

6TH EUROPEAN CONFERENCE IN E-GUIDANCE: *WIDENING ACCESS TO LIFELONG GUIDANCE*

ABSTRACT

TITLE OF THE SPEECH

Distance Career Counselling: Practitioners' Training and Competences. The example of Greece.

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SHORT AUTHOR(S) PROFILE



Nora Gikopoulou (MSc) is a career counsellor and received her BA from the school of Philosophy and her Master in Science degree in Counselling and Vocational Orientation in 2004 from University of Athens; she has a great experience in human resource development and she was working between 2003 - 2006 as a recruiter and consultant in Adecco HR SA. Since October of 2006 she is working in the department of Research and Development of Ellinogermaniki Agogi, undertaking projects which promote career guidance. She is also a scientific responsible for career guidance in the career office of Ellinogermaniki Agogi's school department.

ABSTRACT

Career Counselling From Distance

The distance career guidance session is the outcome of a synergy of four European projects, Career Guide for schools network, which concerns the collection of exercises and activities of career guidance, implemented in students, the CarCoulT project, which refers to career counsellors training and Rural Wings and Hermes projects, which provide broadband internet in rural areas through Europe.

As a product, the teleconference tool provides broadband internet in rural areas, a chat room and the possibility of a videoconference and power point presentations.

The 'new era' of information and knowledge which is characterized by unexpected and rapid changes in technology and in the labor market often shocks individuals who feel lost and vulnerable in the midst of the flux created around them causing insecurity and anxiety.



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The sense of uncertainty can be even more intense for young people who try to build their future and have to deal with an unknown world of work, full of changes and various educational and occupational dilemmas.

The demands of the labour market have multiplied in terms of skills (especially technological), experience, flexibility and mobility. Getting a job is a basic step towards becoming fully integrated in society. But today's young people are concerned not only with avoiding unemployment, but also with finding a job that offers some satisfaction. They realize that employment is a key factor of social cohesion and the basis for financing social and intergenerational solidarity. The transition between school and work is filled with obstacles and young people are becoming more depended economically. The area which significantly influences and will more and more influence the harmony between education and labour market is the area of career education and counseling. There is no part of life where the need for guidance is more empathic than in transition from school to work--the choice of a vocation, adequate preparation for it, and the attainment of efficiency and success.

The need of carrer guidance seems to be more than necessary especially for people who live at disadvantage areas, like small villages and islands, bounded from current evolution. This target group has different priorities and completely differnt needs.

Distance giodance or e-guidance is an opportunity to give more guidance to more people, at as distance (Offer at al, 2001, Mahadar, 2003). In the past, guidance was offered face to face or by telephone or letter. Now, a range of information and communications channels are available like web chat, email, on line discussion forum or message board. Distance guidance is not just about email or chat: to be fuly effective these tools need to be part of a system, delivering guidance at differnet levels to meet different needs- a whole that is more powerful than tha sum of its parts. E-guidance should be as coherent a system as its offline equivalent, with an equally integrated range of activities informing, assessing, advising, enabling or teaching, as the need requires, and providing clear progression between these activities (Offer et al, 2001)

Distance Career Guidance is an excellent opportunity to help effectively students and young people who live in disadvantage areas. We have noted that these young people, have limited intensives in comparison with students living in town, limited information and limited perspectives. Students are planning their future, especially the professional future, according to the beaten track. They believe they do not have opportunities or alternative choices.

Via teleconference tool offered at the one hand, access to information, like educational system, departments of universities, jobs' descriptions and at the other hand a full distance career guide session.

The conference tool and the career guidance process address to people who live in disantavantaged rural areas and especially to students from 12 to 19 years old, to teachers and counsellors who provide career guidance and of course to unemployed people who are trying to find a job.

The distance lesson which is presented concerned the self esteem and the identification of personal characteristic and interests and took place in a small island in Greece, Leipsoi.

The followed methodology is focused on specific steps:

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1. **Preparation:** The first point target on emotional functions the second one on practical issues. The preparation and implementation period was not easy at all. The “mentalite” of people who live in disadvantage areas is completely different and unknown to us. We had to convince and to learn them the way to turn this process to profit
 - Emotional and motivational preparation in order to increase the readiness for e-guidance, students to believe that these sessions will help them
 - Training on technical skills (pc skills),

2. **Implementation** – Distance guidance lessons. The full session aparted by five e- lessons:
 - self concept, strong points and weaknesses,
 - information about educational choices and labour market,
 - career plan and back up plan,
 - workplacement (interview, cv, entrance, adoption),
 - motivation and inspiration.

3. **Evaluation** : According to the evaluation of the session, we measured five parameters, before and after the session. Those parameters concerned the following areas
 - The students' joy for the lessons
 - The students' conviction that learn something and are able to change the way of thinking/acting
 - The difficulties that students faced, using pc
 - The motivation power of the sessions
 - The students' anxiety rate before and after the sessions

4. **Next steps**
 - Even better preparation
 - Individual distance guidance (not only group counselling)
 - Continually contact with users
 - Implementation of new session and lessons

The general outcome was that at the beginning of the lessons most students were very buttoned-up, cautious and anxious. For them the process was something completely new and unknown, although they were well prepared. All these emotions and convictions changed soundly in the midtime and at the end of the sessions.



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For the advisors and counsellors the important point was the stage of the preparation. Well prepared students (at both parameters- emotional and technical) are eager and ready to give feedback and assimilate the new experience in all dimensions.

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFO

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