevant to every department ...it is essential that links to the curriculum are clear’.

Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2001: 9

Careers Scotland responded to this policy push by developing *Career Box*, a series of lessons to support career education teaching, delivering in-service training to teachers and providing external expertise and consultancy (Careers Scotland, 2005). Howieson and Semple, writing in *Scottish Education* (Bryce and Humes, 2008), described this as a positive development: ‘*This has led to some increase in consistency and standardisation of provision, something which had been lacking previously*’ (2008: 455). Thus, by the end of the first decade of the 21st Century, Scotland appeared to have the makings of a coherent and progressive career and enterprise programme in place in its secondary schools, albeit still non-statutory in nature and subject to local variations in delivery.

Models of delivery

Career and enterprise education has been delivered in two ways in secondary schools in Scotland, through permeation into curricular subjects and through the provision of discrete career lessons – essentially no different to the rest of the UK (Watts, 2001; Barnes, 2002; Andrews, 2006; Semple, 2008). There was a good reason for this – no single approach was regarded as sufficient on its own to ensure effective delivery. Policy documents over the last 20 years understood this. The 1986 position paper on Guidance in Scottish schools (*More Than Feelings of Concern*) stated: ‘*The Committee (the Scottish Central Committee on Guidance) recognises the potential of careers education through the curriculum ... but does not believe that assisting pupils to make informed choices can be achieved simply by permeating the curriculum. There is a need for units timetabled for all pupils ... taught by members of staff with appropriate skills including members of the guidance team*’ (SCCG, 7.06).

The discrete delivery model has actually dominated delivery to date: ‘*The traditional approach has been to deliver career education as part of a rolling programme of Personal and Social Education (PSE), with a number of weeks devoted to career education ... Some schools had a*

discrete career education programme, and a very small number delivered career education through other subjects in the curriculum’ (Howieson and Semple in Bryce and Humes et al., 2008: 455). An OECD review of career guidance and public policy in 14 countries, including England, (OECD, 2004) found 3 delivery models - stand-alone, subsumed (ie included in PSE) and infused (into the curriculum) - but similarly maintained that separate provision is required:

‘Where career education is mandatory, its quality is easier to monitor in its stand-alone or subsumed forms. Within the infusion model, provision can be patchy, disconnected and often invisible to the student. Experience in Austria and Norway shows that the infusion model requires a high level of coordination and support to be effective. And it needs some separate provision where the students are helped to make personal sense of the bits and to pull them together’. OECD, 2004: 44

The new policy context

The above seems not to have been appreciated in the latest policy developments in Scotland which essentially envisage the delivery of career related activities solely through a permeated or infused model:

‘We will ensure that ... vocational learning, learning about the world of work and learning about the skills needed in the world of work [is] part of the curriculum, valued alongside other learning and not a separate experience perceived to be of lower value’. Scottish Government (2007)

‘Nationally we will ... embed enterprising approaches to learning across the curriculum (p9) ... This is the way we can ensure enterprise becomes part of a young person’s learning experience – across and within the curriculum ... the development of CfE [Curriculum for Excellence] empowers schools to ... embed entrepreneurial activities and enterprising learning and teaching practices within all areas of the curriculum ... making appropriate connections with the world of work within all subjects [and] ... continuing to make certain experiential entrepreneurial learning is embedded in the curriculum’.

Scottish Government, 2008a: 16-18

Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive, 2004b; Scottish Government, 2008b) is now the key driver of education in Scottish schools, the title illustrating the focus of schools on the ‘curriculum’, with all related activities, including, one must conclude, career and enterprise education, designed to contribute to the curriculum and to be delivered through the curriculum. Of the 8 curricular areas associated with CfE only one, Health and Wellbeing, has an explicit focus on career related learning:

‘young people should be equipped to explore different options for life beyond school and be supported so they can make successful transitions into work, education or training ... learning through health and wellbeing enables children and young people to make a successful move to the next stage of education or work’. Scottish Executive, 2004b

In their most recent publication on CfE (*Building the Curriculum 4: skills for learning, skills for life, skills for work*) the Scottish Government (2009) has elaborated further on how it envisages delivery of these cross-cutting skills through the curriculum but the proposals are still rather vague:

‘The skills for learning, life and work for Curriculum for Excellence referred to in this document are often cross-cutting and transferable across the whole range of curriculum areas, contexts and settings (p5) ... By talking about and planning their own learning from early years onwards, children and young people will develop the skills to: identify, discuss and reflect on their own evidence of learning, use appropriate language for self-evaluation, take responsibility for managing their own learning, help to plan their own next steps in learning and set their own learning goals, make informed choices and decisions about their future learning. They are skills that can be developed by all learners, whenever and wherever they are learning (p13) ... Enterprising learning and teaching specific activities and tasks across the curriculum and the ethos of the establishment – in partnership with employers – enable young people to transfer skills developed through subject-specific contexts into the world of work’ (p13)

Scottish Government, 2009

The above are aspirational aims which envisage the development of career related skills across and through the curriculum but do not explain how this will be achieved.

So who’s now minding the store?

While it remains the responsibility of local authorities and schools to interpret how they implement these policies the danger is that if career related provision is to be delivered solely through the curriculum it will be compromised: it has always been a contested concept (see Harris, 1999) and its loose relationship to school subjects simply reinforces this. Remember too that in Scotland career education is non-statutory. This is in contrast to England where there has been a statutory requirement to provide career education in schools under the Education Act of 1997 and where the latest policy document (*Quality, Choice and Aspiration*) published by the DCSF in October 2009, explicitly provides for an ‘IAG Guarantee’ to ‘high quality programmes of careers education’ for all young people up to age 18

underpinned by Ofsted inspection focused on 12 Quality Standards for Young People's IAG (DCSF, 2007) and six Principles of impartial careers education (DCSF, 2009b). Again this can be contrasted with Scotland where the HMle (the schools inspectorate) are moving to a very different inspection regime to mirror the all-encompassing *Curriculum for Excellence* and inspections are likely to only tangentially touch on career related learning. From January 2008 inspections in Scotland have focused on 30 quality indicators in the document 'How Good is Our School?' (HMle, 2007) only one of which could be used to evaluate the quality of career related learning and education, namely, indicator 5.8, on care, welfare and development. With the drive to make career related learning part of the curriculum through DtS (mainly unsuccessfully and suffering from short term funding) and CfE (where it is essentially subsumed within a health and wellbeing agenda) there is a very real danger that the progress made over the past decade which was highlighted earlier in this paper will be undermined. Who is going to be minding the store?

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Scotland: developing a post-graduate qualification in career guidance and development for the 21st century

Pat Pugh and Jackie Sadler

Introduction

In 2005, Careers Scotland, now Skills Development Scotland, the national provider of all-age career and employability services in Scotland, decided to conduct a review of training provision for career guidance. This arose primarily from the changing nature of the career guidance provision as a consequence of its responsiveness to policy drivers, such as establishing the all age-strategy; enhancing services such as redundancy counselling and enterprise activities; and developing the career planning skills of young people to equip them for lifelong career management.

Careers Scotland, wanted to ensure that the training available was appropriate for this changing context and that the training prepared students better to enter the working environment. It was also particularly important for the more remote areas of the country such as the Highlands and Islands that those living outside central Scotland were able to train through distance learning. The lack of access to initial training courses in these areas was impacting negatively on staff recruitment and retention: trained staff from the central area tended to return to there, even if initially working elsewhere in the country. As it needed to deliver services to all the communities in the country, the organisation also wanted to increase the diversity of the background of applicants.

The review, guided by a Steering Committee with wide representation from stakeholders and professional associations, commissioned a wide-ranging feasibility study funded by the Scottish Executive. The consensus which emerged indicated that a broader two-year qualification at postgraduate level was required.

The importance of being clear about the learning outcomes required from a new qualification prompted the drafting of a set of appropriate benchmark statements, outlining the competencies required of those completing professional initial training courses in career guidance in Scotland. Produced by Careers Scotland following a consultation process including Scottish Career Guidance Course Centres and other stakeholders in the Scottish guidance community, the Subject Benchmark Statement

was endorsed by the Institute of Career Guidance (ICG), the Scottish Executive and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for higher education in Scotland. The Subject Benchmark Statement was used to inform the development of the new postgraduate qualification in Career Guidance and Development. A contract to develop the qualification was awarded to a consortium of three course centres (the University of the West of Scotland at that time known as Paisley University (the lead institution); Strathclyde University and Napier University). An expert reference group, comprising employers and stakeholders from across the UK, was established to assist this process, for example by advising on the scope and content.

The structure of the qualification

From this process, a two-year programme was drafted and agreed: year one leads to a postgraduate diploma (120 Masters-level credit points) and the award of the Qualification in Career Guidance and Development by the Institute of Career Guidance, and the second employment-based year (a notional probationary year) leads to a Masters award (an additional 60 Masters-level credit points). Since the programme at Diploma level confers a professional qualification (the QCGD), none of the modules are optional. However, it includes a lot of emphasis on individualised learning and there is flexibility in the choice of placement, which allows for some customisation. Similarly the flexible structure of the MSc programme and the employment setting in year two allow for more specialisation.

The review identified a need to increase students' experience and understanding of the workplace. The postgraduate programme was therefore enhanced by the inclusion of employment-based 'practice tutors' to mentor students and periods of work experience in different work settings. In addition full-time students undertake six weeks of work experience placements in three blocks in career guidance settings during the first year of study, as follows:

- a one-week induction block in October at a careers centre to introduce students to the work environment at an early stage and confirm suitability and commitment;
- a two-week block in November, (later at one course centre) possibly at Careers Scotland with a focus on achieving specific learning outcomes in their learning plan; and

- a three-week block in March in a different setting, such as Further or Higher Education.

During the development phase, part of the funding was used to employ an e-developer to customise the universities' virtual learning environment (VLE) (Blackboard) to enable the programme to be delivered through e-learning.

The new qualification was received particularly positively by the validation committees of the universities, in part because of the employer participation in its development and the collaborative nature of the work, but also because of its innovative features.

Distance and e-learning

All learners are expected to use the VLE, and this enables those taking advantage of the distance learning option to benefit from the experiences of others for example through discussion forums. Students use the facility to access course materials linked to the modules on which they are enrolled and to follow up references and library links. In addition, distance learners participate through on-line discussions and telephone contact with their Personal Tutor at the University and their work place Practice Tutor.

It has become evident that distance learners still appreciate the opportunity to meet face-to-face and, consequently for the students employed by Careers Scotland, each module is supplemented by a two-day workshop run by the University of West Scotland. These are either held on campus or in-house. An evaluation of the student experience regarding distance learning has been carried out and this mode of delivery has been judged successful. Some issues reported, however, include a sense of isolation and some difficulty getting the required support of colleagues who are not familiar with this mode of learning. Aspects appreciated by students included quick and easy access to materials on the VLE, links to other web sites and to the on-line journal collection and the supply of 'readers'!

E-learning is also being used to support the development of reflective practitioners through personal development planning (PDP). For example, the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) took a strategic decision that all undergraduate programmes would by 2008 provide support in personal development planning through the use of an 'e-portfolio'. The decision was also taken by the career guidance programme that learners on the postgraduate course in Career Guidance and Development would use the password protected e-portfolio, where they document reflections from their experiences and their learning, which enables them to share these with others such as tutors, Practice Tutors and employers. There is also a dedicated module on reflective guidance practice. The initial emphasis has been on creating a fairly simple system

which all learners can use rather than making this too sophisticated, but with the intention of developing its potential further.

The role of the Practice Tutor

The Practice Tutor acts as 'the expert in the field' supporting the learners by offering a workplace perspective. During the first pilot year of the programme (2007/8), sixty staff members from Careers Scotland volunteered for this role. Those undertaking this role tended to have assessment or supervisory responsibilities, so had already developed some mentoring skills. Other e-learner students employed in the FE sector and by the Independent Schools Careers Organisation (ISCO) also have access to Practice Tutors.

The Practice Tutors were briefed at the outset and have attended development days, during the first year of delivery, run jointly by Careers Scotland and university staff. It is hoped in the future to arrange more formal training for them, possibly by customising an existing course on 'Peer Support and Supervision.' Practice Tutors, as this is a very new role, are still unsure of their full role and responsibilities and consequently of the level of support to offer students. Contact between Course Tutors and Practice Tutors could also be enhanced.

It was envisaged that learners would take responsibility for contacting their Practice Tutor about once per fortnight, using e-mail, by phone or in person. This would enable them to discuss details of assignments and for the Practice Tutor to point the student in the right direction, but in a way to encourage self-reliance rather than dependency. In certain circumstances and in consultation with the student, Practice Tutors may become involved with assessment at the workplace, but it is recognised that this changes the dynamics of the relationship with the learner. It is also hoped that the involvement of Career Scotland, and now Skills Development Scotland, staff in this way will facilitate the development of a professional discourse and more reflective practice with the organisation itself, as staff come into contact with new ideas and existing approaches are challenged. Developing the reflective practitioner was a key aim of Careers Scotland and remains one with the successor organisation Skills Development Scotland. A survey of Practice Tutors was carried out in July 2008 to identify issues arising from the first pilot year and plan for the future.

Key findings included a variation in frequency and extent of contact with, and support given to, students. This was often influenced by the level of dependency exhibited by individual students and their stage of study. Contact tended to be less frequent as students became more able to cope with the demands of the course:

**'Started off once a month but no contact recently'.
'Sporadic since January as student needed less support'.**

All Practice Tutors used email communications with students with almost half of those who responded also communicating by telephone. Face – to - face meetings varied significantly often due to the degree of geographical proximity of students to Course Centres.

The majority of Practice Tutors surveyed felt that there could have been more contact with university tutors particularly regarding progress of students on the course and this was identified as a key area for development to increase the added value of the triangular relationship of the student, Personal/Course Tutor and Practice Tutor:

'We need more awareness of the other work students are doing in order to support them better'.

'Would like to be alerted to potential problems with the student in advance'.

Practice Tutors believed that they were most effective in supporting and advising the student and completing relevant assessment reports about the student. This was followed by effectiveness in assessing students (where this happened). Practice Tutors felt that they were less effective at planning inputs and using the Individual Learning Plan, probably as this was a new role, and sometimes found it difficult allocating time to the Practice Tutor role.

In general, Practice Tutors enjoyed mentoring their students and felt that they had gained personally and professionally from this role. It is to be hoped that the role of Practice Tutor will be embedded and developed over time. This issue of accreditation, and related recognition, of Practice Tutors would also be worth investigating in the future.

Training the career counselling workforce in Bulgaria: Introducing a bottom-up approach for bridging the gap between education and labour market

Nevena Rakovska

Business Foundation for Education/ National Board for Certified Counsellors Bulgaria

Introduction

Career and school counselling in the USA and Europe have for a long time long ago demonstrated the benefits and advantages they can bring ensure for pupils, students and employers. Helping individuals make good choices for their profession and life, makes counselling crucial fundamental in the knowledge society. The situation is still very different in emerging economies like Bulgaria. The lack of any stable traditions in delivering counselling services and the need to bridge the gap between education and the competitive labour market requirements are some of the main challenges of the day. There is a discrepancy between the theoretical knowledge students receive in the classroom and the skills needed in business. These are the main problems we face – the discrepancy between the theoretical knowledge students receive in the education system, and the skills the companies need (that are constantly developing).

In 2000, Bulgaria was still facing a high unemployment rate and big gap between the employers' needs and the skills of the worklabour force. Students lacked practical skills and information about career choice while awareness about career services was low and vaguely associated with the state job placement services for the unemployed. Some characteristics of the labour market in these years were the 'job-hoppers' (people who frequently jump from one job to another), hidden employment, low participation in lifelong learning, a low level of soft skills level and low productivity. So, there were many employers who were dissatisfied with the employees' skills of their employees, and many people were unhappy with their jobs. The time has come for career counselling!

Developing a new career guidance system

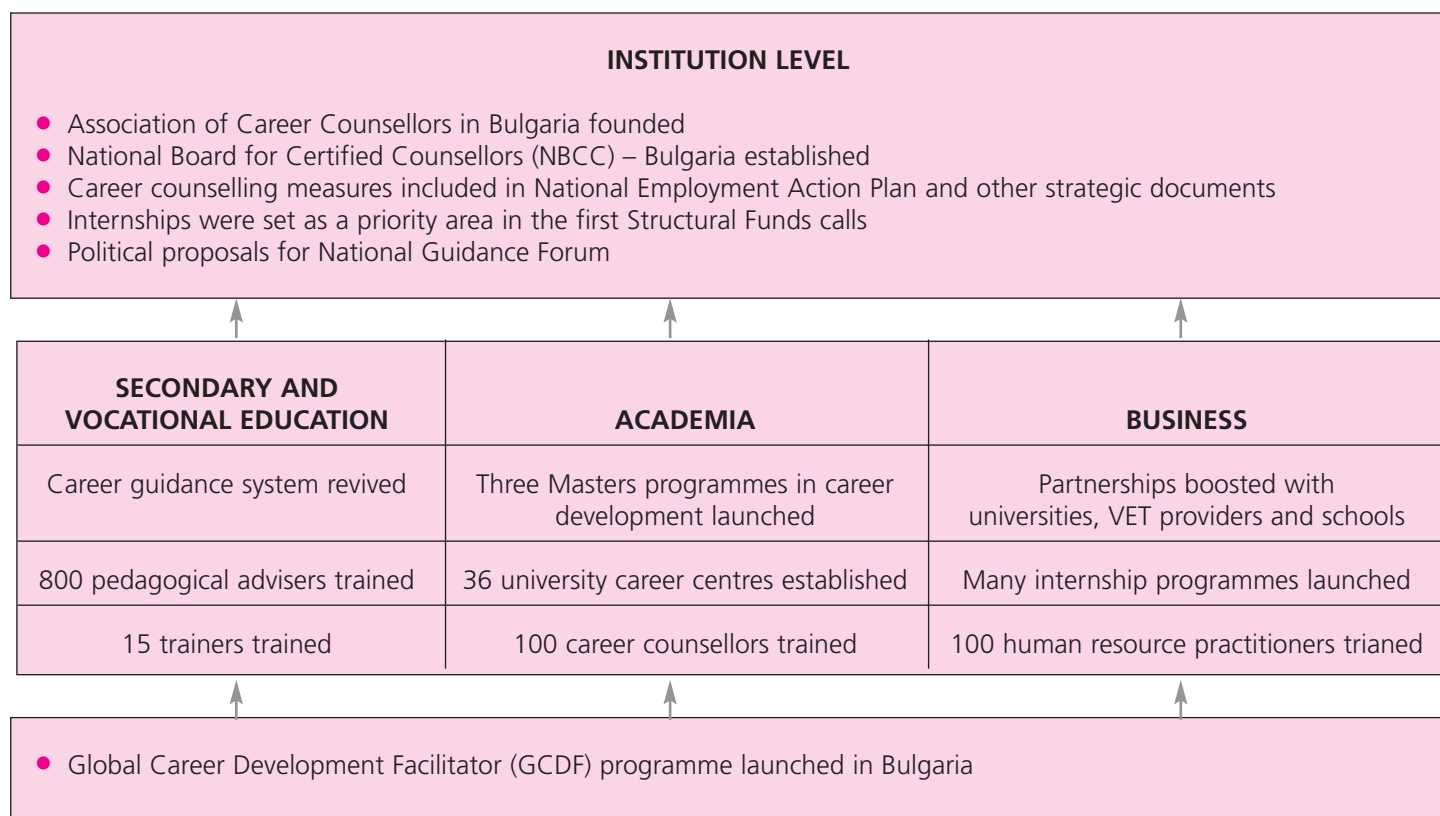
What about the career guidance system? Starting back in the 1970s, a national centralized career guidance system had been developed with career counselling centres established all over the country to support young people make career decisions. Many advisers were trained and a methodology was developed to support their work. As the transition started in the 1990s, this system was destroyed.

Some important lessons from the past were obvious:

1. **Sustainability** is crucial: it takes decades to establish a centralized career guidance system and only a year to ruin it.
2. **Support**: the system has to respond to the needs of business, academia, secondary education, students, institutions, the general public; and contribute to the commonwealth in order to be valued, supported and independent.
3. **Synergy**: the career services should help find the common concerns across point of multiple interests (business, education, public sector) and join together the efforts of all those counterparts engaged in with career counselling.
4. **Awareness**: the promotion of career services and advocating for career system development is both necessary to develop a stable tradition of career services that will be popular among their beneficiaries and supported by the authorities.
5. **Professionalism**: career practitioners need recognised standards that will guarantee a good quality of services for the clients.

The Business Foundation for Education (BFE) - a legacy of the most successful USAID project in Bulgaria arranged with the USA - addressed these challenges by introducing a bottom-up approach that involved all the partners – schools, academia, businesses and institutions – in an effective cooperation working together in an effective way. Starting with small steps at a local level and celebrating each small success, this approach gained recognition for the career counselling and contributed to its institutionalization (Figure 1).

g. 1. Bottom-up approach for bridging the gap between education and the labour market



Developing the career guidance workforce

In 2005, BFE introduced a career counselling training and certification programme: the Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF). The award credential (<http://www.cce-global.org/credentials-offered/gcdfmain>) is owned by the National Board of Certified Counsellors and is recognised worldwide.

The GCDF programme is implemented in 40 countries in the world. The methodology provides a palette – *ok:palette* of competencies in a number of fields that are represented in the curricula as modules. The GCDF curricula in the various countries use a common theoretical background and country-specific information that is annually reviewed and updated annually. The modules are:

- Career development models
- Labour market information and Employability skills
- Assessment
- Helping skills
- Working with diverse groups
- Training clients
- Career development programme management and implementation

- Promotion of career services
- Technology in career guidance
- Ethical standards in counselling.

Specialized training for career counsellors in the country is provided by the Business Foundation for Education and JobTiger. The training isgs are tailored in order to address the specific needs and problems of the clients in different settings. Some additional modules or extra time is added to focus on some important topics in order to equip career specialists in the public and private sectors with a more specificadequate approach and experience. The 120-hour training is practice- oriented and includes interactive workshops, self-preparation of exercises and a case study. The certification also requires also 200 hours of related practical experience, adherence to ethical standards, continuing education and supervision.

ArmedOccupied with competences in these areas, practitioners with GCDF trainings can easily fit into a variety of career development settings, serving as career group facilitators, job search trainers, career resource centre coordinators, career coaches, career development case managers, intake interviewers, recruitment and placement specialists or workforce development personnel. Among the 1000 career specialists that have now been trained, there are 800 pedagogical advisers from secondary and vocational schools, 100 career counsellors from

university career centres and nearly 100 human resources specialists from business organizations, public institutions and the non-governmental sector.

The career practitioners in Bulgaria are university graduates and the majority of them have mainly humanitarian a background in the humanities – so this tends to be in (psychology, pedagogy, psychology and other social sciences,) although this is not a formal requirement obligation. So there is a large number of career counsellors graduates working as career counsellors have specialisms in economics, labour organization and human resources management, etc.

Inspired by their students' growing interest in career counselling on their students, several universities started offering specialized Masters programmes for career guidance counsellors. In 2005, the Pedagogical Faculty of Ruse University since initiated the first Masters Programme for career development in the country. In 2008, the Pedagogical Faculty of Sofia University (the biggest Bulgarian university) offered a renewed Masters programme on **Qualification and redirection of workforce** – You can replace the whole name with Human Resource Development – and a post-graduate qualification programme on 'Professional orientation guidance and career counselling'. A Masters Programme for career development is in the process of preparation in the biggest private university – the New Bulgarian University. The three universities are including the GCDF programme as a practical component in their courses, and provide graduates with the opportunity to receive an international certificate together with their diploma.

By 2006, over 150 GCDF counsellors specialists had gained the GCDF award. been certified. Since the number of accredited counsellors and the popularity of the GCDF programme was growing grew in the business sector, public administration and universities, the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science (MES) recognised that the programme offered as a good opportunity to build capacity for career guidance services in the schools. In 2006, the BFE signed an agreement with the MES' National Pedagogical Centre of the MES, and prepared developed 15 trainers methodologists within under the GCDF credential programme. By the autumn of 2008 these methodologist trainers had cascaded the training to 800 pedagogical advisers throughout the country to provide career services in vocational and secondary schools. It is planned that another 2000 would be trained as GCDF counsellors by the end of 2009.

There are many challenges for the future related to skills and The training and skills development of the career professionals in Bulgaria face many challenges in the future. In first place to ensure the quality and quantity of services in order to meet the developing needs of the

clients. There are still many people from vulnerable groups and those living in the countryside who do not have access to career services. Currently, career services are focused predominantly on young people and the unemployed. Since the financial crisis has started to impact reflect on the markets, career services for employed people and those in transition seem to be inadequate and insufficient.

Career education and guidance as a whole are not integrated into the school curricula except for several lessons on career and professional vocational guidance **orientation** for which the pedagogical advisors and class teachers are responsible. Students in vocational schools undertake go through a compulsory work experience in industry production practice (60 hours for those in the 11th grade and 90 hours for those in the 12th grade) that usually takes place as a work shadowing experience or – sometimes as an entrepreneurship experience in student enterprises. Three career centres have been established recently in vocational schools to help school graduates choose further career pathways. Career counsellors in vocational guidance centres will need a more in-depth knowledge of the new occupations, academic programmes and the recognition of informal learning.

In 2008, three pilot school Career Clubs were founded as a BFE project aimed at making school more attractive to children. The initiative includes career classes, an internship fair, a carnival of professions, quizzes and contests on career topics, and school-to-business visits, etc. Project management and implementation is quite a new task for the career advisers at school: they need which provides them with new tools for designing and funding their services, but it seems that many of them lack experience and skills to deal with this part of their role.

In several offices of the state Employment Agency, individual counselling and group guidance sessions are sometimes organized to familiarise make children familiar with various occupations. There are multimedia and other materials are available to pupils. However, they need to be updated and enriched as the professions develop.

The number of University career staff is insufficient unable to handle the process of individual counselling, as the number of counselors is quite small - usually there is only one counsellor for over 1000 students and sometimes a number of non-specialist-expert volunteers. In order to deal with this impediment the career counsellors use career seminars to provide increase clients' awareness informed client on the one hand, and on the other to train career assistants. But meanwhile as they reduce their individual counselling practice and lose related skills, new types of challenges and technologies arise so this leads the counsellors into a vicious circle of not knowing which skills and competencies they need to prioritise. Using ICT and assessment tools is either overlooked or extremely exaggerated, but the truth is career counsellors need to

raise their skills and knowledges abouton both.

Thus the GCDF programme promoted the development of the career counsellor's profession in Bulgaria. An Association of career consultants has been established in 2007 to develop work for the development of the capacity of the professional community of career consultants. The Association's most important tasks are increased recognition and institutionalization of the profession, the development elaboration of an ethical code for career of the consultants, and to provide providing high quality services for all the needy clients. The National Board of Certified Counsellors in Bulgaria (NBCC Bulgaria) shares the same goals and supports the practising professionals to maintain their competencies and skills through different trainings and projects. The establishment of a system for providing professional career services should have a longer-term impact through the improved deployment of for the successful professional realization of the human resources and on economy development.

Conclusion

The introduction of the GCDF programme and training of career practitioners in Bulgaria triggered a cascade of efforts in several directions but with a single goal of bringing together education and the labour market. More than 1000 counsellors have been trained under the GCDF program to provide career services in all types of settings for thousands of clients. A Career guidance system has been established in secondary and vocational schools to help young people chose a career. The network of 36 universities career centres in 12 towns links students with employers. GCDF accredited certified human resource practitioners are involved in career guidance and counselling for socially responsible restructuring and for growing strategies and policies to support ,. for human resource development and business growth.

Several years ago career counselling whas been vaguely associated with the job placement services for unemployed people, provided by the National Employment Agency. Now, as a result of the BFE initiatives, career counselling is a rapidly growing profession in Bulgaria with an established professional organization and a national credentialing entity awarding body. It is highly valuedevaluated in the community for its contribution tovalue for lifelong learning, and in many strategic documents it is identified as a key factor measure in supporting economic development. Yes :). The developmentelaboration of sustainable policy has started with the Road Map of career guidance policy. The EU's Structural Funds also emphasised the importance of professional orientation career guidance. ,for of strengthening the linkages between industry and academia and its role infor economic growth and competitiveand workforce development. (you can skip it)

The most important challenges for the career counsellors in Bulgaria in the next years will be to respond to the high expectations and needs of the Bulgarian society and citizens. We believe that building the career guidance system we are not building not an Ivory Tower or as Shopping Mall, but a Cathedral that everyone can enter in the important moments in their life and receive the support and inspiration they need.

Competence development for counselling practitioners – The Masters programme M.A. bob in Germany

Peter Weber

Introduction

In this article I describe the development and situation of guidance/counselling in recent years in Germany, some actual tasks on the national agenda and the goals and structure of our Masters programme 'M.A. bob' (M.A. in Career Counselling and Organisational Development) within this context¹.

The Masters programme 'M.A. bob' developed as a logical response to the changes in guidance and counselling from a disparate 'add on service' to a more coherent, distinct field which focuses on three major elements: lifelong provision, quality and professionalism. We have tried to foster these developments within the Masters programme. In this context, the most important tasks in this field are the development of a national and field-wide recognised competence framework and a more coherent but flexible system of training and qualification for practitioners. These are supported by the 'German Federal Ministry of Education and Research' (BMBF, 2007), by the 'national forum for counselling in education, vocation and employment (nfb) as well as by a large number of experts and stakeholders in the field.

The University of Heidelberg's Institute for Educational Science is supporting this development both through the master programme 'M.A. bob' as well as through its research.

1. The disparate field and developments

Whilst the Masters programme in Career Counselling and Organisational Development was initiated at the University of Heidelberg in 2004, ideas about the programme were first discussed in the late 1990s. Three major developments and circumstances influenced the Masters programme:

- the poor professionalism in the counselling field, the lack of development in research and theory, and the will of a broad range of actors to change it;
- the diversification within the 'career counselling' field accelerated not least by the demise of the 'counselling monopoly' of the German PES (Bundesanstalt für Arbeit) in 1998;

- an increased need for more and better guidance and counselling services, driven by the effects of 'flexibilisation', technology development, individualisation, etc. on the employment markets, educational systems and modern life in general.

The MA programme is one measure beside many others to attain greater coherence, better quality and professionalism and the integration of theory and research in the training of:

- guidance practitioners;
- consultants working within career guidance organisations to improve their services, or working for companies to improve their career guidance practices; and
- researchers.

In this sense the Masters programme is more than a study programme for a relatively small group of students: the Masters programme is a laboratory to develop and discuss the future of guidance and counselling in Germany and also within the international context.

2. Target group and goals of the Masters programme

2.1 Target Group

The Masters programme targets the following two groups:

- those who already have some experience in career counselling and related practice and who want to further improve their professional skills; and
- those with experience and previous practice within a counselling-related background (e.g. education, social work, human resource development, training) and who would like to prepare themselves specifically to work in the field of guidance and career counselling.

It therefore is directed towards vocational and job counsellors, human resource directors as well as career and outplacement counsellors.

¹ The Masters Programme m.a. bob 2 and the concept that is presented in this article was developed by a team around Prof. Christiane Schiersmann at University of Heidelberg, Germany. The text is based on a presentation held at a CEDEFOP Workshop in Thessaloniki in October 2008 by the author.

2.2 Conditions for admission

Students are admitted once a year at the beginning of the winter semester. Requirements for admission are a university degree or a degree from a comparable institution for higher education with a minimum duration of three years, and at least one year of practical experience in an occupational field connected to counselling. The examination board can also declare any candidates who have a foreign degree, equivalent to the German university degree, eligible for the programme. The main teaching language is still German and candidates have to have a good background in this. Now, students are coming both from German-speaking countries but also from China and Eastern Europe countries as well.

3. The degree programme's goals

The OECD-study on "Career Guidance and public Policies"² (cf. OECD 2004) recommends that career guidance/counselling (see 4.1 below for a definition of 'career counselling') should be offered both during the primary education, and in the transition from school to vocational training or university, and from there into professional life and into further training programmes (OECD 2004, p 39-68). However, counselling should not primarily be provided in transitional processes. The resolution of the European Union on lifelong counselling (8448/04 EDUC 89 SOC 179) places particular emphasis on this point, in addition to numerous other studies already in the public arena - (Watts & Sultana, 2003; Sultana, 2003; Sultana, 2009; Watts & Fretwell, 2003; Watts & Fretwell, 2004). In the context of lifelong learning, counselling encompasses a range of services designed to empower citizens in all stages of their lives to understand their competencies profile and to make decisions concerning their initial education, further training and career development. Companies can also benefit from it by predicting the competencies their personnel will require now and in the future. Counselling about human resources and organisational development in non-profit and commercial organisations is just as important.³

As greater importance is being placed on counselling and career guidance in the German as well as in the European debate so is the demand for better quality guidance is increasing. However, high quality counselling can only be performed by professionally trained counsellors. In contrast to other European and Anglo-American countries, the counselling sector in Germany is not sufficiently professionalized (cf. Schiersmann/Remmele 2004, Ertelt 2007, Watts/Sultana 2003). Therefore the Master 's programme at the University of Heidelberg is contributing to the advancement of greater professionalism, a more scientific approach and better quality of counselling.

Previously, no postgraduate degree programme for guidance and counselling existed in Germany, and people

working in this field had varying professional qualifications which were mostly academic. It was, therefore, necessary to have a graduate programme, encompassing a mixture of academic study and work experience, leading to a Masters degree. This programme can provide a prototype for drawing up standardised qualification frame for guidance and counselling.

The main goal of the Masters programme is on the one hand to enable students, who have already gained professional experience in counselling or related fields to expand, update and improve their capabilities in professional counselling at a university level, and on the other, to specifically prepare them for the particular field of 'counselling'.

The Masters programme therefore aims at teaching counselling abilities in both a scientific and practical way. Counsellors completing this programme will be able to undertake a variety of activities in the fields of educational, vocational and organisational counselling, e.g.:

- a) practical counselling work using a scientific approach;
- b) management roles for providers of counselling services;
- c) content-related and strategic concept development in politics and/or in various organisations; and
- d) research activities.

The concept developed for the programme which delineates various theoretical, practical and hands-on features, specifies how these goals will be achieved. The concept was conceived in order to reach these goals and is based on the assumption that knowledge and competences acquired in these three areas are essential for professional counselling. The case-specific combinations of the knowledge and competences acquired enable the students to update and implement their professional counselling capabilities in actual situations.

4. The competence model and competence development

Since we started to develop the Masters programme, two questions have been very important. First, how can we develop a competence-oriented curriculum? And second, how can we make competence development happen?

4.1 Competence oriented curriculum and our competence model

We had three points to consider when starting to develop a competence-based curriculum:

² This study covered 14 OECD countries and covered important questions like "how can career guidance be delivered more effectively?" or "why does career guidance matter for public policy?"

- the national and international comparison of educational programmes for guidance/counselling practitioners (Sultan, a 2009; CEDEFOP, 2009; Schiersmann/Weber, u.a. 2008; Ertelt, 2007);
- the need for a holistic approach which includes organisational consultancy, the management of services, self-employment, research and evaluation competences; and not least
- the development of a coherent model for counselling and guidance in a lifelong perspective.

The programme provides competencies for two fields or perspectives of counselling:

- career counselling; and
- organisational counselling in the context of career counselling.

Career counselling

In the educational, vocational and employment field 'career counselling' addresses individuals who seek assistance in decisions concerning their education choices, career development, further education or job opportunities. Career counselling encompasses diverse client groups and counsellors need to be able to be effective in a variety of situations. For example these would include school drop-outs; high risk groups among young adults; students wishing to change their study programme or university; young professionals, those interested in career development or in further education; the unemployed; parents, (in particular mothers going back to work), and elderly workers. Several counselling settings and methods have been developed with respect to these counselling situations or target groups, which are parts of the Masters programme.

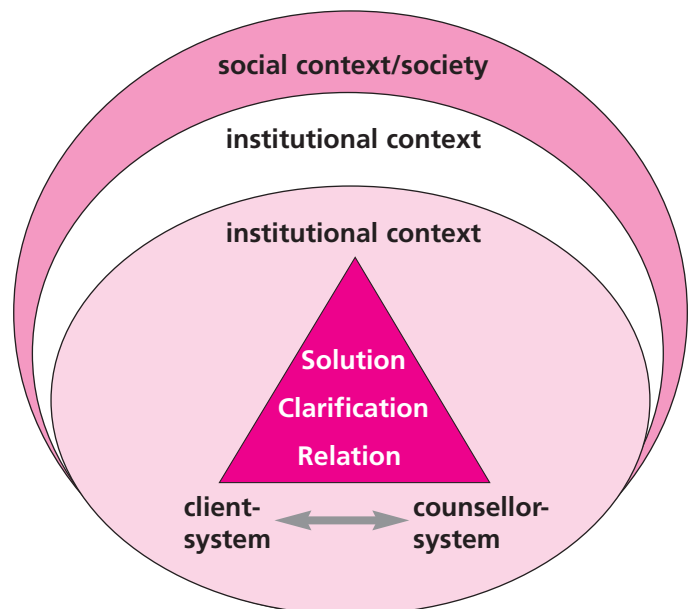
In Germany, career counselling is offered by a wide range of organisations, including schools, employment offices, further education providers as well as a large number of organisations in which counselling is but one of many activities they provide (for example chambers of commerce and industry).

Organisational counselling in the context of career counselling

'Organisational counselling' focuses on supporting an organisation (agencies, companies) or parts of it (for example departments, teams). Organisations are understood as social systems and as learning organisations. Objectives in organisational development include improvements in communication and work efficiency in the organisation's systems as well as the relation of the parts of the system to its whole. One focus of the degree programme concentrates on issues of competence development. Nevertheless, this aspect cannot always be easily isolated, given the increasing connection between

training and further education, human resources development and organisational development in companies. There is a constant interaction with other areas of activity within an organisation. When restructuring an organisation, issues of competence development and learning processes can be just as important as improving the culture of the organisation, team development approaches or implementing knowledge management systems. Special emphasis is also given to the organisational counselling of small and medium-sized businesses due to the fact that they have limited functional differences and, therefore, small internal capacity for organisational development (cf. Iller & Sixt, 2004). Another core theme is organisational counselling for educational organisations and other consultancies.

For both areas, from a systematic point of view, the programme operates on different levels, which relate to our systemic understanding of counselling (see graph 1):



Graph 1 Systemic counselling model and structure of modules in M.A.bob

The model has four levels. The main message of this systemic model is, that counselling has to take into account the client and the counsellor as separate entities each with an individual background, competences, abilities, resources, values and goals. Together they constitute the counselling system. The counselling process that emerges between them is embedded in organisational contexts and societal circumstances, which differ from service to service and between each single counselling situation. The model makes no preliminary choice between individual approaches or concepts and methods of counselling: it rather raises the question as to whether those approaches could be integrated in a general theory of counselling.

Professionals at the level of a Masters degree have to develop the capacity and competence to work in different situations by making judgements on the basis of evidence. They have to have the capacity in terms of theoretical thinking and knowledge regarding all these levels and they should have the competence to develop new solutions for new or unsolved problems. This concept delineates a social science-based understanding of counselling. As such, the degree programme has been designed to be interdisciplinary: It draws from the fields of educational science, psychology, sociology and economics. Therefore it differs greatly from a concept of counselling based on therapeutic or psycho-social fields as well as one-sided psychological or psychotherapeutic approaches. Counselling is placed on a scale between the mediation of subjectively relevant information and biographical or institutional problem-solving. It is therefore understood as a non-standardised situation which encompasses elements of reflection'.

3.2 The competences and modules

Our research and practice is leading to a general competence model for guidance/counselling practitioners which we described and published in a study for the German federal ministry for education (BMBF) (Schiersmann/Weber u.a. 2008). This model reflects the ideas described here and is seen as a starting point for two further developments:

- the debate with all actors in our counselling field in Germany both about a common view of a competence framework for guidance/counsellor practitioners and the shaping and reshaping of training- and study programmes for counsellors; and:
- the use of the model as a framework for future empirical research about competence needs within the field, especially regarding the need of differences between services, professional roles and target groups. (See Appendix 1).

The framework is focusing on the following major fields of competence:

- Competences for the counselling process
- Competences relating to the client
- Competences relating to the counsellor
- Organisation-centred competences
- Societal context-centred competences.

Within the Masters programme M.A. bob these competences are the basis for the curriculum. The following table shows how the modules of the degree programme are shaped:

Basic modules (G)

Module G1: Theories and approaches for counselling as an interaction process

Module G2: Professionalism and ethics

Module G3: The organisational contexts of counselling

Module G4: The social framework of counselling

Module G5: Supervision/mentoring of the learning process and counselling portfolio

Module G6: Masters thesis and Masters examination

Consolidation modules 'person-centred counselling' (P)

Module P1: Person-centred theories

Module P2: Concept and methods of person-centred counselling.

Module P4: Project I: Person-centred counselling.

Module P1: Person-centred theories

Module P2: Concept and methods of person-centred counselling.

Module P4: Project I: Person-centred counselling.

Consolidation modules 'organisation-centred counselling' (O)

Module O1: Organisational theories and models of organisational development

Module O2: Strategies in organisational development and counselling in organisations

Module O4: Project II: Organisation-centred counselling

Optional module 'counselling research' (F)

Module F: Empirical counselling research (variant seminars)
Optional module 'counselling management' (M)

Module M: management in counselling-organisations and for self employed counsellors (variant seminars)

Optional module 'scientific work-techniques' (W)

Module S: Special counselling methods (variant seminars)

Optional module 'Special counselling methods' (S)

Module W: Scientific work-techniques (variant seminars)

Table 1: Modules of the Master M.A. bob

For the assessment and grading of the students' performance, the Masters degree programme uses the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). ECTS measures the credits achieved by a student using quantitative information. ECTS are a measure of the student's workload. The average number of hours for two complete years of study is 3600 hours of work, which equates to

120 ECTS (36 ECTS in practice). In the Masters degree programme these are distributed over a period of five semesters.

4. Competence development - Designing a competence-oriented study concept

The concept is based on an approach to developing competences with the goal of acquiring professional counselling capabilities. Counselling in the complex world is part of a complex social system. The complexity people are facing is a motor of the knowledge society. At the same time people's lives are strongly affected by disruptions and changes. The competences acquired in the programme make it possible for the students to deal with this complexity. The competences-oriented approach attempts to overcome the division between skills and content. This means that:

- it is generally accepted that the problem of acquiring competences is not independent of content;
- the mere instruction of material does not in itself develop general abilities or skills; and
- this problem can be solved by a calculated didactic combination of knowledge, general abilities and skills from various competence dimensions.

Competences are attained or developed through a combination of experience, knowledge and abilities in specific situations. The students will gain independent counselling experience throughout the entire course of study. This takes place in the form of long-term projects. Students conduct a practical project in each of the areas of career and related organisational counselling. For these projects, it is obligatory to work in collegial counselling groups. This obligation serves a double purpose:

- firstly students become familiar with selected models of collegial counselling each with its own theoretical background, and practice working in self-managed groups;
- secondly, working in collegial groups places the focal point on managing the projects, which guarantees intensive and methodical supervision of the projects (how does it do this?).

The students are expected to undertake an additional 360 hours of counselling practice in the first four semesters of the programme and, using defined criteria, document these in the form of a portfolio.

In terms of the learning and teaching practice the programme encompasses the following elements:

- Competence assessment and individual goal setting on an individual level
- Theory and text-based learning
- Presentation of knowledge in the framework of research and practice

- Group discussion and group work
- Casework and conceptual work
- Simulation of practice in career counselling and actual practical work
- Reflection on experience, especially the interdependence of theory, research and practical experience.

These elements are realised within the degree programme in a macro cycle that covers the whole programme as well as in many micro cycles related to each module. From a more theory based competence understanding, this cycle consists of four elements:

- 1) Knowledge acquisition
- 2) Evaluation of knowledge based on defined indicators
- 3) Practice and action and
- 4) Reflection and synthesis on a scientific level.

The most important structuring element alongside this general learning cycle is the individual learner, who is supported by the team in identifying individual goals and individual learning paths. Each student is asked to shape the curriculum and to define their own core centres of development which are to be realised (for example in their own theoretical work, the practical work and the internship as well as in the empirical research in their Masters thesis). To concentrate on their own career development is an important element of our concept. Depending on the opportunities presented by the various teaching-learning settings, we are using e-learning elements, teaching in blocks, case work, project work, practice in real-life settings, and other forms which helps to link theory to practice. The blended-learning scenario consisting of on-line learning elements within each module allows employed, part-time students flexibility in preparing for the elements in the programme and in processing the learning from these.

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Appendix 1: Competences for counsellors in education, job and employment

Competences for counsellors and guidance practitioners in education, job and employment

Competences for the counselling process

P 1 The relationship: The counsellor is competent in setting up a relationship which is appropriate to the client's concerns.

P 2 The clarification: With the help of the client, the counsellor is competent in clarifying the client's goals and motives and at the same time in supporting her/him to deal with conflicts in experiencing and behaviour.

P 3 The problem solving: The counsellor is able to transfer the intentions, goals and possible solutions, which were defined during the counselling process, to an actual concrete strategy.

Competences regarding the client

R1 The counsellor is able to incorporate the knowledge about CV's, vocational development processes, impacts from different phases of life and the dynamics of vocational behaviour into the counselling process.

R2 In regard to counselling, the counsellor is able to coordinate the client's individual development with his/her knowledge about theoretical models of identity and the dynamics of individual behaviour, e.g. in the context of motivation, self-concept and self-efficacy, interests, decision making behaviour or learning processes.

R3 The counsellor knows about the great variety/diversity of clients and is able to adjust the counselling process to specific target groups.

R4 The counsellor is able to incorporate the social background of the individual either in acknowledging it as an influencing variable of the counselling process or in actually discussing it within the counselling process.

The Counsellor

B 1 The counsellor is able to act professionally and to continuously reflect and enhance his/her professional behaviour.

B 2 The counsellor acts according to the developed standards, concretises them on his/her own responsibility and reflects his/her work according to these standards.

B 3 The counsellor is able to include theory and research in his/her work in an appropriate manner and to support the cooperation between research and practice, e.g. within the frame of evaluation.

Organisation-focused competences

O 1 The counsellor is able to participate in the development of a specific mission /corporate design of the counselling institution, which is aimed at the needs of the clients, and to work out strategies for the organisation.

O 2 The counsellor is able to reflect the structures, functions and central processes of his/her organisation and to participate in identifying and optimising them.

O 3	The counsellor is able to contribute to the intended design of the organisation and manner of dealing with the actors involved in the process of counselling or in the counselling institution and to contribute to an organisation culture which is appropriate to the goals and the mission of the organisation.
O 4	The counsellor is able to use available equipment in a sensible and resource-saving way and to support the budgeting or acquisition of resources needed in order to maintain and expand the counselling services.
O 5	The counsellor is able to support the interchange with people and institutions relevant to the counselling process and guidance/counselling organisation by, e.g. cultivating his/her professional network, keeping in contact with other players (such as educational institutions, important political institutions, associations, companies) and participating in adjusting the services, programmes, etc.
O 6	The counsellor is able to design programmes regarding educational and vocational developments which are appropriate to the needs of the clients and to implement them, if needed, on his/her own. This includes combining counselling services with supportive educational services in a useful way.
The society	
G 1	In regard to the counselling process, the counsellor is able to consider recent social framework conditions. He/she has the relevant knowledge from different relevant sectors and is able to provide this knowledge regarding clients' needs in a proper way. This includes the use of proper methods for the knowledge provision.
G 2	Through professional action the counsellor is able to strengthen the ability of the client to self-organisation of competences in response to growing uncertainty in life and career.
G 3	The counsellor supports the client in maintaining and raising their employability through developing specific competences. He/she supports self directed action on the employment market and contributes through this directly by optimising the workforce.
G 4	The counsellor is able to contribute by his/her actions to the goal of equality of opportunity. Social status, cultural background, gender and regional background should not affect the individual learning and development efforts of the client. Inequality should not be maintained or even enlarged.

Comprehensive standards	
Ü 1	In regard to the counselling process, organisation and policies, the counsellor is able to respond to the needs and the resources of the client and to appreciate her/him as a capable individual.
Ü 2	The counsellor is able to establish transparency for all players in regard to the counselling process, organisation and guidance/counselling policies.
Ü 3	The counsellor agrees that ethical aspects are an important dimension in regard to the counselling process, organisation and guidance policies. It is the counsellor's task to further concretise the ethical aspects in discussion (e.g. in teams, professional organisations).
Ü 4	The counsellor is able to adopt integrated quality strategies for both the counselling process and the organisation and to support the development and implementation of a quality concept. This supports evaluation of the impact of counselling.

The Milburn proposals for funding careers services for young people: a note on relevant international evidence: A briefing paper prepared for Careers England

Professor A.G. Watts

1. The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions¹, chaired by Alan Milburn MP, cites estimates that around £200 million is currently spent on non-targeted IAG provision within Connexions services. It states its belief that 'this needs to be delivering much better value for money and that it should be delegated to individual schools' (p.76). It accordingly recommends that 'schools and colleges should have direct responsibility for providing information, advice and guidance, with a professional careers service located in every school and college – starting from primary age' (recommendation 22). More specifically, it recommends that:

'The Government should remove careers responsibility from the Connexions service. It should reallocate an estimated £200 million to schools and colleges in order to give them the freedom to tender for careers services from a range of providers' (recommendation 23).

2. Two countries have in recent years implemented reforms which bear strong similarities to those proposed by the Milburn Report: New Zealand and the Netherlands.

3. In New Zealand, prior to the mid-1990s, the precursors of what is now Career Services commonly visited schools to interview most if not all school-leavers. In 1996, this was replaced by a structure in which secondary schools received extra funding to enable them to purchase career services from an external provider if they wished to do so. These funds were part of their bulk funds and were not tagged. Schools could use them to purchase external services, to cover internal guidance costs, or for other purposes altogether. A recent review concluded that most schools used the monies to cover internal career-related costs or for other unrelated purposes.² Schools which chose to buy in interviews with all leavers or all students in a particular year were now very much the

exception rather than the rule (though some carried out such interview programmes by using their own staff). A report by the Education Review Office concluded that only 12% of secondary schools provided high-quality career education and guidance to their students. A further 85% were effective in some areas and needed to improve in others.³

4. In the Netherlands, the funding previously allocated to the Advice Offices for Education and Occupation (AOBs in Dutch) was progressively reallocated to schools between 1995 and 2000, as part of a broader policy of marketisation. As a result of this policy, some schools continued to buy services from the AOBs; some switched to other private-sector organisations; some aimed to provide all services internally. The result was that the number of AOBs was reduced from 16 to 4, with considerable loss of expertise, and no evidence of any improvement in services within schools.⁴

5. An OECD report on the Netherlands pointed out that the effect of the reforms had been 'to place purchasing power in relation to guidance services in the hands not of the demand side but of the supply side: not of individuals but of institutions with their own agendas and priorities'. The issue was 'whether such agendas and priorities are necessarily and invariably congruent with the interests of individuals and with the wider public good'. There were two problems in particular with devolving decisions on career information and guidance provision to institutions:

- 'The first is that it leaves such provision at the mercy of management priorities. Some managers may see guidance as being very important for the institution and its students; some may not. The latter is particularly likely to be the case where, as in the Netherlands, external pressures on institutional priorities focus heavily on output measures based on

¹ Panel on Fair Access to the Professions (2009). *Unleashing Aspiration: the Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions*. London: Panel on Fair Access to the Professions.

² Watts, A.G. (2007). *Careers Services: a Review in an International Perspective*. Wellington, NZ: Career Services. Unpublished Education Review Office data indicated that around two-thirds of secondary schools allocated all of the relevant funding to career education and guidance; of the remainder, half allocated 50-85% to it; the other half allocated 25-50% to it.

³ Education Review Office (2006). *The Quality of Career Education and Guidance in Schools*. Wellington: ERO.

⁴ Meijers, F. (2001). The effects of the marketisation of career guidance services in the Netherlands. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 23, 131-149. Also Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2002). *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies: Netherlands Country Note*. Paris: OECD.

examination performance, rather than on process measures or longer-term outcome measures. In this situation, the system tends to be viewed in management terms as a closed box, and guidance linked to individual progression outside this box as being of peripheral importance.'

- 'The second potential problem is closely related: it is the issue of impartiality. The funding of educational institutions is linked to enrolments and/or course completions, and this may incline them to restrict the guidance they offer. Thus an employers' representative suggested to us that educational institutions were more interested in filling their courses than with giving good advice to students on the realities of labour-market demand. Again, an external agency reported that a couple of schools had cancelled their contracts because it had advised some students that it might be in their best interests to leave the school and move elsewhere.'⁵

7. OECD accordingly strongly favoured a delivery model based on a partnership between schools and colleges on the one hand, and on the other an external service that is closer to the labour market and is able to provide impartial guidance at a consistent standard. This is the model that England has had in the past through the Careers Service and more recently through the Connexions Service. It is also the model that remains strongly in place in the rest of the UK.⁸ Certainly there is a strong case for reframing the model in England, to take account of the erosion of careers services that has taken place under Connexions, as noted by the Milburn Report (pp.74-75). But the international evidence suggests that the model should be strengthened rather than weakened, as it is likely to be if the Milburn funding proposals are implemented.

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Both of these points seem likely to apply in England. There is strong evidence of guidance within schools that extend beyond the age of 16 favouring their own provision post-16 at the expense of other options.⁶

6. More generally, the OECD Career Guidance Policy Review⁷, based on 14 countries, persuasively indicated the limitations of an exclusively school/college-based model of career guidance delivery, in three respects:
 - Its weak links with the labour market, and its tendency to view educational choices as ends in themselves without attention to their longer-term career implications.
 - Its lack of impartiality, and the tendency for schools to promote their own provision rather than college- or work-based routes.
 - Its lack of consistency: the policy levers on schools and colleges to deliver services in this area tend to be weak, and services to be patchy both in extent and in quality.

¹ Panel on Fair Access to the Professions (2009). *Unleashing Aspiration: the Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions*. London: Panel on Fair Access to the Professions.

² Watts, A.G. (2007). *Careers Services: a Review in an International Perspective*. Wellington, NZ: Career Services. Unpublished Education Review Office data indicated that around two-thirds ⁵ OECD (2002). *Op. cit.*, p.11.

⁶ See e.g. Foskett, N., Dyke, M. & Maringe, F. (2004). *The Influence of the School in the Decision to Participate in Learning Post-16*. RR538. London: Department for Education and Skills.

⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004). *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris: OECD.

⁸ Watts, A.G. (2008). The partnership model for careers education and guidance in schools and colleges – rise, decline – and fall? *Career Research and Development*, 20, 4-8. of secondary schools allocated all of the relevant funding to career education and guidance; of the remainder, half allocated 50-85% to it; the other half allocated 25-50% to it.

³ Education Review Office (2006). *The Quality of Career Education and Guidance in Schools*. Wellington: ERO.

⁴ Meijers, F. (2001). The effects of the marketisation of career guidance services in the Netherlands. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 23, 131-149. Also Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2002). *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies: Netherlands Country Note*. Paris: OECD.

EDITORIAL

Hazel Reid 0

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