SLIGO SUCCESS

News from the Conference and AGM

Inside:

- Principals may need guidance on Guidance
- History of Guidance in Ireland
- LCA Graduates
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Copy Deadline
The deadline for the next issue of Guideline Magazine is
14th September 2013

Articles (which may be edited) and advertisements should be with
the editor before that date.

Guideline is published three times a year (October, March and
May) by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors. Contributions
and advertisements are welcome. The Editors reserve the right to
amend or abridge any contribution accepted for publication. Items
for inclusion should preferably be sent in MS Word by email to the
address below. Typeset articles or advertisements are best sent in
high resolution Adobe Acrobat format.

The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the contributors
and not necessarily those of the Editors or the Officers of the
Institute of Guidance Counsellors.

Acceptance of advertisements does not constitute an endorsement
of the products or services by the Institute.

Every effort has been made by the editors to ensure that the
information is accurate, however no responsibility can be accepted
by the Editors or the Institute for omissions or errors that may have
occurred.

Cover Photo: Presenters at the Conference in Sligo were, Christy Kennelly, Gerry Flynn (President IGC) Helen … and Tommy Gorman.
2013

Central Applications Office

CHANGE OF MIND
The CAO Change of Mind facility will open in early May and will close at:

5:15pm on 1st July 2013.

Applicants may submit a Change of Mind online at:

www.cao.ie

Before submitting a Change of Mind in respect of course choices, applicants should read carefully the instructions on page 18 of the 2013 CAO Handbook.

CAO
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The Minister has gotten the message loud and clear from a variety of sources including this publication about the effects of the cutbacks but despite the visible disintegration of the system, the diversity of service and discrepancy of delivery and the vocal condemnations from teachers, third level, health services and mental health professionals he is not for turning. His policy of handing it to the local school management would be fine if he also allocated the resources but instead he withdraws the resources and throws it at the desk of the hassled Principals. The Principals have made whatever moves they can within the constraints of what is available to them last year now have to do the same for next year. This is your critical moment. This is the time you must sit down with the Principal and discuss what worked, what didn’t and what was left out.

It is crucial that you have this meeting and that you prepare and present your case. The decisions made last year were in a large sense made with blind faith. The Principal was deciding what could be done and could not and depending on their attitude trying to maximise or minimise or continue the service offered. Have your list of what you could or could not do ready. Show how your plan or plans were curtailed, where the reductions were felt and what had to go, be deferred, left incomplete or eliminated.

It is unlikely that you will get all of your wishes and the principals are left with the task of balancing the resources available to them which is never an easy task. Both of you know that you are not Superman or Wonderwoman and can’t cover all the angles with the allocation available to you but how you prioritise the time and resources allocated to you is crucial and these you should clarify with the principal and let them know what demands are being made on you that you cannot fulfil. Whatever your working relationship with them it is an activity that has to be done together and keep them in the loop with the sort of demands that are being made on you by students and parents or others.

Last year was a stopgap one in many ways, this year sees an adjustment and unless the Minister relents which he is unlikely to do despite the mounting evidence of the cost and effect of this cutback, it is likely to set the pattern for the next few years or at least until the next cutback comes into effect. So negotiating now is crucial to get the best you can manage in your service.

It is likely to be frustrating, there will be so much more you will want to do, you will feel constrained by the cutting back on what you used to do and most of all you will have the fury and frustration of seeing the needs going unanswered as you just cannot allocate the time. The temptation is to take on too much and burn yourself out or find yourself working all sorts of extra hours or late evenings to meet the needs. You do have to remember that you are human also, that you too have your own needs and that there is only so much of yourself you can give.

Yes it is frustrating that you find yourself back in a classroom while all your specialist training goes abegging and the needs mount up. You cannot solve the problem all by yourself. The Minister is aware of the crying need but is not prepared to allow you to work towards solving it. The shame is on him for such a short-sighted “solution” despite the chorus of experts telling him.

I’m not sure what the term is for persisting with a particular plan despite the mounting and convincing evidence against that path. History is littered with examples of this refusal to see the evidence of pursuing poor strategies.

We are the poor foot soldiers who have to suffer the consequences of warped thinking and wilful ignoring of the evidence. Negotiate as best you can with your Principal on keeping as much of the show on the road as is possible. As for the Generals in Marlborough Street, isolated and ignoring the mounting evidence we can but hope that sense will break through before too many are lost forever.
www.SmartFutures.ie is an essential online resource for students and guidance counsellors interested in learning more about careers in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

- Watch career videos with people working in STEM
- Find out about great student competitions
- Win work experience opportunities with top tech companies

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: The Smart Futures STEM Careers Week takes place on the website from 29 April - 3 May, when students can submit their career questions to a live panel of industry experts.

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UWC

As a global educational movement, United World Colleges (UWC) aims to unite students from all around the world, educating them as a force against bigotry and hatred in the world while focussing on how we can build a better tomorrow for peace and a sustainable future. By working together, living together and learning together we not only promote international understanding but we live it each and every day.

UWC schools and colleges are located in thirteen countries, across five continents, and at UWC Ireland we send students abroad to complete the two year pre-university diploma, the International Baccalaureate (IB). All of our schools and colleges are unique and different, but the principles and ideals of the movement permeate the foundations in each and every location whether it be India or Italy, New Mexico or Norway.

At each college, we have representatives from an average of 70 different nationalities which not only makes for an interesting mix with cultural expression and stories that begin with “In my country…”, but gives our students an international identity so that when they leave after 2 years, they take a piece of each country with them. Our students advocate on behalf of friends from other countries, they work towards stopping the injustices of today while never losing focus of their roots and culture. If anything, being the only student from a small, green island on the edge of Europe makes them more Irish!

At UWC we encourage our students to embrace the surrounding nationalities as a way to explore and develop a sense of international expression, culture and appreciation. Academic achievements are put into perspective with a demanding mix of community engagement, international affairs, physical activities and creative pursuits. As a programme the IB is rigorous and demanding yet intensely exciting and massively rewarding. Students have opportunities to study new and exciting subjects, take part in thrilling extra-curricular activities and set themselves on a path toward being an advocate of positive change.

UWC Ireland has the respected peacemaker and Nobel Peace Laureate John Hume as its patron. The UWC Ireland committee selects and sends two to four Irish students each year. Irish students in the past have gone to Atlantic College in Wales, Adriatic College in Italy, Armand Hammer College in New Mexico, U.S.A, Pearson College in Canada, Li Po Chun College in Hong Kong, Costa Rica and Red Cross Nordic College in Norway.

There are currently four Irish students in the second year in Pearson College, Red Cross Nordic, Li Po Chun and Costa Rica and three Irish students are in their first year at UWCs in Maastricht, Hong Kong and Costa Rica.

Our UWC in Canada is named after one of Canada’s most forward thinking Prime Ministers, Lester B. Pearson, who in his 1957 Nobel Peace Prize Lecture said:

“How can there be peace without people understanding each other, and how can this be if they don’t know each other?”

UWC Ireland is continuing to keep the tradition of sending Irish students to these colleges to represent themselves and their country each year by holding interviews in March/April. If you think a student would be a suitable candidate or if looking for more information, please visit our website at www.ie.uwc.org.
School principals may need ‘guidance’ on guidance.

Liam Harkin

INTRODUCTION.
At this stage, we are all familiar with the findings of the 2013 IGC audit which concluded that guidance counsellors have been forced to become more involved in classroom teaching and are also less engaged in one-to-one guidance counselling. Previous research has indicated that students prefer individual guidance to group or class guidance.

The IGC audit also found that there has been a 20% increase in academic teaching by guidance counsellors, which obviously has the knock-on effect of a 20% decrease in guidance counsellor availability to students. Previous research, conducted in Ireland before the guidance allocation was removed, and from other countries, has shown that students are critical of the lack of time available for guidance and that often when it was provided, it came too late.

In addition, the audit found that one-to-one counselling has been reduced by over half (50.6%) in the 2012-13 school year. Previous research conducted before the budgetary changes show that there was a demand for more, not less counselling.

The new policy on guidance allocation has been found to be against some national policy obligations. It also runs contrary to several international policies, best practice and experience. Finally, devolved decision-making to schools on guidance provision has been shown to be problematic in other countries.

ONE-TO-ONE GUIDANCE PREFERRED.
Recent Irish research by Smyth, Banks and Calvert (2011) is significant as it found that many students preferred to receive advice on a one-to-one basis, than in a classroom or group situation, as it provided “the chance to ask questions without embarrassment” (p. 114). Students were generally more positive about individual sessions than guidance classes, since these “allowed them to ask questions and access information relevant to their own specific interests” (p. 229). These findings mirror findings from two earlier Irish studies - McCoy, Smyth, Darmody & Dunne (2006) and Forfás (2006) where respondents expressing a preference for individual career counselling as opposed to class or group-based guidance.

NEED FOR GUIDANCE AT AN EARLIER AGE.
McCoy, Byrne, O’Connell, Kelly & Doherty (2010), highlight how young people would have found it more useful to have received career guidance at an earlier stage in their school career.

Smyth et al. (2011) found that many students felt that guidance had been provided too late and at a time when they had already chosen their subjects and subject levels. They felt that too much of the guidance counsellor’s time was devoted to the sixth year classes and/or to dealing with significant personal problems among students, and many students highlighted the need to “provide guidance on the choice of subjects and subject levels at an earlier stage” (p. 214).

NEED FOR MORE COUNSELLING.
Counselling makes up a significant proportion of the guidance counsellor’s workload, and an IGC policy paper from 2008 cited research in Ireland, that as many as one in five students at any one time may require counselling intervention (IGC, 2008). As Hayes and Morgan (2011) found “there is a huge demand for counselling among second-level students” (p. 79), however, such is the demand for counselling in schools, that finding the time and space to do the counselling work was a major issue for almost a third of the guidance counsellors they surveyed, given all the other issues they are required to deal with during the school day: “there are not enough resources currently available to meet their needs” (p. 79). In one of their four recommendations from the research, Hayes and Morgan urged the DES to maintain and strengthen the practice of counselling in schools by guidance counsellors “through additional supports such as reducing the ratio of students to guidance counsellor” (p. 97). However, as this research was conducted before the budgetary changes, the situation may have deteriorated since September 2012, based on the results of the IGC audit.

As this major reform in how guidance is allocated was taking place in Ireland, a major international study of depression in teenagers was published in The Lancet (Thapar et al., 2012), which brought home the importance of counselling therapies in treating depression in adolescence, amidst concerns regarding the prescribing of anti-depressants to teenagers. The research stressed that more needed to be done to identify and treat adolescents with depression, as failure to intervene and provide support early on can have disastrous consequences. The study said that if left untreated, adolescent depression increases the risk of suicide, substance abuse and obesity; leads to serious social and educational deprivation and can result in lifelong health difficulties. The research stressed that while effective treatments are available to young people, the lack of interventions and resources directed to tackling and preventing depression in many countries is a major concern.

In the light of this report, one can only wonder about the long-term logic of dismantling counselling supports for Irish teenagers that were already in place and working.

MORE, NOT LESS GUIDANCE IS REQUIRED.
Recent research, conducted before the removal of the guidance allocation, Smyth et al. (2011) found that students were often critical of the lack of time made available for guidance classes and in particular individual guidance sessions.

In Ireland, the budgetary decision runs contrary to several recent reports, which advocated increased, rather than reduced guidance provision.
For instance, a 2009 report on school guidance by the DES Inspectorate concluded that Junior Cycle students should receive more guidance, and that some schools were not using their full guidance allocation for the purpose of guidance (DES, 2009).

Smyth and McCoy (2011) in a longitudinal study for the ESRI reported similar findings where students expressed positive perceptions about career learning experiences in school but were critical of the limited time available for individual career discussions due to the guidance counsellor’s dual role of subject teaching and career guidance.

Students were particularly disappointed with the lack of time given to guidance counselling at school. Many felt that their guidance counsellors were over-burdened combining their teaching work and role as guidance counsellor. The interviews highlight insufficient time allocation for guidance and guidance-related activities and students appear to be missing out on the guidance and counselling they need (p. 181).

Several years earlier, the National Guidance Forum (2007) had actually recommended such an increase in career guidance activities at Junior Cycle, but these were not implemented:

Guidance services in second level schools need to be available and to be seen to be available for students in the Junior Cycle and for those who are less academic, as well as for those who intend to go to university (p. 17).

The above findings echoed an earlier report on guidance needs in schools by Ryan (2000), who found that there was a definite need for a comprehensive guidance service for early school leavers, particularly the need for access to psychological and other specialist services.

Earlier research in the UK has also found that young people are generally not satisfied with the amount of career guidance available to them to assist with their decision-making in school and would like more help, not less (Keys et al., 1998; Maychell et al., 1998).

The new guidance allocations policy runs contrary to national policy obligations.

It would appear that the new government policy on guidance allocation runs counter to stated public policy goals and the legal obligations of the state in relation to the provision of guidance in schools. Section 9 (c) of the Education Act (1998) placed a legal requirement on schools to “ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance”. The implications of this one sentence remained vague, until the DES issued clarification “Guidelines” in 2005 which showed schools how to develop and plan a holistic school guidance programme, including the provision of personal, social, educational and vocational guidance, and offered resources and supports on how to put the guidance plan in place. Going forward, it remains to be seen whether schools will be in a position to deliver on these guidelines, with guidance hours being reduced or redistributed. As McCarthy (2012), says:

Given the Budget decision to withdraw the ex-quota staff resource for guidance in schools, the Guidelines are now just aspirational. It leaves schools with no way to turn the Education Act guidance requirement into a reality for students and parents. The Budget cut in fact makes a mockery of the Act and of the Guidelines (p. 7).

Taking a wider viewpoint than school-based guidance, one of the aims of the current Programme for Government is the rolling out of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention (2005); however it would appear that this now seems to be at odds with the new guidance allocation policy. Under the Strategy, schools were seen as playing an important role in suicide prevention and a specific objective was articulated “to promote positive mental health, develop counselling services and put standard crisis response protocols in place in all primary and secondary schools” (p. 22). One wonders how this objective will be achieved on the ground in schools with perhaps a majority of guidance counsellors working less hours in guidance than heretofore.

The decision to remove the ex-quota guidance counselling provision is also in direct conflict with Goal 3 of the National Children’s Strategy (NCS) 2000-2010, which states that “children will receive quality supports and services to promote all aspects of their development” (NCS, 2000, p. 27). The first NCS came to an end in 2010, but regardless of this, from September 2012 schools now have greater difficulty providing the services advocated by the NCS:

When it is seen that a child is not coping, parents do not delay intervention but act quickly to prevent problems developing. These responses by parents can be characterised as positive, holistic, comprehensive and proactive. These are also the characteristics which should be reflected in the services provided to children by schools (NCS, 2000, p. 44).

In 2013, when the government launched its new mental health policy for post-primary schools, it urged schools to utilise its guidance and counselling resources fully, however it failed to commit to the provision of additional guidance resources. Instead, schools were asked to adopt the policy using their existing guidance resources:

Schools need to maximise the use of their available resources for the provision of guidance and should seek to ensure that the guidance counsellor has time allocated for individual counselling with students experiencing difficulties or in crisis (DES et al., 2013, p. 33).

Interestingly, there were other aspirational goals expressed in the Social Partnership Agreement “Towards 2016” (Department of the Taoiseach, 2006) where one of the aims is to “further develop measures to combat early school leaving and enhance attendance, educational progression, retention and attainment at primary and second-level” (p. 31). The agreement advocates that the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities should be prioritised “by supporting schools and their communities to achieve equality in terms of educational participation and outcomes in line with national norms” (p. 42). With a disproportionately reduced guidance service in DEIS schools, this equality will be difficult to achieve.

The new guidance allocation policy runs contrary to international guidance policies, best practice and experience.

When one charts the key current international reference points for guidance policy, it becomes clear how out of step the new government policy on guidance allocation is with best practice internationally. A 2004 OECD report highlighted the importance of career guidance provision in schools, saying that career services are necessary for making effective transitions both within education and from education to training and work. In the same year, the World Bank published a review of career guidance in developing and transition economies which stated that career guidance is an important factor in supporting social and economic development. Significantly, this recent government policy change runs counter to current OECD (2012) thinking on guidance in schools:

It is fully accepted that the provision of guidance and counselling in second-level schools is vital to enable each pupil to gain the maximum benefit from the education system, and guidance counsellors have a particularly important role to play in advising second-level students on career options and on the related issue of appropriate subject choice (p. 47).
In 2004, member states of the International Labour Organisation (including Ireland) agreed to "assure and facilitate, throughout an individual’s life, participation in, and access to, vocational and career information and guidance, job placement services and job search techniques and training support services" (ILO, 2004, VIII,15a).

It remains to be seen whether guidance services for young people in school remain effective under the new guidance allocation arrangements. Of particular worry is whether this service remains free. If adequate and acceptable individual guidance is not available in all schools, will this force some students (or their parents) to pay for the service privately? In 1996, Ireland signed up to the European Social Charter, where Article 9 refers to the right to free and effective vocational guidance services:

> With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to vocational guidance, the Parties undertake to provide or promote, as necessary, a service which will assist all persons, including the handicapped, to solve problems related to occupational choice and progress, with due regard to the individual’s characteristics and their relation to occupational opportunity: this assistance should be available free of charge, both to young persons, including schoolchildren, and to adults (p. 9).

At EU level, the 2004 Resolution of the Council of the European Union underlined the importance of career guidance in schools:

> Guidance provision within the education and training system, and especially in schools or at school level, has an essential role to play in ensuring that individuals’ educational and career decisions are firmly based, and in assisting them to develop effective self-management of their learning and career paths. It is also a key instrument for education and training institutions to improve the quality and provision of learning (p. 2).

**Devolved decision-making to schools on career guidance provision is problematic.**

The new policy in relation to guidance allocations in Ireland removed the onus and criteria for post allocations away from the DES and devolved the responsibility to each principal to deliver the “appropriate guidance” for each individual school. With regard to education policy, and indeed policy-making in general, Ireland it seems often copies and adapts policies from other jurisdictions and this is another example of what Smyth and McCoy (2011) call “policy borrowing” (p. 7).

As this policy of devolving responsibility to individual schools for guidance has been tried in other countries, it is interesting to explore how the policy has worked elsewhere. McCarthy (2012) describes it as “hit and miss” (p. 9). He cites Watts (2011) who says that “the discretionary approach promotes inequality of access to services ... and inequality in obtaining comparable career learning experiences and quality assured experiences” (p. 9).

In New Zealand for example, schools are legally obliged to provide careers education but have the discretion to provide this as they see appropriate. Both McCarthy (2012) and Watts (2011) are critical of the outcomes there, noting that nearly all of the careers advisors are part-time, untrained and unqualified, secondary completion rates are lower than in Ireland and the public perception of the guidance service is negative.

In the Netherlands, schools are given a grant to use at their discretion to provide career guidance. Schools invariably purchase this service from outside agencies or do not provide guidance. There is no quality assurance of this service and student perceptions of the service are very negative.

As McCarthy (2012) points out, one of the main problems with devolving responsibility for guidance to schools is that "some managers may see guidance as being very important for the institution and its students; some may not" (p. 4).

In England, the responsibility to secure careers advisors and deliver career guidance was devolved from local authorities to individual schools in 2011. This has resulted in the erosion of specialist professional guidance roles in schools. “Schools are no longer required to provide careers education and face-to-face guidance has been removed” (COA News, Spring 2013, p. 5). Instead they are required to purchase career guidance services from independent agencies, but pay for this out of their existing budgets. McCarthy (2012) says this has resulted in “huge variability among the career learning experiences of students according to the school he/she attends” (p. 9). In early 2013, concerns were being expressed that funding needed to be ring-fenced to ensure similar per pupil funding in all schools (COA News, Spring 2013, p. 5).

According to Tristam Hooley, Head of the International Centre for Guidance Studies, the policy enables schools to cut the amount of careers guidance and even opt out of providing qualified careers advisers: “As a result, eight out of 10 schools in England have reduced their careers advice. In one case, a school had switched from 65 days of careers advice a year … to just 16 days of bought-in services” (Hooley, 2013, para. 3).

The cutbacks led to the Institute of Career Guidance (ICG) in England warning that careers advice for young people was becoming extinct, with ICG members fearing a further rise in the number of NEETS (teenagers not in education or training). The Guardian’s Education Correspondent described one secondary school in England where “only teenagers with special needs are to be given careers advice” (Sheppard, 2011, para. 13).

The 2013 report of the House of Commons Education Committee on the impact of the budgetary decisions on young people concluded that the guidance service to young people in the UK was deteriorating, and highlighted serious shortcomings in the implementation of the UK Government’s policy of transferring responsibility for careers guidance to schools:

> International evidence suggests such a model does not deliver the best provision for young people. The weaknesses of the school-based model have been compounded by the failure to transfer to schools any budget with which to provide the service. This has led, predictably, to a drop in the overall level of provision (p. 12-13).

Watts (2011) argued that for devolution of guidance to schools to be successful that strong policy levers are required, such as measures to assure professional standards, support for school planning and self-evaluation, and in-service training for school principals.

In this light, I would contend therefore that there now needs to be an extensive programme of awareness-building, information and training for second-level school principals in Ireland on both the legal requirement to provide guidance and also on the value and importance of guidance to the school as a whole, as the final decision on school guidance provision now rests with them.
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OECD (2012). OECD project overcoming school failure: Policies that work. Dublin: DES.
Kenny is learning slowly on education

FINTAN O’TOOLE

A long time ago, when Ireland was a Catholic country, most people would have been familiar with the concept of an epiphany. It’s a sudden moment of revelation. The Magi had one when they saw the baby Jesus. Archimedes had one in the bath when he shouted “Eureka!” James Joyce had one on Dollymount strand. And Enda Kenny had one a short while ago.

Last week (In February), the Taoiseach spoke of how the scales fell from his eyes as he performed the official opening of a school in the west of Ireland that had cost €1 million to build. There he was, being his usual affable self, when something “struck me forcibly”.

It wasn’t a solid object hurled by a desperate citizen but rather a blinding revelation. A great truth was made known unto him: if this school cost €1 million, then we could build 3,000 schools every year for the money we were burning to pay the debts of Anglo Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide. Eureka!

Seamus Mallon once referred to the Belfast Agreement as “Sunningdale for slow learners”. This moment of blinding insight was the promissory note for slow learners. Presumably if we wait long enough the Taoiseach will be granted the great insight that, if the deal on the promissory notes saves a third of their cost, we could still build 2,000 schools a year for the money.

Or, more broadly, make the investment in education without which Ireland will revert to being a backwater economy.

SMART SOCIETIES

Smart societies grasped this a long time ago. Finland, for example, responded to its banking crisis of the early 1990s not by putting all available national resources into bad banks but by investing to make itself a world leader in education. But, as Enda Kenny finally saw in his moment of epiphany, we are doing the opposite. Even though we have a remarkably young population (and therefore a greater need for educational investment than most other countries), we are one of the very few countries in the developed world that is reducing spending on education.

This is part of the “common sense” approach of bank bailouts plus so-called austerity. And it is both reckless and self-destructive. The most insane aspect of the policy is the decision to turn teaching from a high-status profession to a low-status, insecure, casual job. Large numbers of highly experienced teachers have been stripped out of the system. They are being replaced by badly paid young teachers with no security. More than half of secondary teachers under 30 are on contracts of a year or less. Many are also part-time.

Around the developed world (and also in developing countries) there is a realisation that making teaching into a job that attracts only losers or saintly idealists is a disaster. Every study of Irish education has argued, to the contrary, that we need a huge leap forward in the skills, confidence, creativity and professionalism of teachers. Instead, we’re telling those who want the job that they’d be much better off working in a shop. Perhaps in 20 years’ time a Taoiseach will have another epiphany and realise how stupid this was.

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"The workshop introduced us to a model for strategic planning in an organisational setting. It is a valuable strategy to help an organisation to move forward. I recommend it to anyone in a leadership position."

Dr Kevin Egan

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**Fundamental Group Facilitation**

with

James Campbell
Institute of Cultural Affairs

Monday 24th - Saturday 29th June 2013
Address by Mr Gerry Flynn, President of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors, at the Institute’s Annual Conference and AGM held in Sligo, 8th March 2013.

I would like to refer to a phrase coined by Helen Ryan, Principal of Cork College of Commerce, Cork said last October at a careers event. She described guidance counsellors as ‘the Guardians of the Dream’ for the students.

This is a wonderfully rich description of what we can do. If given the opportunity to do so, we can enable students deal safely with the ups and downs that are part and parcel of growing up. We can, like no other group of professionals, enable them achieve their full potential in their lives, their careers and in the contribution they make to society. We can steer them on the right road and help them avoid the rocky road.

This is a significant responsibility. It also demands unique skills and training. Just like a hospital porter is not trained to triage a patient in an Accident and Emergency Department, neither is a school caretaker qualified to provide the support necessary to help a vulnerable student stay off the rocky road. I am not in any way being disrespectful to caretakers. I am simply stating a reality that policy makers have chosen to conveniently ignore, in their recent glib comments, when announcing the new national guidelines on mental health and suicide prevention in second level schools.

I have never before witnessed the level of hurt I did among our members when, during his announcement, the role of Guidance Counsellors in mental health and suicide prevention was equated with that of the school porter. There was a palpable feeling that your work, which is supported by many years of training and personal development, was being dismissed as being of little value.

These were truly extraordinary comments which incensed us and most educationalists and people of compassion across the Island.

We have sought meetings with the relevant Ministers to express the indignation of members at these hurtful remarks. As far as I am concerned, the Government attempted to airbrush out a profession that is making a significant contribution to the welfare of students up and down the country every day of the week. But they have failed and they will continue to fail.

The Government can use fine words to dress up this ill-conceived policy decision as something other than it is. But let’s at least be candid with students and parents. Let’s not side step this issue. A cut back is a cut back, no matter how you try to disguise it.

Since taking office last July, all my energies, and indeed the energies of many of your colleagues, have been focussed on lobbying, networking, negotiating and building new alliances. Our objective has been to highlight the short term and long term damage the cuts are having on students and generate support for a change in education policy direction.

We have used every conceivable opportunity to portray the social, economic and political consequences of this Government’s heartless decision.

It has involved liaising with department officials, Management and Parent bodies, NEPS, NCCE, other Government departments, state agencies, advocacy and voluntary groups all of whom play an important role with the people we work with, directly or indirectly. This work is slow and painstaking. Unfortunately there is no quick fix but we are making progress. People are being persuaded by our arguments and our evidence. We have to keep stating our case and stay the course.

The past year has also seen extensive media coverage of the reduction in time for one to one counselling. The media has correctly highlighted the lack of available time for members to meet the counselling needs of students. While the cut backs are a set-back, it is critical that we remain focused on the important work that we do.

We must not allow flawed policy decisions deflect us away from the support, care, compassion and advice we are here to provide to every student who needs it regardless of their means.

We need also need to keep things in perspective. This Government is 2 years old. The Institute of Guidance Counsellors has been in existence for 37 years. So while we must respond in the short term on policy changes as they emerge, we must also take a long term perspective and develop strategies that will ensure the relevance of our profession in the decades ahead.

Today I would like to update you on a number of issues.

National Audit
Let me start with the recently completed National Audit of Guidance Counselling services. This is the most significant piece of research conducted by the Institute in recent years. It compared the levels of services provided before and after the cuts.

It provides us with the rigorous evidence we need to support concrete factually-based discussions with the Department of Education and Skills, Management bodies and other key stakeholders.

The results of the National Audit are stark! Overall there has been a 21% reduction in the service. For some sectors the reduction has been far greater. Almost 20% of Guidance Counsellors are finding it difficult to be released for essential counselling supervision.

The Audit revealed that 13% of those purporting to be delivering Guidance Counselling are unqualified. This is a very worrying finding. And equally worrying finding is the range and extent of external providers - 24 different types, many of whom have no access to supervision. But what is probably the most worrying is what is happening to one to one counselling. It has effectively been cut in half. For every student who can access one to one counselling, there is another outside the door to who must go without. A student to whom we have to say sorry – we cannot help you today. What do these figures mean in practice? Counselling services in this country are being starved. Guidance counselling service could soon be a hit and miss service. Access could depend on what school a student attends because some schools are going to extraordinary lengths to retain the guidance counselling service because they see the value of that service. However, it is also disturbing to see in other schools, that services have been severely curtailed. In one member’s school which has over 600 students the Guidance Counsellor has been scheduled for 16 hours subject teaching and 6 hours for counselling service; that’s 6 hours a week for 600 students. In another member’s school with over 250 students there is no provision for one to one counselling.

No matter what way you try and interpret this, these levels of service clearly do not meet the Government’s statutory responsibility to provide students with ‘appropriate guidance’ as stated by the 1998 Act. While
the counselling needs of schools vary enormously depending on a range of factors, unfortunately when service levels are as inequitable as these, you can be sure that it is those who have the greatest need will experience the greatest deprivation. For those students who are experiencing hardship, frequently the guidance counsellor is the ‘significant adult’ who is a major influence in the realisation of their dreams to pursue further studies. Where there is the greatest demand supply is being choked. Where is the fairness? Where is the compassion? What is this saying about our emerging values as a society? Are we becoming a society of sound bites and platitudes?

Self-Care
I would like to turn now to the welfare of our members. In the past year, many members have been reassigned to subject teaching and other school activities which severely impinged on their capacity to fulfil their guidance counselling role.

Despite the fact that they had discussions with management about the impact of reduced timetabling for guidance counselling activities, members have frequently informed us of the impossible demands placed on their time. It is not sustainable to continue in that capacity as it will inevitably damage their physical and mental health and impair their professional judgement.

We have reached a point where the cuts will soon be self-defeating. Based on research in Sweden, the price we will pay as society in the future for the cuts being made today, will be very high.

Saying ‘no’ does not come easy to most guidance counsellors, yet it may be the most important decision you make to protect your professional role in your work place. You cannot be realistically expected to deliver a comprehensive service in circumstance where your time to do the job has been drastically cut!

I have found that over the years many guidance counsellors, because of their ‘giving’ nature, take on additional duties which are not core to their role in schools. It may be time take a look at these and shed these duties. Where agreement cannot be reached there are established processes to find a solution. Your branch officers are always a valuable source of advice and support.

It is essential that if you find yourself in a position where demands on your time are excessive, in breach of your contract of employment, and wholly inappropriate you should seek the support of your trade unions. The Institute can give you advice and support but it is not a trade union. It does not have negotiating powers. What we should and must do is to support each other through local cluster support groups, so that no member is left alone in a vulnerable situation without support in their individual workplace.

We are fortunate as an Institute to be able to call on the wisdom and support of many experienced members to provide advice and assistance in particular circumstances, but we must use the trade unions for support too.

Supervision
In our discussions with management, we have insisted that members are released for supervision to ensure that support, care and advice for our professional practice is maintained. In this regard I want to thank members for cooperating with the changes to the counselling supervision groups to ensure that all those in supervision obtain five sessions in the academic year despite the budget cutbacks to the service. The difficult task of reorganising this was undertaken by Elizabeth Tynan, our Vice-President.

It involved long and arduous discussions with Branch supervision organisers, counselling supervisors and the Institute’s sub-committee on supervision.

My thanks go to all the members who assisted Elizabeth in completing this very difficult task. We will continue to engage with the Management bodies and the NAPD to ensure that members’ professional practice is supported and we adhere to the counselling guidelines in our code of ethics.

The best way to rebut comments about inappropriate counselling practices is to regularly attend supervision to ensure that we maintain the highest professional standards. It is worth noting there has never been an acknowledgement of the additional training many members undertake, in areas like CBT and reality therapy, at their own expense and in their own time to support their counselling practice.

Vision
You will have received a copy of the Institute’s Vision document for discussion at Branch level. This is a very valuable contribution, carefully drafted by the Role document committee. It outlines future challenges, opportunities and a direction for the Institute. The document deserves careful examination, discussion and detailed consideration by all members. It highlights major challenges for the professional role of the Institute and it has major resource implications for members in seeking designation of title, regulation of the profession and proper compliance procedures. I want to acknowledge and commend the work of the Committee which drafted the document, under the guidance of Maureen Maughan, and thank them for their dedication and commitment to the task.

Constitution
In addition to setting out our vision we also need to reform urgently existing structures to ensure that the Institute responds effectively to the sectoral needs of all our members. Our current structures do not allow members working in sectors other than those at second and further education, to contribute in a meaningful way at Executive and sub-committee level. This issue needs to be openly discussed and addressed. I have asked the Constitutional sub-committee to prioritise the matter and bring proposals to the National Executive and subsequently to Branches for consideration, after which they should be presented for debate at the AGM in 2014, which is a constitutional year.

Your participation in this debate is critical to the future of the Institute. You have the power to shape the future direction of this Institute and I urge you to strongly engage in the debate and ensure that we have a strong vibrant professional voice for guidance counselling in all sectors and for all citizens.

Engagement
There are also a number of other areas that require your engagement. Reform of the Junior Cycle and the new legislation which establishes the Education Training Boards, amalgamates VECs and sets out a new role for SOLAS, could have a major impact on how we work into the future. In this regard I want to urge those of you who work in the adult sector to fully participate in discussions about developments that affect this sector that your clients are afforded the professional advice they need, to maximise their skills and talents.

Members working in the adult sector seem to be still unclear about how the proposed changes will affect their capacity to respond to client’s needs. I believe we need to be proactive with regard to the significant changes that are coming down the track.

Tadgh Crowley is the National Executive representative for the adult sector and I urge you to fully engage with him to ensure that your voice is heard and your concerns are clearly articulated in the appropriate places.
Equally I would like members who are involved with the new Junior Cycle Pilot Programme to engage with Aoife Walsh, our Institute’s representative on NCCA Junior Cycle committee, to ensure that your views inform her contribution to discussions on the new programmes.

One of the new areas under discussion is a short course on Guidance in the Junior Cycle. It is very important that there is widespread discussion among our members working at second level to inform this debate. There is anxiety among members that engaging with any such discussion will lead to an exclusive curriculum based guidance counselling service at the expense of a holistic approach. There is concern among members that management in some schools might use such an approach to meet the statutory requirement of providing ‘appropriate guidance’.

There are no circumstances where this approach would be acceptable and should be challenged legally by parents and advocacy bodies on behalf of the young people.

Recently, the NCCA committee on SPHE has been reconstituted and discussion has commenced on proposed changes to its assessment and delivery in schools. Thelma Jones is our Institute’s representative on the SPHE committee and I am sure she would welcome your views on the proposed changes. Thelma, Aoife and Tadhg are at the Conference today and will be at the AGM tomorrow so please take the opportunity to speak with them. I would also like to see extensive discussion at Branch level on these matters.

**Research**

I cannot stress enough that it is absolutely vital, to enable us to negotiate and lobby on your behalf, that you support and participate in research we undertake. This is how we can compile the evidence that underpins our lobbying efforts and bring about a change in Government thinking. We need to be armed with strong evidence based research to illustrate in concrete terms the value of your work in economic and social terms. I urge you to help by supplying detailed analysis of your work when asked.

**3rd Level**

I want to take this opportunity to thank and commend the Directors of the initial training courses in Guidance Counselling in the third level colleges for their expressions of support, publicly and privately for the work of our members. I hope to meet with them again in the near future to explore how we might further collaborate in the promotion of quality guidance counselling services for all who have a genuine interest in promoting and supporting the holistic model of guidance counselling, which is the bedrock of what we are about.

**Resourcing**

In the Conference Handbook I have briefly referred to the importance of resourcing the Institute. I would like to take up this issue again. Let me be blunt for a minute. The Institute will not be able to deliver what you expect it to deliver without sourcing additional resources. There is no escaping this fact and we are deluding ourselves if we think otherwise. To contribute to the educational debate we need to resource the Institute. I would like to take up this issue again.

The energy and enthusiasm here today reflects our ability to deal with the pressures we face and respond appropriately in a professional, focused and considered way that reflects the values which guide our work. While we are facing challenges, we have a deep tradition of loyalty to our students, our work and our colleagues that will sustain us. And while the future is a little foggy at the moment and we face challenges, some of which I have highlighted today, I have every confidence that we can preserve and develop the profession further.

**Conclusion**

I have in recent weeks listened carefully to guidance counsellors, teachers, year heads, principals and assistant principals about the increasing pressures they face in trying to support students who are at risk. There is no doubt we are witnessing a silent but steady dismantling of support services in our schools. We are seeing management strive to cope with competing demands in a system populated with colleagues who are struggling to maintain standards.

In a couple of years’ time we will see disimprovements in retention and progression figures among the student population and we will be able to link this regression directly to the short sighted and destructive policy decisions that this Minister has presided over in the past two budgets.

It is very clear to me that we need to continue to demonstrate to the policy drivers within the Department Education and Skills and the Government that the decisions they made in relation to the provision of Guidance Counselling services are severely flawed. They will have profound social and economic consequences for stated objectives in relation to employment creation, economic growth and social inclusion.

As an institute we must continue to put forward strategies that will address their negative impact. I know you and your colleagues around the country who are not here today are working incredibly hard to support your clients. The students and adults whom you deal with on a daily basis regularly give strong testimony to your genuine concern for their welfare.

I applaud your dedication and professionalism. And on behalf of the Institute I want to strongly affirm and support you in your work. At the moment our profession is experiencing speed bumps. We are being asked to do an awful lot more with a lot less. These demands are taking us away from our core work. We do not have enough time to meet the growing need for our unique skills; listening, interpreting, empathising, advocating, mediating, etc. We have been hurt by flippant throw away comments. We are bruised.

But we are recovering.

The increasing but necessary requirements of complying with charitable status legislation and new regulatory conditions impose a lot of hidden but essential work imposed on officers. Much of this work is demanding and forensic in nature but does not necessarily make headline news among the membership and is carried out without any acknowledgement by us.

I have previously referred to the enormous voluntary contribution of members of the Institute who give of the time, advice and expertise in so many different ways. I want on your behalf to thank them sincerely for their continued commitment to the Institute whether they are members of the following sub-committees: Supervision, Allocations, Finance, Public relations, Role document, Adult, Professional Development, Constitutional, Qualifications and membership, Strategy, Labour market, Psychometric Testing, the Guideline Editorial Board or act in a liaison role with state agencies, professional bodies or advocacy groups.

Let me be blunt for a minute. The Institute will not be able to deliver what you expect it to deliver without sourcing additional resources. There is no escaping this fact and we are deluding ourselves if we think otherwise. To contribute to the educational debate we need to resource the Institute. I would like to take up this issue again.
The University of Limerick is recognised as one of the key providers of professional training in Guidance Counselling in Ireland. We are now in a position to offer a new Master of Arts in Guidance Counselling and Lifespan Development in the Department of Education and Professional Studies.

The MA is a QQI Level 9, 90 ECTS credit programme which will be offered over two years on a part-time basis. It consists of a combination of taught modules, a professional practice placement and a research dissertation. This new programme is currently under review by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) for the purpose of appointment as a Guidance Counsellor in post-primary, further and adult education. This qualification does not provide graduates with a recognised teaching qualification as required by the Teaching Council.

Applications are invited from practising teachers and other professionals in cognate disciplines such as psychology, social and community work, human resources and health sciences. For the coming academic intake, 2013 – 2015, the MA in Guidance Counselling and Lifespan Development will be offered in the University of Limerick campus and the Carrick-on-Shannon Education Centre. As this is a new course, it is not yet recognised for membership of the Institute of Guidance Counsellors.

Further information on the MA is available at: http://www2.ul.ie/web/WWW/Faculties/Education_%26_HandHealth_Sciences/Departments/Education_and_Professional_Studies/Programmes

To apply online, access: http://www2.ul.ie/web/WWW/Services/Research/Graduate_School/Prospective_Students/How_to_Apply#applytaught

If you have any specific enquiries please contact: Dr. Lucy Hearne, Course Director, lucy.hearne@ul.ie
Rosses Point I always associate with a camping trip we did there many moons ago. We were planning a camping trip to Italy and as we had varied experience of camping we needed to see how we would get on together and what extras we would need. While it did give us some idea, the howling wind and chilly weather was a poor preparation for the searing heat of Sicily and Sorrento that we were to encounter a few months later. I certainly don’t think that the Radisson Blu hotel was there at that time but it proved an ideal venue once one had made the awkward journey from the South East to the North West. But once there, the journey from the desks to the bedrooms was almost as long. This was not because of the distance but due to the presence of friends, colleagues and acquaintances that slowed down this simple journey. Eventually however we made it and just about were ready for the opening presentations on the Thursday night.

First up was Tommy Gorman who spoke thoughtfully and incisively of his life and experience in the area. Then came Christy Kinneally who had a joke a minute about every county in the country. It was a marvellous, inspiring speech full of wit and wisdom and a suitable launching pad for the weekend. The buffet dinner was followed by a fine group playing a mix of jazz and traditional that was very impressive. It was certainly one of the most memorable and atmospheric lunches I’ve ever had at a conference. The food (I had cod gratin) was excellent also with tasty desserts and fine bottled water to see us through. The lighting (even, dare we say it, disco lighting) and bouquets of flowers on every table created a marvellous ambience and atmosphere. The food was magnificent and the speeches mercifully short. Frank Mulvihill was presented with an honorary Fellowship of the Institute and was genuinely moved to be so honoured. Dancing followed until the early hours with lively music and eager participants.

Saturday provided a well-attended and well-run AGM with motions, amendments, points of information and points of clarification which was conducted with great skill and acumen by the Standing Orders Committee. Pretty soon it was all over and we were soon ushered in to the magnificent function room at the pre banquet wine reception and we were quickly ushered in to the magnificent function room. The food was magnificent and the speeches mercifully short. Frank Mulvihill was presented with an honorary Fellowship of the Institute and was genuinely moved to be so honoured. Dancing followed until the early hours with lively music and eager participants.

Time to gather our belongings and go. There was no golf despite the presence of some fine courses nearby, but we did avail of a chance to clear the head and walk around Rosses Point. I could not see where we would have pitched the tents all those years ago but the Sligo Conference and AGM had given me some extra special memories to take their place.
Identifying School Values in a Value for Money Environment

Written by Paul Fields on March 29, 2012

I notice a recent news item phenomenon where individuals from the world of business and politics are invited onto the stock exchange floor to ring the bell, thus indicating the start of a day’s trading.

Once the bell is rung, the frantic activity of buying and selling shares and stocks begins. The world’s other stock exchanges tune in to look at emerging economic and financial trends in order to consider any relevant positive or negative impact for their own market. It is a case of one stock exchange watching the other stock exchanges in order to try and map a financial direction for the day. All of this is carried out with multiple phone lines, a multitude of computer screens, and a mass of different colour jackets worn by a myriad of traders.

The ringing of that bell starts the day’s activities and it is a symbol of importance to be invited to ring that bell: a place where the world awaits the bell ringing, a place where the bell and the bell ringer determine the start of economic activity.

The school staff room is also place where the ringing of a bell signals the start of the day’s activities. It is a bell of a different sound to that of the stock exchange. It is a bell which indicates that formal learning begins, where students know it is time to settle down to the business of learning, and one where teachers arrive in classrooms to begin the formal work of the day.

Across the world, school bells ring, all indicating that it’s time for the learning to begin. Unlike the stock exchange, no important outsider is invited to ring the school bell: the bell ringer is usually a teacher or principal.

In these examples, the bell has a common purpose of indicating the start of the day, though for two very different activities: one for economic activity and one for the beginning of the formal student learning process. The bells are similar in ringtone but aimed at different practices. In recent times I note that the echoes of the stock exchange bell are beginning to influence how we look at success in our schools. The economic language of the stock exchange bell is beginning to seep into our everyday language when considering how schools are progressing with their work. Words such as value for money, data driven analysis, outputs, business plans, and viability, may sit naturally on the stock exchange floor where one is measuring economic and financial activity.

However, in a school where one is working with children, these aforementioned business terms often ignore the importance of factoring in the developmental stages of the child. In the world of neo-liberalism, where everything is consumable and quantifiable, it is easy to look at schools in simple measurement terms. When the performance of the school is measured in a similar manner to that of the DOW, FTSE or NIKKEI, it is time to look at how a society can allow and encourage the language and vocabulary of marketisation of schooling to take place: time to say no to the echoes of the stock exchange becoming the language measuring schools.

The school and the economy have two entirely different sets of values. For a school, the values of inclusiveness, community, working with the disadvantaged and weak, are at the heart of all formal and informal student activities. I cannot see the world of business embracing all of these school values, but I can clearly see how the values of profit, value for money, individualism, data, and privatisation, sit very comfortably on the stock exchange floor.

The difficulty arises where one set of values is perceived as weak, as not contributing directly to short term economic growth. More importantly, the difficulty becomes more pronounced when one set of values is perceived as better that the other. Yet, that is how school values are perceived by the neo liberal agenda. Unless they measure up to the standards set in a privatised medium they are perceived as holding little economic value for the State. The value for money barcode has to ‘beep’ before a project can be sanctioned for schools. But, the barcode ‘beep’ belongs elsewhere amid a different set of values.

The school and the economy have two entirely different sets of values. For a school, the values of inclusiveness, community, working with the disadvantaged and weak, are at the heart of all formal and informal student activities.

So the next time the bell rings in the staff room ask yourself what are the values that you as a teacher stand for? What are the values of your school? What are the values which aid and support your students? What are the dominant values that try to quantify and measure all school activities? These are important questions for any school and society to ask about its education system.

Yes, we must provide an education service where there is transparency and value for money, but in every value for money service there has to be values that are core: schools need to identify their core values and not lose sight of them. School values need to create their own barcode which ‘beep’ for student inclusion, motivation, identity, and learning. The school bell needs to beep a little louder about its core values in order to be heard in society; the school bell needs to ring on the stock exchange floor.

Paul Fields is Director of Kilkenny Education Centre

From www.Educationmatters.ie
Jimmy Deenihan TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht on Wednesday 10 April launched a new MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) called Exploring Irish Identity which will present a broad overview of how history, geography and culture have interacted to create divergent, and sometimes contradictory, ideas of what it means to be Irish.

The MOOC is being designed and created by Hibernia College, in association with The Gathering, and is the first MOOC on the theme of Irish identity. The MOOC will be free of charge and starts on 27 May 2013. Registration for more information is open at mooc.hiberniacollege.com.

The MOOC will explore Irish history, literature and poetry, theatre and film, language, art, sport and landscape in a series of eight two hour presentations. The MOOC will have a potential audience of the 70 million people around the globe who claim ancestral links to the island of Ireland.

The MOOC will have contributions from prominent Irish academics and cultural icons. These include Dr. Pat Callan – Hibernia College, Kingsley Aikins – Diaspora Matters, Mary O’Flanagan – screenwriter, Dr. Maria Long – Botanical Society of the British Isles, Dr. Olive Braiden – National Gallery of Ireland, Dr. Fionnuala O’Neill – BEC consultants, Dr. Rory Hodd – BEC consultants, Dr. R. Nash – BEC consultants, Anna Davitt – Hibernia College, Alan Gilsenan – writer, director and film maker, Marian Keyes - author, Charlie Lennon – composer/ musician, Dr. Teresa Whitaker – Hibernia College and John Maguire – Quote Devil/ TV personality, Dr. Moynagh Sullivan - NUI Maynooth. Also involved are the GAA, Gaeltacht, Irish Theatre Festival, Birdwatch Ireland, Irish Film Festival, Duke Street Gallery, BEC Consultants. It will seek to identify key themes within Irish history and explore how they resonate through the realm of culture and the arts to create the broad tapestry of Irish identity.

Minister Deenihan said:

“The coming together of The Gathering’s ambitious plans to bring visitors to Ireland with Hibernia College’s ability to deliver online learning is a perfect partnership. Hibernia has transformed higher education in the last decade bringing online blended learning to new students at home and abroad. The Gathering is reaching out to the world and inviting it to come here this year. The MOOC is a perfect preparation to ensure maximum enjoyment of a visit to Ireland.”

President of Hibernia College, Dr Sean Rowland said:

“The idea for a MOOC exploring Irish identity was conceived in Hibernia College as a response to the Government’s The Gathering initiative. MOOCs have grown

Hibernia College, in association with The Gathering, develops free of charge MOOC which will present broad overview of Ireland to visitors before they arrive

MOOC’s potential audience of 70 million people
Hibernia College is now enrolling for its primary and post primary teacher education programmes. Both are academically accredited by HETAC and professionally accredited by the Teaching Council. Because the programmes are delivered through a blend of online and onsite tuition, they are ideal for anyone who wishes to structure their study around personal and work commitments.

**Higher Diploma in Arts in Primary Education**
Established in 2003, graduates from this programme now work as primary school teachers and principals around the country. The programme currently includes three blocks of school experience and teaching practice, three weeks in the Gaeltacht and onsite workshops at weekends.

**Professional Diploma in Education (PDE)**
Based on our highly successful Primary Education programme, this programme was established to encourage a broader range of people to consider post primary school teaching as a career. The programme currently includes three blocks of school experience and professional practice and onsite workshops at weekends.

**Key Facts**
- Professional accreditation: The Teaching Council
- Academic accreditation: HETAC (Level 8)
- Intakes: spring and autumn
- Duration: 2 years
- Delivered online and onsite at regional centres throughout Ireland
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Liz Donnelly

A comment on the “Why they don’t like Teachers” article

Change of Mind:

Many years ago I always felt like the Liberals and Pseudo-Liberals in the Corey Robin article that Fred Tuite spoke about in his article on “Why they don’t like Teachers”. I considered teachers to be a little odd, not really with it, not in the real world, and definitely living a very boring existence...somewhere where I just did not want to be. I had been attending a girls’ school in Dublin, a convent school, a high achieving place, but some of us kids were real pain in the necks- as I see now that I look back! I remember going with some others to complain one of the teachers who had taken up our homework one day, and had the audacity not to give it back to us corrected the next day....we were peeved! Times have changed!

Teachers were nothing definite, as far as I could see, they were not doctors or lawyers or businessmen/women. They were nothing really, going nowhere, had no ambition. Boring.

I went to UCD to study science when I finished school- not very politically correct as we expected to study Arts really. After three years here I went to Rome to study for a degree there in the science of Education-which they called ‘Pedagogia’. It was a complete eye opener! The people I met up with had a much wider view of the world than myself. I remember the Italians and Germans being very well-versed in Joyce and asking my opinion on him...at that stage he was anathema here! WOW! I was so impressed with their world view- in politics, in history in literature. It was a mind blowing experience! The education from my peers was as good as the education I got from my lectures!

As you might remember, Plato in his discourses explains at one stage that ‘the contemplation of Beauty gives the heart wings’. I found that the study of Education in this situation lifted me up and gave my heart wings. Everything about it became fascinating- I realised there was a wonderful world out there- so many things, so much of peoples gone by, so much to do for people around the world at present. This has always remained with me, and has made me laugh at my prejudices...so utilitarian, so short! Education is the future for all mankind, the way forward, the way to make steps in the right direction, the way to build, the effective way to help the next generation, to help the world!

I get impatient when the kids here don’t come in to school! I have a brother working in the slums in Nairobi, who tells me there is no free primary education for slum people there- they are being taught to lobby for it at the moment. In Uganda, a friend, recently retired, went out for 6 months and found that in a school of 700 she was the only teacher, the kids came in for school every morning at 8.00, often no chair to sit on, never any pens, 2 or 3 books, but dying to learn, to be educated. Funny isn’t it? Perhaps it’s us; perhaps we are spoilt, know it all – and yet know nothing. If we don’t change our tune it will all pass us by!

Or perhaps more people need the opportunity to go away, and become less insular?

The picture shows the Autumn Graduation at NUIG in 2012 when Sean Beatty was awarded an honorary degree by NUIG Prof. Browne, President and Nollaig McCongail, Registrar and Vice-President with Sean Beattie, who worked for many years in Carndonagh C.S

The award was for contribution to heritage and history in Donegal. Sean was on the organising committee of the Donegal AGM in 2004 and was responsible for the publication of the AGM prospectus. He is currently engaged as co-editor of a new ATLAS OF DONEGAL to be published in May by Cork University Press.
Scenes from Sligo Conference
Blackrock Further Education Institute (BFEI)

SCD will move to new premises during 2013-2014 and the College will become known as Blackrock Further Education Institute (BFEI)

Full-time courses for September 2013
An alternative pathway - outside CAO points system

Accounting Technician
Business Studies or Business Studies with Marketing
Digital and Social Media Marketing
Retail Management and Marketing - New

Applied Psychology
Fire & Ambulance
Community and Emergency Services Management - New

Beauty and Body Therapy
Complementary & Holistic Therapies
Remedial and Sports Massage Therapies
Advanced/Spa Therapies
Theatrical & Media Make-Up
Nail Technician & Salon Administrator
Retail Pharmacy & Beauty Sales Assistant

Interior Design
Jewellery Design - New
Garden Design
Landscape Design
Arts with Business Management - New

Creative Multimedia with App Development
PC Maintenance & Technical Support
Computer Science - New
Advanced Computer Applications for the Cloud - New

CISCO (CCNA) Networking
Cloud Computing Technologies - New

Open Days
Wednesday 8 May 2013 2pm - 8pm
Wednesday 28 August 2013 10am - 2pm

No tuition fees, Grants, VTOS, Alternative pathways to degrees, Mornings only courses, up-skilling and retraining, Professional qualifications, Career opportunities, Set up your own business, Small classes, 100m DART and train

www.scd.ie office@scd.ie phone 1 850 265 534
Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) has recently announced a significant stimulus for the Limerick and Mid-West region’s economy with the unveiling of its €200m plus ‘Campus 2030 Masterplan’.

The Masterplan, launched by Minister Jan O’Sullivan at LIT’s Limerick School of Art & Design (LSAD) city centre campus at Clare Street, Limerick, is in response to unprecedented growth across LIT discipline areas such as Art and Design, Engineering and Humanities. It also reflects the expansion in LIT’s Enterprise Centres and the applied research capabilities, which were not part of the original masterplans when the campuses were developed during the late 1990s.

The investment will see an additional 50,000sq metres of new facilities as well as extensive refurbishment of existing facilities. It will be invested across LIT’s four existing campuses – its Moylish Park headquarters; LSAD (Clare Street, Limerick); its LIT Tipperary campus in Thurles and Clonmel – as well as a brand new 7,000sq metre new campus at Coonagh, Limerick. The three Limerick campuses will be renamed after the ancient kingdoms of Munster – Desmond (City Centre), Thomond (Moylish) and Ormond (Coonagh) – where LIT draws the vast majority of its students.

The Masterplan will amount to the most significant expenditure by a third level institute outside of Dublin over the coming decades, with the overall investment set to be a key element of the city’s reinvigoration. The €20m Phase One of the programme will commence next year and comprise the development of the new Irish Fashion Incubator enterprise centre; the reinvention of an existing 7,000sq building as the centrepiece of the new Ormond campus in Thurles and Clonmel – as well as a brand new 7,000sq metre new campus at Coonagh, Limerick. The three Limerick campuses will be renamed after the ancient kingdoms of Munster – Desmond (City Centre), Thomond (Moylish) and Ormond (Coonagh) – where LIT draws the vast majority of its students.

Other key elements of the project to follow will include LIT’s first student villages for the Ormond and Desmond campuses, as well as an integrated ‘DOT’ (for Desmond, Ormond, Thomond) transport system. Other aspects will include the development of new civic spaces on all campuses including Thomond plaza adjacent to Thomond Park, which will link to the existing Moylish Campus with the famous rugby venue, and at O’Brien Park, Clare Street, which will be linked to LSAD.

The highly ambitious programme is in response to the current capacity challenges at LIT as well as an anticipated 30% increase in LIT student numbers, to 9,000, over the period of the plan. In comparison to both national and international standards, LIT is currently under-resourced in terms of infrastructural capacity at the moment when compared to national and international norms. This investment will ensure that LIT staff, students and the wider community will have improved facilities. The facilities will build on the strong academic reputation and the proven track record of enterprise support of LIT which already has three enterprise centres on its campuses providing employment and research opportunities for its graduates and local start up and established businesses.

Said LIT President Dr. Maria Hinfelaar, “This is not just a milestone moment for our Institute but our city and region as we truly believe that this will be a catalyst in the transformation of Limerick and the wider region. It’s a milestone for us as we are embarking on an unprecedented level of expansion. It will bring LIT to a new level, by not just dealing with existing capacity issues but facilitating increased demand for places on our undergraduate and post-graduate courses. A good example of the current demand for places at LIT is our School of Art and Design, which is ranked in the top 50 such colleges in the world but has 900 CAO applications for just 200 places each year. Satisfying student demand for our courses so that the quality of our infrastructure will match the quality of our teaching, our applied research and our enterprise supports, is the cornerstone objective of this Masterplan. We are extremely engaged also with the impact it will have on Limerick City Centre, bringing more people and breathing new life into the city core.”
Review of www.classroomguidance.ie

Fred Tuite

If you have not been to the www.classroomguidance.ie website recently then I strongly suggest you pay it a visit. In your work these days you are likely to have increased class contact and having resources ready to meet those is a regular challenge. The new version of the site has been redesigned to service and support Guidance Counsellors experiencing increased class contact by helping them free up valuable time and energy as they continue to be all things to all members of their school communities.

The site allows the Guidance Counsellor to go into class, go to the site, select the area or curriculum they are teaching and in three clicks have the required presentation up on their whiteboard.

1
2
3

The free presentations are curriculum based and very comprehensive and, if used in conjunction with the accompanying Learner’s Record, satisfy all learning outcomes required by the NCCA, TY or FETAC curriculum for the Leaving Cert Applied but of course it can be used for other courses and groups. They also contain embedded YouTube clips and are designed to entertain as well as educate.

The Learner’s Records or workbooks that supplement the presentations can also be viewed on the site and you can order them if you so decide.

Subjects & Modules Currently Covered:
Work Experience Level 5, Communications Level 5, Anti-Bullying (Unit 3 Cyber Bullying), Transition Year Work Experience, Leaving Cert Applied VPG Set, Guidance, Jobsearch, Enterprise, Work Experience, Working & Living, Community Work & Career Investigation. The prices of the Learner’s Records workbooks for the modules are very reasonable and range from €4 to €10. They also organise and focus the students and aid their learning.

New Development
An area on the site that has been recently created where presentations for class use in all areas of guidance will be made available for free. This area will be broken down into three areas; a ‘Leaving Cert’ page, a ‘Junior Cert’ page, and a ‘Guidance & Parents’ page.

Much like the great work that the “Guidance Resources” section of Tom Farrell’s website Careersnews.ie is doing to encourage the sharing of much needed classroom resources, classroomguidance.ie wants their resources to be convenient, easily accessible, entertaining and highly professional.

Over time the site hopes to draw from the huge amount of expertise out there from other Guidance Professionals who want to share their presentations and to help build a useful and used resource. Rather than have everyone paddling their own canoe this site can bring best ideas and practice together. Thus the site hopes to continually evolve to suit the changing environment in which Guidance Counsellors find themselves, as, to quote Charles Darwin, “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change.”

Brian Comerford is the Guidance Counsellor and author of the site. He has been working in St. Kevin’s College, Crumlin for the last ten years. This year he has taken a career break to develop this project. A DVD of presentations is available as some schools have issues with YouTube or slow or non-existent internet connections.

So Brian is looking for your contributions also. If you have a presentation that you feel other Guidance Counsellors could find useful please send it on to Brian at info@classroomguidance.ie and share it with us all.
This paper reports on a study of the destinations of a sample of 331 LCA graduates from 166 schools who completed the programme in 2008. The study was conducted by the authors in collaboration with Sheila O’Driscoll and Evelyn McLoughlin of the LCA and would not have been possible without the valued cooperation of LCA coordinators.

When the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) began work on the development the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) in 1993, the target of 90% retention rates up to and including Leaving Certificate was already part of the policy rhetoric (DES, 1995). While this ambitious target has yet to be reached, school completion rates have increased from 81.3% for 1996 entrants to a European high of 87.7% for 2004 entrants (DES, 2011). However, LCA participation rates have remained notably constant.

The LCA is a self-contained, pre-vocational alternative to the Leaving Certificate (Established) whose primary objective is ‘the preparation of participants for adult and working life and the development of the participants’ literacy and numeracy skills’ (DES, 2000a, p. 8). Its historical origins lie in school-to-work programmes developed during the 1980s with the European Social Fund support (Gleeson, 1990) at a time of growing youth unemployment across Europe. It is located across Levels 4 and 5 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) along with the other Leaving Certificate programmes.

Participating students testify to their enjoyment of the LCA programme, their growth in self-esteem and self-confidence, increased awareness of the world of work and development of skills and motivation (DES, 2000b; Ó Donnabháin, 2001). They are particularly positive about the student task, work experience, the flexible learning environment and student-teacher relationships (Boldt, 1998; Ó Donnabháin, 2001; Somers, 2008).

This was designed as a school to work programme and not all students remain on to complete the full programme. The SCDC (2001, p. 14) report shows that 33% of the 1997-1999 cohort did not complete, up to 36% for 1998-2000. While acknowledging the difficulty of establishing student attrition rates, Banks et al. (2010, p. 28) noted that ‘a significant number do not complete the programme… motivated by a combination of a rejection of their school experiences and the attractions of paid employment’.

LCA PARTICIPANTS
Some 5% of 2006-8 Leaving Certificate students took the LCA programme, of whom 54% were male.

Table Proportion of Leaving Certificate Students taking LCA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LCA Student Numbers</th>
<th>97/98</th>
<th>02/03</th>
<th>07/08</th>
<th>10/11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5308</td>
<td>7977</td>
<td>7437</td>
<td>6736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of all Leaving Certificate Students</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As may be seen from Table 1, national participation rates have remained constant since 2002 at a time when the number of participating schools has increased somewhat. As noted by Banks et al. (2010, p. 20) student access to the LCA depends on school attended, with larger schools catering to more disadvantaged populations most likely to offer the programme along with Community/Comprehensive schools, and schools located in Dublin (see Table 2). This reflects the general focus on educational underachievement and potential early school leavers.

Table 2 Proportion of Second-Level Schools Providing LCA by School Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Type</th>
<th>97/98</th>
<th>02/03</th>
<th>07/08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/Comprehensive</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACCESSING GRADUATES
Gaining access to school leavers presents many difficulties, particularly since the tightening of data protection regulations. Banks et al. (2010) drew from the national School Leavers Survey (SLS) data for 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2007. Their total sample size (Banks et al., 2010) was 9,700, of whom just 4.3% (417) completed the LCA. The LCA National Coordinator made very effective use of her contacts with schools to survey the destinations of 895 LCA graduates (57 schools) in 2000, 1338 (68 schools) graduates in 1999 and unknown numbers of 1997 and 1998 graduates (SCDC, 2001). For purposes of the current study the research team asked the programme coordinators in all 296 LCA schools to conduct telephone interviews with the first- and last-named LCA graduates students from their school’s (2006-8) class list using a common set of pre-piloted questions.

THE CURRENT STUDY
Responses were returned for 331 graduates across 166 schools. While it would have been preferable to collect such information face-to-face, participants were likely to be less inhibited when providing information by telephone. The fact that the interviews were conducted by 166 different co-ordinators is an obvious limitation of the study and, despite their best efforts the authors cannot guarantee that the survey administrators shared a common interpretation of the items.

Respondents were fairly equally distributed across school types – secondary (39%), vocational (31%), Community/Comprehensive (30%) – with 49% being male and 51% being female and were broadly representative of the LCA national cohort by gender and achievement with 49% being male as against 54% nationally and 24% achieving Distinctions as against 17% nationally. Virtually all had completed two years of the programme while some 5% had not taken the final examination.

Each respondent was asked if her/his first destination was Further Education/Training (FET) or employment. Those who had entered FET were asked for details regarding their course e.g. whether it was PLC, FAS, professional...
training. Those who had moved directly to the labour market were asked the name and nature of the job, whether it was regular full-time/part-time, temporary full-time/part-time. Those not in employment were asked if they were seeking employment, unemployed, unavailable for work etc. Respondents were also asked to indicate their current status – were they in employment, FET or professional training; were they seeking employment, unemployed, unavailable for work etc.; those in employment were asked the nature and status of their employment.

**DESTINATIONS**

The destinations of graduates immediately after completion of the LCA and eighteen months later are presented in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Destinations of LCA graduates (N=331)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Education/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking employment, unemployed, unavailable for work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost two-thirds had progressed to FET on completion of LCA in 2008 with 28% finding some form of employment. Eighteen months later the proportion in employment had increased to 34% while the combined category of those seeking employment, unemployed and unavailable for work increased by 17% to 26%. Only 13% of the whole sample found regular full-time employment immediately after completing the course. Eighteen months later this figure increased to 17%, while 8% of the total sample was in regular part-time employment with 6% in either temporary full-time or part-time employment.

When SCDC (2001) data on the first destinations of LCA graduates for 1997-2000 inclusive are compared with the current findings an interesting shift emerges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Comparison of first destinations for 2000/2008 graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Destinations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking/unavailable etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the proportion of graduates progressing to FET increased by some 15% between 2000 and 2008, the proportion going directly to the labour market declined accordingly. With almost two-thirds of 2008 graduates progressing to FET, this shift reflects the growing participation rates in post-secondary education in Ireland and the general influence of the ‘Diploma Disease’.

This shift is a recent phenomenon. Banks et al. (2010, xv) concluded that ‘LCA leavers are more likely to be in the labour market one year after leaving school and less likely than other school leavers to be in full-time education and training’ and that ‘LCA leavers have higher unemployment rates [18%] than other Leaving Certificate leavers [11%]’ (ibid, p. 110). While the current study found that 38% of respondents remained in FET eighteen months after completing the LCA, drawing on their earlier data, Banks et al. (2010, p. 111) reported that 18% of LCA completers in 2005 were unemployed one year later and this is consistent with the proportion who were either unemployed or seeking employment after eighteen months in the current study.

**WORK DESTINATIONS**

Banks et al. (2010) reported that LCA graduates were most likely to be found in the services sector and in manual jobs. The employment destinations of participants in the current study who proceeded directly to the labour market and their destinations eighteen months later along with the work destinations of 1998-2000 cohort (SCDC, 2001) are presented in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Employment Destinations 2000/2008/2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main destinations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building / Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture / Horticulture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed/seeking employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unavailable for work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most common employment destination for LCA graduates immediately after completion in both studies was in retail sales. Some 40% of the 2006-8 cohort who did not continue in FET were either unemployed, seeking employment or unavailable for work eighteen months after completion of LCA. Changes in certain employment situations are indicative of the changing external environment e.g. the decline in Manufacturing, Catering/Tourism, Clerical and Building employment and the increase in Agriculture/Horticulture.

**FET DESTINATIONS**

As already noted 62% of 2008 LCA graduates progressed directly to FET as against 48% of 2000 graduates (SCDC, 2001). A significant proportion of the 2008 cohort remained in that sector eighteen months later.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6: Education/Training participants (2008/2010)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education/Training participants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Leaving Certificate Course/ FE (N Ireland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered FÁS Apprenticeship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other FÁS Training Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/on the job Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture/Fishing training agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most popular FET option was FETAC Level 5 PLCs, followed by FÁS training courses, including apprenticeships. Banks et al. (2010, p. 128) report that LCA graduates ‘have the highest levels of participation in PLC courses’ while ‘almost twenty per cent… pursue state sponsored training programmes’ (ibid, p. 139). The most popular PLCs chosen by the 2006/8 cohort included Childcare (15%), Hairdressing/Beautician (15%), Media/Information Technology (11%), Business/Office Administration/Sales (10%), Tourism and Hospitality (8%), Construction and Engineering (5%), Artistic/Creative (5%). 44% of these students achieved certification after one year while a further 34% were still in PLCs after eighteen months.
While the numbers taking PLCs had understandably declined after eighteen months, participation rates in professional, on-the-job and other training courses had increased. The most popular courses included Childcare (10%), FAS Training (9%), Hairdressing (7%), Beautician (6%), Youth Development (5%), and FAS Apprenticeship (5%). The remainder were spread across a wide variety of courses including Photography, Advanced Dance, Montessori Teaching and Nursing.

Although transfer rates from LCA to FET are very high, the current study would suggest that over 20% left without any certification. One does however hear some good news stories anecdotally while it is mildly encouraging to read that ‘school leavers completing the LCA programme do not differ from either early school leavers or lower performing LCE/LCPV groups in their progression patterns’ (Banks et al., 2010, p. 145).

DESTINATIONS AND GENDER

Interesting if predictable gender differences emerge both in terms of FET participation and employment settings. Only 48% of males as against 76% of females progressed to FET on completion of the LCA while 51% of males as against 23% of females made or attempted to make the transition to employment. Similar patterns were in evidence eighteen months later when 44% of males as against 23% of females were in employment with 50% of females as against 31% of males remaining in FET.

Table 7: Destinations by gender (2008 & 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destinations</th>
<th>Male (n=158)</th>
<th>Female (n=163)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLC Course</td>
<td>21% 18%</td>
<td>51% 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered FAS Apprenticeship</td>
<td>8% 3%</td>
<td>1% 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Education / Training</td>
<td>19% 10%</td>
<td>24% 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>42% 44%</td>
<td>14% 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking employment/ unemployed/ unavailable</td>
<td>9% 23%</td>
<td>9% 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1% 2%</td>
<td>1% 3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some Broader Issues Arising

Given the programme’s ‘school to work’ origins, the relatively high unemployment of LCA graduates with correspondingly low employment levels is the most obvious issue. The employment future of the large number remaining in FET remains to be seen. The increasing tendency for LCA graduates to proceed to FET certainly raises serious questions about a curriculum designed with adult and working life as its main focus. It is regrettable that the LCA has become increasingly invisible in national policy documents since the 2000-2006 National Development Plan and the Education Strategy Statement (2001-4) and there can be no great confidence that this issue will be taken seriously now that the focus has shifted to junior cycle review on the one hand and the relationship between post-primary and higher education on the other.

As with many pre-vocational programmes, parity of esteem is a major issue for the LCA (Gleeson and O’Flaherty, forthcoming). Whereas the National Economic and Social Council (NESC, 1993) recommended that university-progression routes would be clearly linked into particular further education and training options with a policy of positive discrimination in favour of LCA graduates, that recommendation has not been pursued. This failure is reflected, for example, in the placing of the LCA in the “Leaving Certificate no exam category” in the 2007 SLS report because of ‘the different grading system utilised in the LCA and the small numbers of respondents who took this programme’ (McCoy et al., 2007, p. 11) and in the change of policy on the part of FÁS Ireland in March 2010 which means that LCA graduates are now bracketed with Early School Leavers and differentiated from ‘mainstream’ students.

While the proposed Common Awards System will provide systematic progression opportunities to the first year of higher education programmes for Level 5 and 6 FETAC award holders, the need for a rigorous follow-up study of LCA graduates who proceed to FET (and higher education) emerges from the current study.

Regrettably, employers lack information about the LCA. Somers (2008, p. 154) reported that the ‘LCA programme was not well known to employers’ who either accorded the qualification a lower status than the LCE or were unaware of its existence. In this context it is ironical that employers who had taken LCA students for work experience ‘felt that elements of LCA such as task completion and achievement, work experience and the Personal Achievement Task encourage the development of the qualities of self-confidence, co-operation, teamwork, problem solving, independence and initiative [but not] decision-making skills’ (Doyle, 2009, p. 93).

The current study raises some pressing issues regarding the continued fitness for purpose of the LCA in an environment that has changed considerably since the programme was designed almost twenty years ago. This is reflected in the recommendation of the Task Force on Student Behaviour (DES, 2006, p.125) that a senior cycle programme ‘of possibly one-year duration, with emphasis on pre-employment’ be introduced. It is time to face the implications of this shift for the identity of the LCA and its curriculum. Other worrying trends emerging from the above paper include the gendered nature of graduates’ destinations with respect both to FET and employment. And of course the broader issues such as the public invisibility of the LCA and the social class ‘ghettoisation’ associated with ring-fencing are very real. It is indeed time to go back to the drawing board!

Notes on Authors

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Dr Joanne O’Flaherty, Lecturer in Education, Department of Education and Professional Studies, University of Limerick.

References


Careers in the Irish Seafood Industry

BIM invites applications for its full-time and part-time Level 5 Certificate training in Commercial Fishing, Aquaculture and Marine Engineering.

FETAC Level 5 Certificate in Commercial Fishing
This course operates from the BIM National Fisheries College, Greencastle, Co. Donegal and covers eight modules including Fishing Gear Maintenance and Repair, Fishing Vessel Operations and Navigation and Stability. The course prepares students to work safely on a commercial fishing vessel. This course includes work practice on the BIM training vessel MFV “Lough Swilly” at the college.

Course Start Date: September 2013

FETAC Level 5 Certificate in Aquaculture
This full time course operates from the BIM Regional Fisheries Centre, Castletownbere, Co. Cork and includes modules on finfish, shellfish and seaweed ongrowing, hatchery production of fish and seafood hygiene management. This course will help you find work in an existing aquaculture business, offer progression to further training at third level or assist you in setting up your own aquaculture business.

Course Start Date: February 2014

Fishing Vessel Engineering
This course operates from the BIM National Fisheries College, Greencastle, Co. Donegal and is approved by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport as leading to the Engineer Officer (Fishing Vessel) qualification. Modules include Material Science, Engineering Drawing, Marine Engineering and Workshop Processes. Students are given a thorough grounding in light engineering skills that prepare them for work on board commercial fishing vessels. There are options to progress through DoT qualifications at Class 3, 2, and 1 following periods of sea service in approved vessels.

Course Start Date: September 2013

More details are available on www.bim.ie where application forms may be downloaded.

BIM Contact Details
Training Support Services, Fisheries and Training Division, Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Crofton House, Crofton Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.
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In these changing times of educational change and diminishing resources, it is indeed opportune to reflect upon the professional role of the guidance counsellor in terms of its evolution and advance some personal reflections on how we might face a future of great uncertainty. It is disconcerting to learn that one-to-one counselling has been reduced in our schools and colleges by some 51.4 percent since recent cutbacks were introduced. These then are challenging times but we need more than ever to be radical, creative and focused. Paulo Freire might say, in every desperate situation, there exists the possibility of hope. In fact, Freire is of the view that hope exists as an ontological requirement for human beings and one must always adopt a position of critical optimism: “unhopeful educators or counsellors contradict their practice; they are men and women without address and without a destination!”

( Paulo Freire, 1999, p46).

American Influences and the Vocational Guidance Movement

It was during the early 1900s that modern guidance counselling in the United States had its first origins when the progressivist education movement was at its zenith. John Dewey in Democracy and Education had suggested that pupils and teachers should plan together, that the child’s personal and social environment should be enhanced and that the developmental needs of each child should be nurtured and fostered (Dewey, 1916, p50). Following Dewey’s publication of Democracy and Education, the progressive education movement advocated that the school should cater for a variety of abilities and aptitudes in a more positive and encouraging classroom environment. Such an educational philosophy of a holistic view of development with a caring, pastoral schooling environment appealed greatly to many teachers and established the first foundation stones of the guidance counselling movement. Indeed, the ideas of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Jacques Maritain, Paul Tillich, Paulo Freire and John Dewey influenced greatly the early pioneers of modern education. These intellectual giants extolled a view of a more pupil-centred education which would cater for the academic, personal, spiritual and vocational needs of pupils. School counsellors were easily attracted to this new evolving philosophy of education. Near the end of a long career as a social reformer, Frank Parsons established a Vocations Bureau in Boston, in 1908, and the purpose of which was to provide vocational guidance for out of school youths. Parsons believed that individuals must have dependable information about occupations and about themselves in order to make good occupational choices. He also considered that “the role of the vocational counsellor was to make such information available and to help individuals comprehend and utilise it (Baker, 1996, p5). By 1913, the National Vocational Guidance Association was organised and in 1915, the first guidance journal, Vocational Guidance was published. A new helping profession with the title of guidance counselling had been launched.

Apart from the Vocational Guidance Movement and the influence of Parsons, there were several parallel movements in the early part of the twentieth century which ushered in what would later be known as the Mental Health Movement. However, it was a publication in 1908, entitled A Mind That Found Itself, which brought about major reforms in the treatment of mental illness and would later encourage the introduction of Health Education Programmes in schools (Beers, 1908, p78). The author, Clifford Beers, had been a former mental patient, and he focused the attention of an increasingly humanitarian public to the plight of the mentally ill. He states:

A pen rather than a lance has been my weapon of offence and defence; for with its point I have felt sure that I should one day prick the civic conscience into a compassionate activity, and thus bring into a neglected field earnest men and women who should act as champions for those afflicted thousands least able to fight for themselves (Beers, p78).

Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic ideas were becoming increasingly significant in the treatment of mental health problems and in mental health studies. William James, Adolf Meyer and other psychologists were instrumental in launching the mental hygiene movement to educate the public about psychiatric illness and its treatment and with the introduction of mental health policies for schools, school guidance counsellors were now in the forefront of implementing health education programmes in elementary and second-level schools across America.

Psychometric Testing:

The introduction and development of standardised psychometric tests was to have a major impact on the growth of the guidance movement. In 1905,
the French psychologist Alfred Binet and his colleague, Theodore Simon, developed a scale to measure mental ability in order to help the school system in Paris to classify students for educational instruction. Stanley Baker reminds us:

“Binet’s scale popularised the idea of using psychometrics to solve practical problems and was also the forerunner of modern day intelligence testing. . . . Psychometrics offered school guidance not only the tools for assessment but also corresponding respectability because the tools seemed so precise and scientific. Psychometrics emphasised objectivity, individual differences, prediction, classification and placement” (Baker, p5).

During World War One, the armed forces developed The Alpha Test, The Beta Test and other psychometric techniques which were used in high schools. The success of the military use of tests popularised the idea of using group tests in education.

Space Exploration:
The guidance movement received a further impetus from the launch of the first Russian satellite, Sputnik One. Americans were alarmed by this major scientific accomplishment as they perceived a Russian dominance in science and technology. Politicians responded by introducing the National Defence Education Act of 1958. This NDEA law provided federal funds for training guidance counsellors and for the enhancement of school counselling programmes. There was now a perceived desire to identify academically trained students and guide them into strategic careers in science and engineering. Fears of Russian educational superiority after the launch of the space satellite, Sputnik One, represented the lift off of the American school guidance counselling movement (Baker,p5). Within six years of the introduction of the NDEA, the number of full-time, high school guidance counsellors had increased from 12,000 to 30,000 (one for every 510 students).

Developments in Counselling Psychology: Directive and Non Directive Approaches
The idea of psychoanalysis held a special attraction for Americans, but for it to become assimilated into the culture required an Americanisation of Freud’s thinking. John McLeod suggests:

There emerged in the 1950s a series of writers whoreinterpret Freud in terms of their own cultural values. Foremost among these were Carl Rogers, Eric Berne, Albert Ellis, Aaron Beck and Abraham Maslow. Many of the European analysts who went to the US such as Erikson and Fromm, were also prominent in redefining psychoanalysis from a wider social and cultural perspective, thus making it more acceptable to an American clientele (McLeod, 1998,p 18).

“...people could better themselves and emphasised the pursuit of personal happiness of the individual as a legitimate aim in life.”

American society resonated to the ideas of psychoanalysis for the ‘American Dream’ insisted that all people could better themselves and emphasised the pursuit of personal happiness of the individual as a legitimate aim in life. Indeed, counselling and psychotherapy offered a fundamental radical method of self-improvement. American society demonstrated a much greater degree of social mobility. McLeod considers: “People were likely to live, work and marry outside their original neighbourhood, town, social class or ethnic group. There were therefore many individuals who had problems in forming satisfactory relationships, or having a secure sense of personal identity (McLeod, p19).” There was now a greater need for vocational guidance and personal counselling. Numerous visits by Sigmund Freud, C.G. Jung and Alfred Adler to the United States gave a powerful impetus to the new science of counselling psychology.

With the emergence of a school guidance profession between the years, 1930s-1950s, the key emphasis was on vocational guidance. Early Guidance Counsellors had the following responsibilities: vocational guidance, psychometric testing, subject choice and class selection, administrative responsibilities, attendance and follow-up, consultation with teachers and parents. However, from the fifties onwards the impact of Carl Rogers and his model of person-centred therapy was having an impact on education and counselling. Rogers’ view of the client as an equal and his positive view of the individual’s potential harmonised more with an American way of life that was positive in outlook than did the more pessimistic, deterministic Freudian Psychoanalysis. Rogers even suggested that the pupil or client assumed responsibility for solving his or her problems in this radical client-centred, and non-directive approach - a revolutionary departure from the directive, counsellor-centred model of an earlier era in American history. Directive and non-directive approaches each had proponents but the new emphasis represented merely a psychological shift from a ‘tradition-centred’ society to a more open ‘inner-directed’ way of live. “If I keep from imposing upon people they become themselves” was a favourite Rogerian comment. This person-centred approach to life and decision-making was very much in harmony with this psychological shift of a changing America in terms of social and cultural mobility.

In the school guidance counselling movement, the impact of Carl Rogers resulted in “the overnight replacement of testing by counselling as the key guidance function. In turn, counselling would rise to such eminence in the next few years that it would compete and contend with guidance in regard to the use of the counsellor’s time and the overall purpose of counselling his or her guidance. What began as an adjunct tool of guidance would now raise a challenge for ascendency in its own right” (Baker,p 19).

Rogierian person-centred therapy and counselling influenced and dominated the field of counselling both in schools and clinics, throughout the nineteen sixties and seventies. It was welcomed as an alternative model to the directive, patriarchal, authoritarian approaches in schools. However, there were criticisms of this model and many educationalists called for a more proactive approach - the emphasis on the therapeutic relationship was recognised as valuable but not sufficient for all occasions. J.M. Whittner called for a more preventionist, interventionist and developmental approach to school guidance counselling. He states:

Very little attention was being given to the co-equal emphasis on prevention and on environmental intervention techniques so desperately needed in schools. Little attention was being placed in counsellor education programmes on the consulting and the co-ordinating roles needed by effective developmental school counsellors (Whittner,1993,p 3).

Whittner’s advocacy for a more proactive developmental guidance approach came at a time when others were voicing similar views. It was a momentum which would bring significant change to an emerging model of guidance counselling in the period from the nineteen seventies to the present.

Developmental Guidance: Prevention to Diagnosis to Intervention:
Gilbert Wrenn in his highly acclaimed book, The Counsellor in a Changing World, which was published in 1962, chided guidance counsellors for having allowed themselves to become too narrowly focused on one-to-one counselling and the needs of the few. He recommended a more expansive approach and encouraged school counsellors to develop appropriate school guidance curriculum and proactive programming (Wrenn,1962,p46). James Conant in The American High School Today which was published in 1959, argued that all high school students should have access to a school counsellor (Conant,1959,p72). Likewise, Don Dinkmeyer, a distinguished Adlerian psychologist and educationalist, advocated a more developmental approach to guidance counselling.
This approach was very much in line with Adlerian principles in Individual Educational Psychology.

The American School Counsellor Association (ASCA) attempted to respond to the challenges through School Counselling 2000 and suggested a more integrationist approach:

School counsellors should work directly with students, teachers, community members, and employers collaboratively in order to develop policies and programmes that address the challenging problems that have been widely identified. . This more integrationist approach will find a balance between designing and delivering programmes in a curricular fashion that will enhance personal, social and educational problems. To do so, counsellors will work with teachers to offer programmes cooperatively and counsel students as effectively as possible individually and in groups but over a limited number of sessions. Consulting, coordinating and managing skills are needed in order to bring it together successfully (Baker,p12).

This more balanced approach combining careful intervention and prevention promised a greater degree of success than either approach alone. This particular model of a comprehensive, developmental approach to school counselling has been receiving considerable support from within and from outside the profession over the past decade.

In summary, it can be stated that in the American Guidance Counselling Model, the approach in the early decades of the twentieth century was based more on a Rogerian, person-centred focus with an emphasis on one-to-one counselling. However, criticisms of this approach resulted in a more developmental proactive style of guidance counselling which would achieve greater results for a greater number of pupils. Prevention and intervention were highlighted with the guidance counsellor cast in the role of consultant to parents, teachers, pupils and outside agencies. This more balanced approach seems appropriate for meeting the current and future developmental needs of a more diverse student population. Indeed, a succinct description of this more balanced philosophy is presented in the following school’s guidance programme from Wake County, North Carolina and it states:

Schools are a microcosm of society reflecting a culture characterised by diversity, complexity, and changing values in the home, school, and community. Today’s society affects our students in ways that can impact achievement. . Our school system supports a developmental, balanced approach to school guidance and counselling. Classroom guidance, small group and individual counselling, parent involvement, and other activities continue to be the focus of the plan. In addition, current needs may dictate that school counsellors respond in new roles such as staff developer, or case manager. School counsellors will assess the needs of the school, will create and implement a balanced guidance programme that address those needs, and will continuously evaluate the outcomes (Baker,p13).

**European Guidance and Counselling Dimensions**

In many European countries, the emphasis is very much on educational and career guidance. This tradition resulted from an unease with the adaptation of a US individual counsellor model which was first voiced by Ministers of Education at a European Community Meeting in 1976. Guidance provision was formally identified as a major need in secondary schools in 1976 and over the years two main models emerged for European secondary schools.

Guidance may be carried out by mainstream teachers who combine their guidance work with normal subject teaching and may or may not have had some specialist training. This approach is often based on a “home room” or “tutor group” arrangement in which a teacher is responsible for the welfare and educational guidance of a particular group of pupils for the whole school year and sometimes throughout their school career. Normally, these home room tutors represent the school’s “first line” guidance system (OECD report, 1996, p 20).

Austria, Denmark, Norway and Finland are examples of countries using this approach. It should be noted that only in Finland is specialist training compulsory before a teacher is allowed to offer educational and career guidance in school. (ii) The second model is to have specialist counselling often with a psychological background, based in schools - Normally, they do not teach except in those schools or systems in which educational and career guidance is part of the compulsory curriculum but they may organise workshops and programmes relating to various aspects of personal development, including educational guidance and preparation for the world of work (OECD report,p21).

In many European countries, responsibility for career guidance is divided between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour or Employment Agencies, both public and private. In France, the concept of a school based guidance counsellor is alien to the French; there are approximately 4,500 counsellors who work in 518 Centres for Information and Guidance (CIOs) throughout France. Counsellors are generally trained psychologists who specialise in guidance psychology. Counsellors guard their independence fiercely and divide their time between working in their offices and visiting two or three schools. Guidance Counsellors act as technical advisers to the principal and staff and also work as counsellors for pupils. In Britain, the school guidance counselling service was not to blossom as had been expected by the counsellors of the early and mid-seventies. This was due to changes within and outside the school, within the theory and practice of counselling itself and due to economic and political shifts which took place during that period. Within the schools, there was a movement away from specialist counselling to a system where more and more teachers were valuing and using counselling skills. The European Community Action Programme of 1985 advised that guidance counselling should not be a separate activity but an integral part of the curriculum. There also followed a shift in emphasis from personal counselling to educational and vocational counselling. In their recommendations, the Committee of Enquiry into Discipline in Schools set up in 1988, under the chairmanship of Lord Elton, urged every school “to develop a ‘whole school behaviour policy’ involving, and supported by, everyone directly involved with the school itself (Hughes, 1985,p13).” According to Richard Hooper and Peter Lang, the main reasons for this shift were the decrease in full-time counsellor posts and the closing of a number of full-time counselling courses due to lack of public funding.

Outside the school there were heated public debates regarding the aims and methods of education. The rise of Thatcherism in the eighties saw the re-emergence of “simplistic views about the preferability of traditional methods, of hard work and high standards, and of ‘tough-minded’ attitudes to the problems and needs of young people. In these circumstances, the growing conflict between counselling and establishment values might seem inevitable. Importance was attached to the education of students with skills suited to the perceived needs of industry. An effect of the economic recession of the 1980s was severe cut backs on what were considered to be non-essential services within education such as specialist needs teachers and guidance counsellors. By 1985, less than ten percent of schools in England and Wales employed a counsellor. Of the three hundred and fifty-one counsellors who had been working in the English and Welsh school system in 1977, only ninety remained in 1987 (Hughes, p 10). By 1993, school counsellors seemed to have come and gone. In the 1990s, what is often referred to as counselling may instead be “crisis conversations, general advice-giving, career interviews, informal pupil-teacher discussions or discipline-linked interviews (Hughes, p 18).” Fewer and fewer British schools are now employing counsellors, and though teachers are increasingly committed to the idea of counselling, they sometimes do not have the time to offer more than informal counselling during lunch hour…rather ominous!
Training Programmes:
The qualifications of Guidance Counsellors vary a great deal from country to country and within countries too. In Finland, guidance staff are highly qualified by international standards. Student counsellors are normally experienced and fully trained teachers who are selected for a full-time, one year of specialist training. Indeed, this writer is of the view that the Finnish model of school counsellor is very similar to the Irish model and represents one of the most advanced guidance counselling systems in Europe. Furthermore, it is cross-curricular and integrationist with the involvement of other teachers and community services.

The OECD Report of 1996, Mapping The Future: Young People and Career Guidance, could be written for 2013. It stated:

The key characteristic of most national guidance systems is incoherence, gaps, and unnecessary overlap - or a lack of any real system at all. More effective planning and liaison are without doubt part of the solution, but this can be difficult in some countries because of the different cultures of educational institutions and those working in the labour market (OECD report,p23).

The Report considers that this incoherence in guidance systems results in a weak professional identity which perhaps explains why recognition of the importance of educational and career guidance has been so long in coming. Similarly, career counsellors are not well integrated with the counselling, psychotherapy profession which prefers to focus on therapeutic issues and intense one-to-one counselling. “So career guidance too often finds itself in the wilderness, seen neither as a bona fide educational activity, nor as “real” counselling and lacking status in either field.”

Indeed, it is interesting to note that similar observations are made by Richard Sweet in the OECD Report of 2004, entitled Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap. He states:

Many of the problems that emerged during the review are general themes. These include poor co-ordination of services across portfolios and weak instruments for steering services, including lack of adequate evidence; poor monitoring of inputs and outcomes and weak accountability mechanisms; relatively old fashioned delivery methods and training and qualification arrangements that are ill-adapted to support more innovative delivery systems; large gaps in provision for example limited career education in schools and weaknesses in career information(OECD,p46).

Professor Ronald Sultana, University of Malta, had this to say of the OECD Report 2004. His observations are very similar to Richard Sweet’s and he calls for a more coherent system of guidance services that cater for the needs of the citizen in a more holistic manner and which targets career-related concerns across the life cycle. He states:

In particular, the research data indicates that while career guidance increasingly features on the agenda of many European governments, with goals for services being reframed in the light of lifelong learning policies, there are a number of serious weaknesses that need attending to. Access, for instance, tends to be largely limited to students and the unemployed. The focus is all too often on immediate decisions, failing to take into account lifelong learning and career development. Training for service providers tends to be limited and inappropriate, given the range of client needs that have to be catered for. There is often a lack of cross-sectoral collaboration between different ministries, and with stakeholders. The evidence base is too weak to provide policy makers with useful data on outcomes, costs and benefits. Most significantly, few European countries have developed a coherent system of guidance services that cater for the needs of the citizen in a holistic manner, and which targets career-related concerns across the life cycle. With career guidance taking increasingly varied and disparate forms, there is a need within countries for stronger mechanisms to articulate a vision and develop a strategy for delivering services more effectively (OECD report, p46).

The OECD report, 2004, is an outstanding study and review of guidance services which covers twenty-nine European countries and represents one of the most extensive datasets ever collected on guidance across Europe. It provides essential information which will help policy-makers and practitioners to benchmark their own systems in relation to those of others for years to come.

In summary, the key characteristic of most European guidance systems is a plethora of delivery mechanisms and a weak professional identity across member states. The ideals of nine key activities for careers education as outlined in the European Commission Report 1994, entitled Educational and Vocational Guidance in the European Community, have yet to be fully realised. These included:

- Information, Careers and Courses, Job Vacancies
- Assessment & Diagnostic Judgements
- Advice, Suggestion, Guidance
- Personal Counselling
- Work Experience and Work Shadowing
- Placement and Job Entry
- Advocacy and Negotiating Directly with Institutions
- Feedback from Employers and Individuals on Courses
- Follow Up

Guidance and Counselling in Ireland: A Retrospect To the Present

The Investment in Education OECD Report, 1966, argued that a career guidance service was needed in all secondary schools in Ireland and stated:

“We believe that the establishment of adequate career guidance is necessary in all branches of the education system.” The Report was followed by the momentous decision to introduce free secondary school education in September, 1967. The subsequent influx of 18,000 extra pupils from different backgrounds added a new momentum to the guidance counselling movement in Ireland and represented a decisive factor in the emergence of the guidance counselling profession. Further momentous developments in the period 1965–1967 occurred with the establishment of comprehensive and community schools; Regional Technical Colleges (IT Colleges) were established; a psychological service was introduced by the Department of Education and Science; the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee expanded its Vocational Guidance Service for schools under its authority by appointing a psychologist to run its service.

A huge volume of educational articles on the subject of guidance counselling resulted from this new awareness of its importance. Desmond Swan, Educational Psychology Department UCD, introduced an article on the subject in the May 1968 issue of The Secondary Teacher (May 1968, p.128) stated: ”When there was but one road around Ireland, the choice of routes could have presented no great difficulty to the traveller - he either went right or left. Things have changed since then. . . it makes no sense to set out on a journey without a guide or, at least, a sufficient knowledge of the route and reliable estimate of our chances of ever reaching our destination.”

Donald Akenson’s apt comments best articulated the great social, educational and economic changes that Ireland was undergoing in the 1960s and 1970s. Akenson considers:

Undeniably, early in the 1960s the Republic’s politicians discovered education. Almost overnight schools were changed from legislative orphans to a topic of continual public interest and debate. The most important innovations came in the financing of schools, the introduction of free post-primary education and the creation of new forms of post-
primary institutions (Akenson, 1970,p54).

In 1970, a major International Conference on Counselling and Vocational Guidance was held at The Hague in 1970. Its co-ordinator, Professor E.F. O'Doherty, Department of Psychology, University College Dublin, spoke of the need for counselling services to address what he called “the cultural conflict between young and old.” O'Doherty was of the view that the cultural conflict was the result of a changing value system by which the new generation lived. He considered:

The transitory values of the adult generation have their roots in nineteenth century thinking, and have consisted in idolising things such as security, respectability, conformity, possessions, whereas the values of the younger generation seem much more to enhance ideas of liberty, exploration, insecurity, non-conformity, solidarity with one another, and honesty (Doyle,IGC Journal,2001,p7-8).’

O'Doherty's socio-psychological analysis of cultural change in the Ireland of the late sixties and early seventies represented a resounding endorsement of the felt need for counselling services alongside vocational guidance.

The Training of Guidance Counsellors:

Perhaps, the most significant event in the development of guidance services in Irish schools was the introduction of the first full-time, one-year post-graduate course in guidance counselling at UCD. The Secondary Teacher Journal, Astir, published a series of articles by Professor Desmond Swan on guidance counselling in education. Indeed, Swan captured the essence of the skills of the guidance counsellor which remain timeless in providing a succinct role definition. He stated:

The guidance counsellor’s role demands a high degree of skill in dealing face-to-face with young people; a thorough knowledge of the psychology of adolescence in particular, . . . experience in interviewing young people is also indispensable; dynamics of this situation are indeed subtle; so subtle that the amateur is likely to miss the whole point and not to realise it. When to intervene, when to remain silent, what to watch for that may be of significance: Nothing less than the whole structure of the developing personality is involved, the bravado, the repressions, the unperceived self-deceptions, which we all use (Doyle, p7-8).

Professor Swan argued the case for ‘the maturely qualified counsellor’ who would be supported by an appropriate system of ‘class teachers’ and ‘careers teachers’. An essential element was the ability of the counsellor to respond to individual human differences. In 1968, the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) was established by early graduates of the UCD course and the concept of ‘career guidance and counselling’ was increasingly promoted.

Further courses of full-time post-graduate training were established in the seventies. The Catholic bishops initiated a full-time course at the Mater Dei Institute, Dublin, in 1972 and it was recognised by the Department of Education. The course was directed by a Carmelite priest and provided schools with more than a hundred guidance counsellors between 1972-1976, when the absence of government grant-in-aid forced its cessation. From 1977, the University of Dublin, Trinity College, under the leadership of Professor Rice, offered a new guidance and counselling psychology specialisation with a Master’s qualification. The M.Ed. Degree in Guidance Counselling has been training Guidance Counsellors from 1977 down to the present time. As a consequence of these post-graduate training programmes, by 1979, Guidance Counsellors were employed in about fifty percent of Irish secondary schools. University College Cork introduced its one-year full-time course in 1981 with a major emphasis on counselling in the second-level schools. Dublin City University, University of Limerick and NUIM have all introduced post-graduate training programmes.

It is interesting to note that a major boost to the training of guidance counsellors in Ireland emanated from a Report published in December, 1977, by the Irish Institute of Training Managers (IITM) and the Institute of Personnel Management (IPM). This Report from the private sector was indeed timely and far seeing. Dr. Eileen Doyle states:

Perhaps because the report was the work of the private employer sector the members were conscious of the grave problems facing so many young people in the transition from school to adult and working life. Periods of work experience were therefore recommended and employers were challenged to collaborate generously in such provision. The wisdom of designing school curriculum in such a way that students would experience close links between ‘general education and vocational training’ was stressed. What was needed was a system of ‘continuing educational and vocational guidance involving the participation of parents, teachers and community’ and a more enlightened approach to the initial and continuing training of teachers (Doyle,p50).

Dr. Doyle considers that the Report was far ahead of its time in distinguishing between ‘guidance’ and ‘counselling’ and in promoting equal educational opportunities for girls and for students and adults with disability of any kind. “At the time there were approximately 831,000 young people in the education system and the working party estimated that an additional 600 guidance counsellors were needed to ensure that 150,000 boys and 142,000 girls were served. The IITM was the first group to advocate the appointment of a second counsellor for schools of 500 students.”

Under Siege in the Eighties

During the seventies, psychometric tests such as the Differential Aptitude Tests (D.A.T.S.) were standardised for the Irish population and both intelligence tests and aptitude tests were administered extensively. Psychometric testing became a very useful tool in the armory of the newly emerging professional. Indeed, the role of the Guidance Counsellor continued to expand to include “any area of responsibility which is not immediately claimed by others of the school staff.” Such responsibilities included liaison with parents, arranging visits to industries, dealing with behavioural difficulties and co-ordinating the schools pastoral care service. In a major speech in 1979, Turlough O’Connor, Senior Psychologist in the Department of Education and Science, called for a team approach to pupil guidance and suggested that the “Guidance Counsellor must come out of the closet” and become a member of a team of teachers involved in various aspects of the guidance programme. The American one-to-one counselling model was now under scrutiny and O’Connor was now calling for a more integrationist, preventionist, and developmental approach in collaboration with other teaching colleagues.

However, it was in the eighties that the guidance counselling service came under closer scrutiny and a series of articles by The Irish Times journalist, Christina Murphy in 1981, helped no doubt to bring the Guidance Counsellor out of the shadows and into relatively high visibility as a professional person in his/her own right. In an Irish Times article (14 February 1981), she wrote:

I have to say that guidance teachers do manage to convey to me, an outsider, an aura of separateness, of wanting to distance themselves from other teachers and of being somewhat too conscious of emphasising their special status. I feel there is a tendency for subject teachers, and school management, to be somewhat wary of the role of the guidance teacher, and that, any suggestion of elitism or separateness, can only serve to flame this suspicion.

In the early years of the guidance service, the Department of Education and Science was prepared to allow every school with 250 pupils to release a teacher to follow a course to become the Guidance Counsellor. However, with the worsening economy of the eighties, the provision of Guidance Counsellors was greatly affected with the decision by Gemma Hussey, the Minister for Education in the 1983 Coalition Government, when she instructed that only schools with more than five hundred pupils would be entitled to an ex-quota Guidance Counsellor. This was a catastrophic decision for the newly developing service and the proportion of time was now increasingly being given to vocational guidance with little time for personal and social problems. So, we have been in a similar
Guidance

The Institute of Guidance Counsellors Newsletter

Planning the School Guidance Programme by the NCGE, 2004.

responsibilities have been comprehensively delineated in the publication and responsibilities that the modern Guidance Counsellor is expected to provide. The following chart in Fig. 2 is designed to crystallise the various activities and responsibilities that the modern Guidance Counsellor is expected to provide. The government budget of 1995 gave commitments to appoint extra psychologists, guidance counsellors and special education teachers.

Encouraging Times in the Nineties

In more recent years, a number of key developments have given new hope and strong support for a more expansive role for the school guidance counselling service. The White Paper on Education, Charting Our Education Future, 1995, has given strong support for a more expansive role for guidance and the school psychological service emphasising “a need for more emphasis on educational guidance and greater integration of the work of psychologists and teachers.” Almost two years later, the Report entitled: Principals’ Perspectives of the Guidance Service in Post-Primary Schools, 1997, was very praiseworthy of Guidance Counsellors in Irish second-level schools but highlighted the main weakness of the current guidance system which was its inability to respond to the increasing range of social and personal problems of the students. To remedy this problem principals called for a greater emphasis on counselling skills training, earlier intervention within the school life of the child, systematic liaison with education, health and social services as well as a ratio of one Guidance Counsellor to two hundred and fifty students. The Principals argued that a good case could be made for improved intervention, counselling and referral in order to deal with problems at an early stage “thus saving money in the long term.” The Education Act 1998 gave further impetus to the Guidance Counselling Movement by stating that all schools shall use its available resources “to ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices.” This was a most significant statement at the time in consolidating the provision of the Guidance Counselling service in Irish second-level schools.

Current and Future Provision in Guidance Counselling:

Of all the challenges to the professional identity of the Guidance Counsellor, keeping current and up-to-date with vocational guidance, psychometrics, counselling theory and skills training, interculturalism and cross-cultural counselling, family systems, spirituality and counselling, grief and bereavement, must surely be a major challenge in “cognisance of the signs of the times”. Initial Trainers in our universities are challenged to provide the most rigorous and advanced training that is possible and must not allow programme content to be diminished due to funding which has already occurred in some instances. Initial Trainers pass the responsibility for keeping the torch of knowledge lit on to their students. Their students, in turn, make themselves valuable, versatile and creative to their pupils and parents by keeping the flame of self-renewal burning brightly in times of unprecedented change. Ministers of Education come and go but quality training will in due course reap a rich dividend and a close monitoring of initial training programmes by the IGC is strongly advised.

The following chart in Fig. 2 is designed to crystallise the various activities and responsibilities that the modern Guidance Counsellor is expected to respond to in the Ireland of this new century. These activities and responsibilities have been comprehensively delineated in the publication of Planning the School Guidance Programme by the NCGE, 2004.

Guidance activities that assist students to make choices include:

- Counselling - helping students to explore their thoughts and feelings, and the choices open to them; giving care and support to students learning to cope with the many aspects of growing up.
- Assessment - helping students to obtain a better self-understanding through the use of psychometric tests and other inventories.
- Information - providing students with objective and factual data on education and training opportunities, occupations, labour market information, entitlements etc.
- Advice - making suggestions based on the advisor’s own knowledge and experience.

Educational Development Programmes - facilitating the transfer of knowledge and skills relating to studying, examination performance, choices of subjects and levels.

Personal and Social Development Programmes - facilitating the transfer of knowledge and skills relating to a student’s personal and social development; self-awareness, decision-making and planning.

Referral - this includes two types of activity: referral of an individual student by the guidance counsellor to other professionals outside of the school, e.g. The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS); referral of an individual student to the guidance counsellor by teachers, Board of Management, School Management and Parents.

Other guidance activities that support the achievement of the aims of the school guidance programme include:

Consultation with parents, school staff and students.

Feedback - giving feedback to the Board of Management, school management and staff on the needs of individual students, groups and the school as an organisation, and how the school guidance programme has supported students’ choices and transitions.

Networking - establishing links with employers, relevant agencies and institutions to enhance guidance work with students.

Promoting change - assisting curriculum development in the school.

Managing, organising and co-ordinating guidance activities into a coherent programme.

The Inspectorate for Guidance in their Guidelines for Second Level Schools relating to students’ access to appropriate guidance has stated:

Guidance encompasses the three separate, but interlinked, areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance. … Counselling is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis and at moments of personal crises. Counselling has as its objective the empowerment of students so that they can make decisions, solve problems, address behavioural issues, develop coping strategies and resolve difficulties they may be experiencing. Counselling in schools may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these (Government Publications, DES 2005).

In this document, the word guidance is used to describe the activities provided by the guidance counselling services identified in the Education Act 1998 Paragraph 2. It was a clear enunciation at the time with regard to the preservation of the best of the American Model which emphasises personal counselling and the European Model which has a narrower focus on the notion of career guidance.
Conclusion

We have noted how educational changes in Ireland have evolved from economic, social and political influences within Ireland and from trends and developments in Europe and the United States which impact on our thinking here. The Irish guidance and counselling service tends to be a compromise between the American model which emphasises personal counselling and the European model which has a narrower focus on the concept of career guidance. So states The Ryan Report of 1993, entitled: Counselling the Adolescent in a Changing Ireland: National Survey of Second Level Schools in Ireland (Dublin, 1993, p63). This compromise in the Irish system is well illustrated in the report and in the varying time devoted by different practitioners to the four tasks of career guidance, personal counselling, teaching and other activities. The following Table represents the average percentage of time devoted weekly to each activity and is based on a sample of 312 responses at the time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Guidance</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Counselling</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teaching</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Activities</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Ryan Report considers:

"The picture that emerges is straightforward enough: career guidance is a task that must get done in every school; outside of that some personal counselling gets done if guidance counsellors do not have a sizeable teaching workload; where they do have a teaching workload very little counselling takes place" (Ryan, 63).

Little has changed indeed, over the past few decades. Indeed, management, students and parents expect that a good school will have a good school guidance programme in operation; personal counselling and having time for this important dimension is seen as 'the icing on the cake'! In any event, it is impossible to separate both roles. Students come to a counsellor to talk about subject-choice, career choice, university or technological institutes and inevitably, it emerges that the original problem was not the real one and that there are other worries and concerns that require a therapeutic intervention. The role of career guidance and personal counselling cannot be separated and the counselling dimension is a very important component not alone in guidance but in teaching as well. The Directors of the Guidance and Counselling Training Courses in Irish Universities in a submission to the NCCA Curriculum Framework for Guidance in Post-Primary Education (March 2007), had this to say:

The key to guidance is the relationship between guidance counsellor and student rather than the instrumental needs of the student. The aim is to support students to develop a critical, creative, humanistic approach that will help them gain insight into factors that influence their development and choices. The relationship between the school and the student should avoid the kind of rigidity that fosters foreclosure in favour of a balance between support and autonomy. This relationship translates into guidance outcomes in the school curriculum through the development of knowledge, attitudes/values and skills. While we take account of national and European economic and social inclusion priorities, it is important in articulating such outcomes to use language that focuses on the person rather than the language of the marketplace.

Indeed, this writer is of the view that the roles of the good teacher and counsellor are synonymous and interchangeable. The ideal teacher is one who embodies the unity of both functions. Teaching and counselling are concerned with similar tasks. Nurturing relational capacities, empowering and building a positive assets search are key concerns in the daily duties of both teacher and counsellor. The distinguished Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber, emphasised that the teaching and counselling functions should indeed be integrated. It is significant that he frequently treated the roles of teacher and therapist as interchangeable; several commentators have remarked on the closeness of his thinking on education and his ideal teacher was one who would personally exemplify that unity (Daniel Murphy, 1988, p100). Thus, whether as teacher, careers teacher or counsellor, the relationship in education is one of pure dialogue and the key ingredients in that relationship must surely embody empathy, trust, acceptance, confirmation, respect and a caring concern for the well-being of each pupil. Teaching and counselling must be primarily based upon a psychology of optimism and hope. The distinguished psychiatrist, Irvin Yalom, reminds us that "making the world a better place for others is surely a powerful source of meaning."

Whatever changes come in the role and function of the guidance counsellor, it is clear that what is being asked whether of a personal counsellor or of a guidance teacher is something of a real vocation. Anne Fletcher in Guidance in Scotland, best surmises the significance of that important role in a wonderful passage:

"Guidance I believe has the greatest scope within itself to bridge the gap between school and society; it may also bridge gaps within school, gaps between declared aims and pursued aims; between guidance staff and non-guidance staff; between subject-centred and pupil-centred approaches; between rules and procedures designed for the institution and those designed for people, so guidance might evolve both as an agent for change and as an agent for reconciliation. Whatever the programme formats and activities, counselling and guidance in schools will continue to require a great deal of guiding, listening and attending, a considerable amount of counselling, and an abundance of caring. . . and if you care, you will perpetuate the grandest tradition of the counselling profession, you will be relevant, and you will understand the uniqueness of your clients and their environments" (Fletcher, 70).

This difficult period will pass in our professional lives and Ministers of Education will also pass. Meanwhile, we must work to provide a more open, transparent, and integrationist approach in the guidance counselling service involving other teaching colleagues and the implementation of a high profile classroom guidance programme. It is long time to place the one-to-one guidance model along side a more group/class oriented approach with greater visibility within the schooling system. Time must be given to personal counselling no matter how we manage to do so in these times of austerity. High quality training and qualification arrangements must be central to support more innovative delivery services and initial trainers must be courageous enough to withstand pressures to cut programmes in times of diminishing resources in our universities. Leadership in our professional bodies must surely act "as agents of change and reconciliation" in the words of Anne Fletcher and take on a political role like never before. The final inspirational words we leave with John Henry Newman:

We mourn for the blossoms of May, because they are to wither, but we know withal that May shall have its revenge upon November, in the revolution of that solemn circle that never stops and that, teaches us in our height of hope ever to be sober and in our depth of desolation never to despair. BIBLIOGRAPHY
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WORKING IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

Mary Hosty

Just a while back, a horrible, darting pain crept up on the right side of my face. Close to the ear, I figured it might be an ear infection. The internet listed twenty possible causes for the pain, some of them serious. The pain got worse and, determined to save the cost of a doctor’s visit, I managed to extract a few Neurofen Plus from the local pharmacist. Back on the internet I searched again with a more fine-tuned set of symptoms. I discovered more illnesses – things that would at least plague me forever if they didn’t kill outright. Migraine was the least of it. I reasoned – this is the internet. These are reputable medical advice sites and I will resolve this pain on my own. In the end though, I still had to go to the doctor who quickly diagnosed an ear infection.

Career Guidance is a bit like that I think. It’s uncommon for people to believe they can sort out their future goals and plans by just hitting the internet or working through a good self-help book. Both are very useful tools for clients, advisors and counsellors. But in the end it takes a professional to help clarify the real issues for a client, to apply a breadth of knowledge and to come up with workable, sustainable insights, plans, cures or solutions.

While the entire Career Guidance & Counselling profession is currently navigating difficult times, the focus of this article is on the area of private practice. Leaving aside issues of change and development in schools Guidance Counselling practice, the fact is that more and more qualified careers practitioners now opt to go into private practice. They do so for a variety of reasons. The opportunity to be one’s own boss and also to practise at a professional level can be appealing. The chance to specialise in a certain area can offer potential for a satisfying vocational challenge. Some members combine working for schools or other organisations with a level of private practice on the side. For members that have retired and remain active within the profession it’s a chance to continue developing professionally and at the same time to provide a useful service, founded on extensive professional expertise. For some, challenging conditions in the workplace have led to significant changes in their working lives.

The internet listed twenty possible causes for the pain, some of them serious.

These past ten years have also seen a growing interest from clients of all ages, in finding sound careers advice and support. Careers Guidance is no longer something that a person ‘just does’ between the September of 6th Year and the 1st February CAO deadline. It is a lifelong process and like many aspects of life where our future well-being and happiness are at stake, we are now more inclined to spend time and money planning and implementing each progressive stage of our career. Of course Guidance Counsellors have always known that Career Development is a life-long process. But it’s very gratifying to see that at last the general public are coming around to that realisation also. In her excellent presentation on The Careers Guidance Business: Establishing & Managing Practice, in Sligo last month, private practitioner Esther Doyle reminded us of our professional status, our unique set of skills, expertise and specialised educational training. Like any profession we are trained and qualified to supply objective counsel and service to others, for a direct and definite compensation. Perhaps, trained to empathise with, counsel and provide support to others, we sometimes forget to remember (and to remind people that need to know these things) the quality and depth of our own particular expertise.

IS PRIVATE PRACTICE FOR YOU?

Like any major life transition, the decision to enter private practice is rarely taken lightly. You may wish to consult with a career advisor about it! It’s important to explore your reasons for wanting to work privately and to be aware of the realities and practicalities of taking such a step. Once you’ve made the decision to work privately, it’s crucial to get good advice and accurate information on issues such as advertising, tax and insurance.

Here Is A Brief Summary Of Some Of The Issues Associated With Setting Up Privately:

Training: Your existing qualifications eg: Post Graduate Diploma or Masters in Guidance provide a sound basis of professional expertise. A certificate in Level A testing is also important. Pay attention to keeping your CPD up to date and keep a record of all additional courses attended and certificates awarded. Additional training not only broadens your expertise, but it offers important networking opportunities, reinforces your professional competence and self-assurance and is an important aspect of marketing yourself. Level B training provides additional personality assessment training and is useful if you plan to work with a broader age cohort of clients.

Professional Affiliations and Memberships: No one wants to drag around a string of letters after their name. At the same time professional qualifications represent a recognition of your expertise and they are therefore important in endorsing your professional status and in distinguishing you from those without the requisite internationally recognised qualifications. Membership of the IGC, Teaching Council, British Psychological Society, Register of Qualifications in Test Use (RQTU), European Federation of Psychologists Associations are all important. Additional memberships and affiliations might include AEGI and ICG (UK) or IACP where appropriate.

Clients: Who will your clients be? Secondary students? College students? Graduates? Adults? Clients with disability or health issues? Will you specialise in one area or combine? What are your particular skills, interests and areas of expertise? In areas of practice where you may not feel fully competent, building and maintaining a list of good referral contacts is invaluable.

Keeping in touch: The advantages of working alone are numerous but it can also be a bit solitary. There’s no staffroom for chatting with colleagues, no canteen for an informal catch up on a professional issue over coffee. So keeping in touch through branch meetings, CPD, college open days, seminars, conferences and other IGC events is important.

Insurance: You will need professional indemnity insurance. One option here is provided by Allianz through Heavey Insurance Brokers. Costs are reasonable and full details are available on the IGC website. You will also need public liability insurance. This may be available through your existing house insurance.

Tax & Finances: There are costs involved in setting up privately and this is probably the subject of an entirely different article. In brief it is useful to chat to your accountant / tax advisor and establish well in advance, all costs involved in setting up, including registering as a business on the CRO site, professional memberships & registrations, insurance, marketing & website, office supplies, CPD, subscriptions, phone etc. Find out what you
can write off as legitimate business expense against tax. Keep a careful record of income and expenditure and store all receipts in one safe place. I found the advice of an accountant invaluable.

**Premises:** Depending on the level of practice you plan to run, you may opt to see clients at their home, to meet at a neutral venue or to work from your own home. Some people rent / share office space and these days it’s possible to find good deals online. If you are working from home, it is worthwhile setting aside a dedicated room / office if you have the space. Creating a space where clients feel comfortable, welcome and encouraged is important. You will need to set up a secure filing system where confidential files can be stored safely. You may already have a library of resources and it can always be built on as your practice develops. Filling out forms can be made easier by creating a few essential templates: eg Booking Form, Client Record, Client Feedback, Invoice & Receipt.

**Child Protection Guidelines, Garda Clearance, Code of Ethics:** For your own protection and for that of your clients, you must have Garda Clearance and adhere to Child Protection Guidelines and the IGC Code of Ethics. The IGC recommends that members seeing their approval when they are in private practice supply the following:

1. A statement adhering to the IGC code of Ethics
2. Proof of on-going attendance at CPD
3. Proof of Professional Indemnity Insurance to the IGC.

These are the recommendations of the Constitution and Code of Ethics committee and will be obligatory for all Private Practitioners from the 1st July 2013.

**Supervision:** As a practicing Guidance Counsellor and active member of the IGC you are required to attend supervision. It offers invaluable support in your counselling work and provides you with a forum to explore complex issues that may arise in your work.

**Your Services:** Working in a school environment, we are used to dealing with whatever clients and issues come our way, referring on as appropriate. When someone is looking for a private Careers Practitioner, they frequently look for a list of services available, including complete career planning packages. They also want to know how much it will all cost. It can be difficult for any list of services to encompass all the subtle nuances of careers guidance work but an indication of what your service offers is helpful to all. Prices for careers guidance vary. Take a look at similar professions and some existing practitioners to see what they charge and remember - the labourer is worthy of his hire. Clients are paying for your professional expertise, your training, your experience, your time and skills, your qualifications and the depth and breadth of knowledge that is yours by dint of hard work, education and dedication to your profession.

**Marketing your Service:** The IGC website offers a list of private practitioners, all fully professionally qualified members of the IGC. There are websites where you can list your services and also local papers and advertising forums. The Yellow Pages offer listings but can be expensive if you move beyond the basic name and email address. It’s no harm to do up a few business cards with your contact info. Companies like Vistaprint and others offer good deals on these and other stationery items from time to time. Websites and other social media are also powerful marketing tools. Word of Mouth remains one of the strongest marketing tools and a good recommendation from a satisfied client is invaluable.

**Website:** It’s not for everyone but if it does suit your requirements, setting up a website has never been easier or more cost effective. For €99.00 you can build a site with a company like www.letshost.ie. It takes a bit more time that you might think (so worth planning ahead), but for a relatively small outlay it is possible to have a site that advertises your business, giving potential clients a chance to see what your areas of expertise are and what services you can offer. It doesn’t need to be a big sprawling affair. For starters you could create something like a Basic Six Page site to include the following: Home Page, About Me, Career Services, Counselling Services, Job Application & CV, Contact and Links. Wordpress is a blogging site that allows you to create a basic type of website for free.

**Social Media Profile:** For anyone working in mainstream education the whole area of Social Media presents particular challenges. Having an online profile is not always practical or advisable. Yet whether we like it or not, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are a major communication and marketing force. LinkedIn can be particularly useful for Careers Guidance Counselling Practitioners because it allows you to list your areas of professional expertise, CPD, affiliations & accreditations – and let’s be honest – any key contacts or client endorsements you may have. You can also build links and networks with co-professionals and potential clients within secure structures that give you a high level of control over who views or has access to your profile. You can use Twitter for following other Private Careers Practitioners and keeping in touch with news and developments in the field internationally.

Finally two issues in particular come up in conversations about private practice: (i) Career Coaching and (ii) Working in Competition with other guidance counsellors.

Career Coaching is a specific area of expertise and a term that can raise heated discussion from time to time. Some Careers Guidance Counsellors train in Coaching and incorporate elements of age-appropriate Career Coaching into their work. A number of Career Coaches also train and qualify as Careers Guidance Counsellors. When clients (or parents of clients) ask about the differences in approach I explain briefly that Career Coaching is focussed on helping the client to identify and achieve career and employment goals – often using specific models of Goal Setting & Implementation. Coaches work with people in building new careers and managing existing careers, making career choices or managing career change. It’s a very useful instrument for the practitioner in many instances. However in my experience, the intensely goal-focused model tends to work best with older clients. It’s a bit of a blunt instrument when it comes to the wonderful but delicately balanced complexity of the younger person and can sometimes lead to additional frustration and self-criticism with the school or college client.

As for working in competition with fellow guidance practitioners, discussions with a number of other private practitioners indicate that this is not an issue. I’ve met with nothing but encouragement, support and practical help since starting out. Guidance Counsellors that I hardly knew two years ago have mentored, referred clients to me, passed on sound information and advice and basically shone the torch in the right direction – when I may have been looking the wrong way. In turn, I’ve shared resources, information, and referred clients to them.

This article has only scratched the surface in relation to the practicalities of setting up in private practice. We haven’t looked for instance at managing your time, organising a diary or accessing reputable psychometric tools. Hopefully though, it will provoke a little discussion and debate on a growing area of the profession. The prospect of going into private practice can be a bit daunting and finding a balance between doing something rewarding and keeping on top of the practicalities is important. If you’re taking this significant career step into private practice - then as someone said recently - surround yourself with cheer leaders not fear leaders.

**My Thanks to Esther Doyle www.careerconsultancy.ie**

**Dr Terry Connors http://www.psychometrik.com/**

**Mary Quirke www.careerconfidence.ie**

(Mary Hosty has worked as a Careers Guidance Counsellor for fifteen years and now runs a small Private Practice in Dublin - www. southdublincareers.ie and www.turascareers.com She writes and curates the Parents & Guardians Section of www.careersportal.ie, is treasurer of Dublin West Branch of IGC and currently serves on the National Executive.)
Unemployment and Immigrants

According to a report published today (Wednesday 16th January) by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and the Equality Authority, immigrants did not fare as well on average as Irish nationals in the Irish labour market in 2010, with the results varying according to nationality and ethnicity.

The research shows that Black African, Ethnic Minority EU and EU New Member State (NMS) groups fare worse than other national-ethnic groups in terms of both objective labour market outcomes (e.g. employment and unemployment) and in their experience of discrimination.

The results are based on new analysis of the Central Statistic Office’s 2010 Quarterly National Household Survey Equality Module. The report also utilised data from the Equality Module collected in 2004 to compare the experiences of immigrants during the boom with those during the recession.

Other key findings of the study are:

Labour Market Outcomes 2010:

- In 2010, Black Africans and Ethnic Minority EU individuals had much lower labour force participation rates than Asians and White individuals from the EU countries. The labour force participation rate for Asians and White EU individuals ranged between 72 per cent (Irish and UK) and 86 per cent (NMS) compared to only 60 per cent for Black Africans and 65 per cent for Ethnic Minority EU individuals.

- Employment rates were also lower among Black African and Ethnic Minority EU individuals, 38 per cent and 51 per cent respectively compared to an average employment rate of 61 per cent for the sample population.

- Black Africans recorded the highest unemployment rate (36 per cent), and were four times more likely to be unemployed than White Irish individuals.

- White individuals from the ‘old’ EU-13 Member States recorded the lowest unemployment rate at 9 per cent, followed by Asians at 12 per cent.

- Compared to White Irish Individuals, Black Africans and White EU NMS individuals were less likely to be high earners.

- Black Africans, Asians, Ethnic Minority EU, and White individuals from the UK and the 12 EU NMS were also less likely than White Irish nationals to work in professional and managerial occupations.

Experience of Work Based Discrimination 2010:

- In 2010, approximately 5 per cent of White Irish nationals reported having experienced discrimination while looking for work. A similar proportion reported discrimination in the workplace over the previous two years.

- All national-ethnic groups, apart from White UK and White EU-13 individuals, reported substantially higher rates of discrimination in the workplace than White Irish.

- Black Africans are almost seven times more likely to report experiencing discrimination in the workplace, and seven times more likely to report having experienced discrimination when looking for work.

- The study found that migrants who arrived in Ireland during the recession (i.e. in or after 2008) were found to be more likely to report experiencing discrimination when looking for work than those who had arrived during the boom.

- Ethnic Minority EU individuals are four times more likely to report experiencing discrimination while looking for work than White Irish nationals.

- People in the EU NMS group are twice as likely to report experiencing discrimination in the workplace than White Irish nationals.

Renee Dempsey CEO of the Equality Authority said: "This report shows that immigrants do not fare as well as Irish nationals in the Irish labour market. Clearly there needs to be a renewed focus on promoting equality for immigrants and for minority ethnic groups in the labour market and throughout society."
Don’t scare students off philosophy

From the Guardian

Applications to university are on the rise, we’re told. But arts and humanities subjects have seen numbers plummet as students are guided towards career-driven options.

The latest UCAS figures, showing a 3.5% increase in university applications, may be seen as an encouraging sign. There’s been a small move back towards the application numbers seen before the tuition fee hikes, which would suggest young people are not being put off reaching their potential through higher education.

However, a closer look at the numbers reveals a more damaged picture. While applications to vocational and career-priming subjects such as computer sciences and law have indeed risen significantly (12.5% and 5% respectively), applications to study non-vocational subjects have fallen for a second year running.

Faced with average tuition fees of over £8,000 a year and a tough employment market, students are shunning humanities and arts degrees, and putting their faith in courses they think will land them a job.

This is no surprise of course. Through selective funding cuts, the government is trying to steer students towards those subjects it thinks will benefit the country’s economy.

Welcome to the real legacy of the coalition’s fee rises: students become mere consumers of an educational product, paying to receive a certificate in a subject that the government is gambling on to provide the skills that our job market will demand in years to come. Meanwhile universities turn into soulless research institutes, as their arts and humanities programmes wither away.

One such programme is philosophy, a subject that is struggling to survive after funding cuts and a 17.4% drop in applications over the last two years. Departments are facing closure at several universities, including my own. It seems a course that was good enough for Fyodor Dostoevsky, Albert Camus and even Ricky Gervais is no longer considered to be of value to today’s youth. But can we really afford to let it fall by the wayside?

Socrates declared: “The unexamined life is not worth living.” There is a compulsion within us all to search for the truth, and philosophy gives students the chance to do just that, asking deep questions and the answers given by some of history’s greatest minds. Minds that, in every case, share a skill with philosophy graduates – the ability to think critically. While not all philosophy students are geniuses, you will struggle to find a genius without an interest in philosophy.

This in turn suggests philosophy students may not be as unattractive to the job market as the government thinks. While there is no set career path for a philosophy graduate, many employers are interested in students who know how to argue, critically evaluate and think in innovative, creative ways.

Eliza Veretilo, 22, is a philosophy graduate from the University of Greenwich. Now employed at Life in London, an organisation that supports young people at risk of being excluded from mainstream education, she finds the skills she learned on her philosophy course invaluable.

Veretilo says: “My degree helped me to be more open-minded to different circumstances. A lot of the young people I work with have lost all hope and perspective, and I am able to share my ability to think in different ways – and express ideas differently – with them. It’s a real help.”

She also notes that her degree was a huge plus to her employer: “They knew I would good at approaching things rationally, and that I would have the high levels of literacy that the role requires.”

Today’s students must avoid falling into the trap of becoming graduate clones. Daring to spend your higher education years doing something you may not do for the rest of your life might just pay off after all.

Carmel O’Donohoe

Fred Tuile

“Carmel O’Donohoe” she said giving me her name the first time I met her. “That’s n-o-h-o-e-o-e” she said with a broad smile, knowing that people would surely get it wrong. She was so used to giving this spelling variation that she incorporated it into her email nohoebv@gmail.com with the “bvs” of course standing for Borris Vocational School where she worked. Again I remember her smile as she gave it to me. “You know where that comes from?” she chuckled.

As exiled Dubliners, Carmel and I got on very well. She enjoyed my sense of humour and I enjoyed her earnestness. I particularly enjoyed her staccato laugh and the twinkle in her eye as we shared some joke or amusing comment. But with Carmel there were limits. There was a whole private side that we never got to see and she kept herself to herself very much. But we knew she took her work very seriously. She put in all sorts of hours in the school staying on late in the evening to counsel clients if it was needed. She did her Masters in Integrated Psychotherapy and I would jokingly ask if she was integrated yet. “Not quite, Fred!” was her reply. She had a huge belief in Supervision and I would say never missed a supervision period, which if I recall she paid for herself. As she was in a different group to the Carlow and Kilkenny one this meant it clashed with Branch meetings. No prizes for guessing which one won out and she would ring me up to apologies on missing the meeting and have a chat on how things were going.

Those chats, that great heart and her unwavering dedication to her work and students will be sadly missed.

Esther Doyle continues:

It is with great sadness that we mourn the passing of our dear friend and colleague Carmel, who died on March 7th 2013. Many of us will remember Carmel from when we trained together in UCC in 1996-7. Carmel was originally from Dublin but lived in Kilkenny and worked in Borris Vocational School as a Guidance Counsellor and teacher. Following her guidance training in UCC, Carmel went on to do further studies in counselling. This enhanced her work as a Guidance Counsellor. Carmel was the epitome of positive acceptance and showed the best in every person that came in her door. It was very clear how well regarded Carmel was in her school and many of her students participated, through words and song, at her funeral Mass. She is a huge loss to them and to us.

Carmel was a member of the Kilkenny/Carlow branch of the IGC but a member of one of the longest standing counselling supervision groups, in the south east branch, which we formed after graduating from UCC. We are all the better for knowing her and she has been a great support to each one of us over the 16 years we are together. Carmel was an active member of her local branch but also served at National Executive level and her contribution to the supervision sub-committee was immense. This was an area that Carmel felt very strongly about and she worked hard with her fellow committee members in advancing our national supervision structures. Carmel was a kind, gentle spirit who always had time to listen to others and this was even true in her last few months when she would ask about others rather than talk about herself and her battle with cancer. She had a big heart, great sense of humour and was always smiling. No words can express the deep sadness that is felt by her friends and family but to say that we were lucky to have the privilege of knowing her. Carmel is survived by her father Paddy, sisters Mary and Anne, brothers in law Kevin and John, and nephews Daragh and Enda.

May she rest in peace. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam dhilis
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