

BERGISCHE  
UNIVERSITÄT  
WUPPERTAL

Schriften Band

3

der Zentralen Studienberatungsstelle  
herausgegeben von Gerhart Rott  
unter Mitarbeit  
von Joachim Studberg



ISSN: 1610-7136

**Proceedings of the Symposium  
“Beratung und die Wirksamkeit  
der Hochschulbildung -  
Guidance and Counselling and  
the Efficacy of Higher Education”**

University of Wuppertal,  
September 24th & 25th, 2009.

Gerhart Rott (ed.)

**ZSB**

Zentrale Studienberatung  
der Bergischen Universität  
Wuppertal



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Prof Dr Lambert T. Koch

## FOREWORD

Prof Dr Lambert T. Koch  
Rector of the University of Wuppertal

With the introduction of the bachelor/master degree structures in Germany approximately ten years ago the general conditions for students changed dramatically. Today, they are facing challenges that are different from the ones previous generations had to cope with, and they are still pioneers in a new system in which they have to orientate and assert themselves. Although the new system of studies offers distinct advantages such as a faster and more clearly structured course of studies, at the same time its demands have increased: Most notably, students have a more extensive need for information in the run-up to their studies in order to persevere in the modular system and use their time effectively and in a goal-oriented way.

But it is not only the system itself that has changed: students' self-expectations have, too – not least due to the recent global economic crisis and the accompanying uncertainties on the job market. Many strive to attain the widespread public ideal of achieving excellent grades while at the same time acquiring soft skills, completing internships and staying abroad – without, of course, exceeding the ambitiously allotted number of semesters. Although politics has reacted to the criticism of the obvious tendency to overwhelm students, and although curricula have been straightened out and exam pressure has been lessened in many places, the mental pressure is still immense for a lot of students.

In this light, the increasing demand for adequate student guidance and counselling is not astonishing. It becomes obvious that nowadays the need for competent, comprehensive and personal guidance and counselling for prospective, as well as first-year and more advanced students is much higher than it was one or two student generations ago. In addition, there is an increased guidance and counselling need on the part of students who have tripped over course plans, failed examinations or succumbed to their own pressure to succeed on the way to their degree. Successful student guidance and counselling means identifying perspectives for and with prospective students and creating personal space for students in which they can successfully organise their studies autonomously and with an optimistic attitude.

This publication seeks to contribute to the discussion of these challenges and to suggest possible solutions. At the same time it is the output of an exciting symposium around the topic of „Beratung und Wirksamkeit der Hochschulbildung – Guidance and Counselling and the Efficacy of Higher Education“, which was held on the occasion of the retirement of Dr Gerhart Rott as Academic Director and Head of the Central Student Advisory and Counselling Service of the University of Wuppertal on September 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all the symposium's authors and speakers.

## PARTICIPANTS OF THE SYMPOSIUM

Second Row (left to right):

Abraham van Veen, Johannes Wildt, Klaus Scholle,  
Michael Katzensteiner, Norbert Koubek, Peter Schott,  
Per Andersen, Catharina Schultz, Andrija Brilobrk,  
Verena Henßen

Front Row (left to right):

Bernd Strey, Ulrike Leonhardt, Istvan Kiss, Elsa Bell, Diana Esser,  
Gerhart Rott, Peter Figge, Eric Depreeuw, Karin Gavin-Kramer (in  
the very front), Ann Heyno, Franz Muschol, Andrea Bausch, Peter  
Englert, Joseph Swann, Margaret Dane

Missing in the picture:

Heinke Rübken, Karen Schober, Iryna Zavhorodnya







## CONTRIBUTIONS

by Margaret Dane & Michael Katzensteiner, Gerhart Rott, Michael Katzensteiner, Ann Heyno, Elsa Bell, Peter Figge, Karen Schober, Istvan Kiss, Johannes Wildt, Norbert Koubek, Peter Englert, and David Crosier

## **SUMMARY OF THE SYMPOSIUM ON THE OCCASION OF THE RETIREMENT OF DR GERHART ROTT**

University of Wuppertal  
Germany  
September 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009

### **INTRODUCTION**

This symposium, with the title “Beratung und die Wirksamkeit der Hochschulbildung - Guidance and Counselling and the Efficacy of Higher Education”, was organised on the occasion of the retirement of Dr Gerhart Rott as Director of the Central Student Advisory and Counselling Service at the University of Wuppertal. The theme was concerned with the individual personal development of students within the learning context of higher education (HE). As such, it addressed issues of students’ personal, psychological and professional as well as academic development. The symposium also looked at how the learning activity and commitment of students is encouraged and developed within the system of HE. HE institutions themselves become learning organisations using the feedback from students about their own learning in order to develop the institution. In this way HE can – in combination with input from the world of business and the professions – increase students’ awareness of the relevance of their studies in relation to their own professional development, as well as the institutions’ relevance to the professional world and society.

In the light of the challenges facing the HE sector as a result of the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area, the step to becoming a truly learning- and by extension a more flexible – organisation can be viewed as a desirable objective for HE institutions.

The symposium was composed of four thematic clusters:

1. Personal development and psychological counselling in higher education
2. Higher education as a step towards career development
3. The link between teaching and learning and guidance and counselling in higher education
4. Challenges in the context of the European Higher Education Area.

#### THE PROGRAMME

The ambitious programme was directed towards the 25 participants, experts from eight countries – Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, the UK and the USA – and different professional backgrounds. The two days saw a wide range of contributions that generated lively discussions in this international group. The consensus was that the two days of shared ideas and experience had produced real learning. The mixture of national and professional perspectives led to some interesting new insights into how different countries and institutions address the issues raised.

Opened by Dr Rott, the programme was designed to offer a wide range of perspectives on the themes indicated above. Speakers addressed issues around academic, personal and professional development; preparation for entry to and success in the world of work; and the range of student services available and required to help students succeed in the future, in the context of employment and their personal lives. The written versions of their presentations are included in this report.

In his introduction Dr Rott laid great emphasis on the learning process involved both in students' personal development and in that of the university as a learning organisation. This dynamic perspective shaped the later discussions on the symposium topics.

#### PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION GROUPS

Dr Michael Katzensteiner, Director of the Student Psychological Counselling Service at the University of Linz, Ann Heyno, independent consultant from Birkbeck College, University of London, Elsa Bell, Director of the Counselling Service at the University of Oxford, Prof Dr Eric Depreeuw of the Centre for School Psychology at the University of Louvain, and Dr Peter Figge, Director of



the Student Psychological Counselling Service at the University of Hamburg, all addressed interesting and challenging issues around the psychological counselling of students.

Margaret Dane, CEO of the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services in the UK and Ireland, and Karen Schober, President of the German National Guidance Forum, described new developments in the context of graduate employment, career development and the careers guidance services now widely available across Europe. Prof Dr Heinke Röbbken from the University of Wuppertal, Dr Istvan Kiss from the Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest, Prof Dr Johannes Wildt from the Technical University of Dortmund's Centre for Research in Higher Education and Faculty Development, Prof Dr Norbert Koubek from the University of Wuppertal and Prof Dr Peter Englert of the University of Hawaii covered a wide range of other issues around student networking, teaching and learning and mobility.

By way of introduction, Dr Michael Katzensteiner presented the concept of identity balance as a possible way to support the learning process in a holistic way both for the student and the academic institution. This could only succeed if inconsistencies and contradictions between expectations and vested interests were not exaggerated but consciously addressed. Ann Heyno pointed out in her contribution that advisory services provide a single assistance point but, from an organisational point of view, were in danger of being marginalised and undervalued. Advisers had to learn to bear these negative projections from outside, she argued, and pleaded passionately for a wider understanding of the counsellor's traditional role to incorporate active assistance in relation to the university's treatment of its students. Elsa Bell showed that at least under certain circumstances this could succeed, as with the example of the co-operation between the counselling service and the relevant departments of the University of Oxford to support the implementation of the Disability Discrimination act.

Psychological interventions should be based on solid research, which must be publicly recognised and understood. Prof Dr Eric Depreeuw's explanation of the effect of procrastination on student behaviour, its parallels with addiction, and its serious consequences on student careers – drop-out, poor study effectiveness etc. – found considerable resonance among the participants. This should provide food for thought for all responsible persons in academic institutions.

Dr Peter Figge referred to the wide range of psychological counselling, reflecting in a personal way on his 35 years of experience of psychological and psychotherapeutic consultation. Referring to Gerhart Rott's earlier contribution, he outlined the many different internal and external influences that had shaped him and which he could pass on as living experience.

Career guidance was also prominently represented: Karen Schöber, President of the German National Guidance Forum, spoke about the development of quality standards, ethical principles and professional competence in the services offered, and raised fundamental questions concerning the social and political conditions within which consultation takes place. Margaret Dane, Chief Executive of the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory services (AGCAS), not only outlined precisely the wide field now covered by HE careers services, but also described the challenges that result from the present political and economic climate. Prof Dr Heinke Röbbken of the University of Wuppertal argued that the well-known traditional methods of supporting student job-hunting, like application and interview training, are overrated and that more informal ways – like social networking – are often ignored by student support services. The ability to network is a fundamentally important life skill that students need to develop within and beyond the academic phase. Dr Istvan Kiss presented an interesting model of the development of coping strategies which, he argued, can facilitate a prognosis of the study and career development process and provide a useful starting point for purposeful interventions.

The ability to learn holistically should also be matched by the ability to teach holistically. Prof Dr Johannes Wildt spoke as a representative of university faculty. His diagnosis of the shift from a teacher-centred to a student-centred approach and its increasing momentum might allow the optimists among us to hope that this movement will achieve its goals. At the very least it underlines the need for dialogue between student advisers and their academic colleagues.

The learning organisation was one of the basic underlying themes of the symposium. In this context a first degree is not the end of academic or professional education. Prof Dr Norbert Koubek, a successful representative of Wuppertal's university management, returned to this theme and saw a new type of student coming to the university – those seeking special advanced training. These students already had professional experience and were highly mo-

tivated; moreover, the costs of their training would in many cases be borne by their companies. It is a student group that presupposes mobility, and Peter Englert, a global expert on HE systems, reported on the different dimensions of mobility in three HE areas, the USA, China and Bologna Europe. His comparative study of structure and practice could serve as a basis for university policy and practice.

#### CONCLUSION

Dr Rott summarised the results of the lectures and discussions. It is clear that many of the issues faced are similar across Europe and indeed across the developed world, but the solutions vary considerably, depending on national priorities, history and culture, the availability of resources, and the educational and employment context. Bringing together international professionals from a wide range of backgrounds had stimulated much useful thinking and learning, and was a valuable way to mark the retirement of Dr Rott, who has been a dedicated supporter of student development and international collaboration throughout his professional career.

Informal and formal celebration of the retirement of Dr Gerhart Rott framed the symposium and some tears flowed: on the one hand from laughter with a wonderfully humorous speech and performance by Franz Muschol of the University of Munich at the evening buffet, and on the other hand with the impressive official celebration on behalf of the University of Wuppertal. In addition to the symposium participants, two hundred friends, colleagues, family and representatives of institutions with which he had cooperated throughout a highly successful working life honoured Gerhart Rott on this important occasion. The various very personal speeches were the crowning conclusion of his official working life.

Margaret Dane, CEO of AGCAS, the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (UK)

Michael Katzensteiner, Director of Psychological Student Counseling at the University of Linz (Austria)





## **RATIONALE AND CONTENTS OF THE SYMPOSIUM “BERATUNG UND DIE WIRKSAMKEIT DER HOCHSCHULBIL- DUNG - GUIDANCE AND COUNSEL- LING AND THE EFFICACY OF HIGHER EDUCATION”**

Gerhart Rott  
University of Wuppertal  
Wuppertal/Germany  
rott@uni-wuppertal.de

### **ABSTRACT**

The rationale of the symposium “Beratung und die Wirksamkeit der Hochschulbildung - Guidance and Counselling and the Efficacy of Higher Education” is developed by introducing the concept of organisational efficacy in academic teaching and learning or efficacy in HE. It transfers criteria of psychological self-efficacy such as self-reflectiveness or self-organisation to the organisational level of the university as a learning entity. Within this framework the contents of the symposium are presented, focusing on how student guidance and counselling is interwoven with the evolution of HE and the university.

Key words – Organisational Efficacy; Higher Education; University Management; Student Guidance and Counselling; Personal Development

The symposium had the clearly defined focus of guidance and counselling and its relation to efficacy in the context of higher education (HE) – a link that opened up a number of new perspectives. In order to integrate various aspects of the relationship between guidance and counselling and the efficacy of HE, I invited colleagues and friends from a range of different professional and academic backgrounds to contribute to the symposium.

The concept of self-efficacy was developed by Albert Bandura within the paradigm of social learning theory. It has been enriched by a huge body of research initiated by Bandura himself and others, and has been applied to many areas during the past 30 years. This concept has been influential in many areas of research and practice in HE guidance and counselling.

The concept of self-efficacy is basically a psychological concept that looks at the individual's beliefs and ability to cope with social and personal demands. Nevertheless, the interaction of the individual as a self-regulating, self-organizing, self-reflective as well as proactive agent within a social environment is central to the theory. For example, a student's beliefs and expectations about coping with academic requirements are interwoven with the learning environment offered in the university setting.

This symposium aimed to inquire into the efficacy not only of the individual student but also of HE as a comprehensive endeavour in which the university as an organisation, with policies and the cooperation of its members, play an important role. In a time when universities have to cope with ever increasing demands on their efficiency and effectiveness I thought it useful to attempt a broader vision by drawing on a concept that one might call **organisational efficacy in academic teaching and learning** or simply **efficacy in HE**. While it has not been possible to provide a theory, a model or even a clear definition of this concept at this stage, starting points have been set to explore in what ways the advantages of this broader perspective could be identified. However, one has to be aware of the limits and epistemological challenges of translating the concept of individual self-efficacy onto an organisational level.

Corner stones might be:

- Examining the way in which the fostering of the student's personality development, including self-efficacy beliefs and the development of learning and studying capabilities, is supported by a collective sense of efficacy embedded in organisational settings, strategies and policy implementation.

- Analysing how a student-centred approach to teaching can be supported by the institutional environment, offering students opportunities to develop self-reflective learning and active study.
- Opening up visions of how the university of the twenty-first century can balance the demands of a rapidly changing and globalising world with its traditional educational and cultural task, which is to be a focus of innovation and knowledge. This means enhancing the institution's self-reflective and self-organising ability as a learning organisation, enabling itself and its members, especially students, to cope with present and future expectations. This requires universities to build up their capacity to respond to needs of society and humanity and at the same time to develop their **organisational self** flexibly and coherently.

With these aspects in mind I developed four headings for the different sections of the symposium:

1. Personal development and psychological counselling in higher education
2. Higher education as a step towards career development
3. The link between teaching and learning and guidance and counselling in higher education
4. Challenges in the context of the European Higher Education Area.

The first section was introduced by the question "**What** core elements best conceptualise the relationship between counselling services, student personality development and the university as an **institution**?"

Michael Katzensteiner developed a framework of identity balance as a continual process within the university, which was perceived as a task for its members as well as for the university as a learning organisation. This framework could provide guidelines for the whole debate during the symposium and beyond.

Ann Heyno's paper offered a first step to deepening reflection within this framework. Essentially, a counsellor's professional identity has to encompass a well-founded understanding of the symbolic role of counsellor and counselling service within a university. This enables the counsellor to accept projections without retaliating, which makes it possible to contribute constructively to the management of the university while being effective contain-ers of organisational anxiety.

A further question in this section was “**What** specific contribution can psychological counselling settings make towards enhancing the efficacy of **HE**?”

Elsa Bell provided another excellent example of how a deeper understanding of the role of a counselling service can enhance its professional competence and influence the quality of university policies in demanding areas. It showed how an integrated approach not only synthesizes competences in an effective way but also symbolically conveys the message to the students – and one might add to the university as a learning organisation – that it is “possible to work across the many parts of ourselves and succeed in the demanding tasks we have set for ourselves”.

Looking beyond university and educational settings, Eric Depreeuw developed an innovative approach to procrastination - a widespread problem in HE. While researching aspects of procrastination in the world of work, he not only identified a destructive personal spiral generating economic costs, but also developed the idea that the frequently dissatisfying results of treatment against procrastination might be explained by the assumption that it can be compared to addiction, a preliminary hypothesis that would need further research before being published in detail.

The more general need to reflect the efficacy of the counselling services in relation to that of the university was highlighted by Peter Figge. Drawing on the evolution of the German student counselling services, he elaborated the thesis that conceptualising the efficacy and efficiency of student counselling has always been closely related to the development of universities, and both institutions have been powerfully influenced by the *zeitgeist*. In this embedding context a balancing act between commitment to the individual and loyalty and responsibility to the university has to be achieved. The public discourse on efficacy, backed by research, may play a role here.

The question introducing the second section was “**How** does the careers service reflect students’ needs, as well as the university’s need to open up towards the requirements of **society**?”

An important way in which the university increases its capacity to respond to the needs of society is the enhancement of career management competence in its students and graduates. This is especially important at a time in which career flexibility, happenstance and planned serendipity play an ever increasing role.

In a very inspiring presentation Heinke Röbbken emphasized the need to encourage students to engage in the development of networks in order to cope with these demands. She indicated the need to understand the strength of weak ties and showed multiple ways how this competence can be constructed by the individual student, by guidance and counselling services, by the faculties and by the university as a whole. Due to heavy workload and time pressure the presentation could not be prepared for publication.

Margaret Dane, whose contribution was not available as a text for publishing here either, could draw on her long-term experience in the field of career guidance and on her unique knowledge as the Chief Executive of AGCAS. She explored challenges like doing more with less for diverse users. Together with the participants of the symposium she opened up encouraging perspectives of how, for example, demands for alignment with diverse institutional goals, and for connectivity across the university and with the world of work, can be transformed into proactive change management of the services and the university as whole.

The necessity and opportunities for HE to integrate into the wider context of worldwide developments was elaborated by Karen Schober for the field of career guidance. Backed by OECD research, pan-European and worldwide attempts to make career guidance an important device for lifelong learning and for coping with ever increasing economic flexibility have become important agents of change. This wider perspective motivates relevant actors, policymakers and stakeholders to cooperate in the quality development of services in Germany.

The third section was introduced by the general question **“What are the most promising theoretical, institutional and interventional interfaces between student services and teaching and learning set-ups?”** and a more specific one **“Does the competence concept, as a core element in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), provide a useful basis?”**

Discourse on the latter question was especially substantiated by the empirical research by Istvan Kiss. He showed how life competence as a domain-specific self-efficacy pattern is linked in a highly differentiated way with academic achievement, managing academic success and career interest, as well as with the of role guidance and counselling services in achieving the competence goals of the EHEA.

Johannes Wildt introduced a broader perspective on this topic. Reflecting on his experiences in research in HE and academic development, he called strongly for close cooperation between guidance and counselling services and academic development centres in order to achieve the learning-oriented and student-centred approach called for by the Bologna Process.

Finally, the fourth section was introduced by the questions **“What kind of risks and opportunities arise from the more flexible organisation of the study programmes in the EHEA (Bologna Process)?”** and **“How can guidance and counselling, as well as teaching, contribute to attractive student-centred learning environments as part of change management in HE?”**

Norbert Koubek introduced an impressive model for identifying risks and opportunities for universities that open themselves to the requirements of lifelong learning. External needs and organisational requirements are mutually dependent. If universities want to attract students who already hold executive positions in their professional life, they have to become more entrepreneurial. The necessary innovations will affect teaching, guidance and counselling, as well as the overall management of the university.

Peter Englert presented his comparative study, which clearly pointed out the need to look beyond borders, and the benefits of doing so. Comparing the credit system of the EHEA with that of the US and China, he appreciated the innovative potential of the concepts of student work load and learning outcomes. These can give Europeans a fresh view of the Bologna Process and its opportunities to improve HE.

Finally, David Crosier inspired the debate by the paper he produced for this publication, although he unfortunately could not participate in the symposium. Reflecting on his long-term engagement for the EUA and for the quality of the Bologna Process, especially by producing the empirically based “Trends” reports, he emphasized that it is far too risky for society to ignore the development of appropriate guidance and counselling provision, given the changes in HE as well as in society.

The symposium could not and did not aspire to present a comprehensive answer to the challenging questions it raised about the interweave of guidance and counselling with the efficacy of HE. Rather, with their diverse backgrounds and methodological

variety, the contributions sketched in different parts of a picture that still needs to be completed. The intensive interdisciplinary exchange of views in small groups, as well as in plenary sessions, built bridges between heterogeneous aspects, and proposed possible steps forward for theory and practice to improve HE development as well as the everyday work of guidance and counselling services. I hope that this publication will prompt similar insights not only for the participants but also for other readers.

I would like to add a short personal remark. Together with my colleagues at the Central Student Advisory and Counselling Service (ZSB) of the University of Wuppertal I have sought to meet some of the challenges outlined above. Especially during the past decade we were able to initiate some explicit and innovative steps towards a more holistic approach of student guidance and counselling in line with the overall policy development of the university. We would not have been able to do this without an enriching exchange of knowledge and experience with other members of the University of Wuppertal, professionals and the wider academic community in Germany, and on a European and international level in various contexts, especially within FEDORA and its cooperation with UNESCO, the EUA and the emerging ELGPN.

I am grateful to the many colleagues and friends who came to Wuppertal to participate in this undertaking. Their cooperation has been so stimulating and in many cases so enduring. I would also like to thank the University of Wuppertal, and especially its Rector, Prof Dr Koch, for giving this symposium their strong support. My thanks also extend to the companies Bayer, Price Waterhouse Cooper Düsseldorf, Schmiersal and the Stadtsparkasse Wuppertal for financially backing the symposium and the production of this publication. For the latter, I would also like to thank my successor, Dr Christine Hummel, who made the design of the publication possible.

Last but not least I would like to thank Catharina Schultz and Verena Henssen, who were of great help with the organisation of the symposium and supported the editing of the publication, together with Joseph Swann, for whose many years of friendship and support I am also very grateful.

I will always remember this symposium as a great personal and intellectual experience. Thank you very much for your participation and your many contributions.





## **IDENTITY BALANCE AS A FRAME FOR DESCRIBING THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN GUIDANCE AND COUNSEL- LING AND THE EFFICACY OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Michael Katzensteiner  
Student Counselling Centre Linz  
Linz/Austria  
michael.katzensteiner@jku.at

### **ABSTRACT**

Identity understood as identity balance (Krappmann) is not proposed as a ready-made product, but as one that must be continually established and renewed by the balance of interacting forces. Thus the objective “learning individual in a learning organisation” requires qualifications that are sometimes not part of our academic culture, like role distance or tolerance of ambiguity. The paper explains why this identity concept can be useful for supporting a target-oriented, holistic learning process for both students and academic organisations, including counselling institutions.

Keywords - Identity; Learning Organisation; Counselling Institutions; Efficacy; Higher Education

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 THE STUDENT SITUATION IN A FIELD OF AMBIGUOUS DEMANDS AND NECESSITIES**

It has often been said (cf. Rott, 2008, p. 357) that students have to reconcile the demands of their studies with those of their phase of development: demands not only of daily life but of having to build a career – from the first steps at university (degree program

choice) to entry into a job. This means that the individual, besides having to cope with their program of studies, has to learn to balance a number of inconsistencies in the form, for example, of personal needs that meet with conflicting demands from outside (academic staff, peers, economy, society...)

## 1.2 THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN A HETEROGENEOUS FIELD OF FORCES

The main purpose of guidance and counselling in HE is to help students cope with the situation in the areas mentioned. Counselling institutions emerge with credit from this process.

## 1.3 THE SITUATION OF HE ORGANISATIONS

HE organisations on their part have to cope in a similar way with the forces that influence the individual student. Traditions and mission statements, which often only pretend to be transparent, also tend to disregard inconsistencies that could, if accepted, enhance the learning process within the academic institution.

## 1.4 THE EFFICACY OF HE AS RESULT OF A LEARNING PROCESS

It is well known that in reality – as opposed to academic statements – the discussion about the efficacy of HE does not mirror the many different components that stimulate a learning process – if one sees this not only as the completion of a degree but as a process of growth in identity. Much less does it take into account the mutual influence and interplay between students and academic organisations.

## 1.5 THE CONCEPT OF IDENTITY BALANCE AS A USEFUL TOOL TO DESCRIBE SOME ESSENTIAL GOALS OF HE

The concept of identity balance (Krappmann, 1971) can help clarify some aims and objectives of HE in relation to the individual student, taking into account the dynamics of the academic field, because

- it refers to the real situation of students and HE organisations in a field of ambiguous demands and necessities;
- it can be used to describe the learning process in which a person gains personal identity, but also to characterise the way how an organisation can learn to establish a specific profile in a professional context;

- it can include the role of guidance and counselling in this heterogeneous field of forces; and
- it takes into account the importance of learning in a holistic sense – not only for the individual student, but also for the institution or organisation.

## 2 IDENTITY BALANCE

### 2.1 COMPONENTS OF BALANCED IDENTITY

Krappmann (1971) sees identity as a „uniqueness shared with others“, and balanced identity not as a finished product, but as a condition that must be continually established in a process of balancing the interactions of various forces, typically individual interests, needs and intentions on the one hand and the demands, expectations and regulations of the outside world on the other. In actual interactions, inconsistencies arise between these forces, or they turn out to be heterogeneous and ambiguous. At this point individual identity can emerge, because such inconsistencies offer the individual an opportunity to find a way between being a mirror of expectations and dropping out of all communication. But in order to reach this goal one needs a “base.” This base requires an inner space of security, a reasonably steady self-concept, and the ability to actually present some components of one’s own identity.

### 2.2 THE STUDENT SITUATION AS A CHALLENGE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF IDENTITY BALANCE

The title of Arnett’s book *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties* (2004) already suggests the challenge inherent to the student phase of life. Kalantzi-Azizi (2008, p. 2) uses four of Arnett’s five key features to characterise the developmental aspects of a student’s adjustment process: identity explorations, instability, self-focusing and feeling in-between. From a resource-oriented perspective, Arnett’s optimistic view of this phase as an „age of possibilities“ should be added. Kalantzi-Azizi (2008, p. 3) complains about the constraints of current study programs and remarks that some students simply cannot cope with these new challenges. Rott (2009, p. 49) points out that „although the university setting may be perceived as being narrower after the reforms, it now opens up a more realistic perspective.“ Thus, students can be „encouraged to become awa-

re of their own development and to play an active part in their own learning process.“ Consequentially, the opening of possibilities for all round „academic, professional and personal development“ can be seen as a key feature – and a core criterion – for HE (ibid., p. 50).

### 2.3 THE ROLE OF STUDENT COUNSELLORS IN RELATION TO EFFICACY IN HE

Student problems and disorders are often characterised by a deficiency to perceive these possibilities, since they appear to the students themselves as heterogeneous demands from the outside. The daily job of student counsellors is to help students „translate“ these demands into possibilities, and to align them with their own – often inconsistent – needs. If students find “a way in-between,” they have the chance to discover and present their own uniqueness and, as a consequence, develop an academic, professional and personal identity. And right there, the primary purpose of guidance and counselling in HE complies with the goal of efficacy in HE.

Students and graduates will be required throughout their careers to cope with new situations, exhibit willingness to learn, and possess decision-making ability, social skills, and problem solving and innovation abilities. Such qualities, however, though widely called for, will remain buzz-words as long as they are not objectives condensed into a coherent concept. Since it includes the process of learning, the concept of identity balance can serve as a frame bringing together and combining the requirements placed on the individual with those emanating from the institutional side.

## 3 REQUIREMENTS FOR DEVELOPING A BALANCED IDENTITY

### 3.1 LEARNING AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF CONFLICTS

Learning in a psychological sense can be seen as a “holistic process of adaptation to the world” arising out of “conflicts between opposing ways of dealing with the world” and the “results from the resolution of these conflicts” (e.g. in Lewin’s model: “between experience and abstract concepts,” “between observation and action” ...) (Kolb, 2000, p. 322).

### 3.2 SOME QUALIFICATIONS RELATED TO IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

This goal requires qualifications that sometimes are not part of our academic culture (cf. Krappmann, 1971):

- tolerance of ambiguity,
- role-distance ability,
- role-taking ability,
- role-making ability.

#### 3.2.1 TOLERANCE OF AMBIGUITY

Tolerance of ambiguity (Frenkel-Brunswik, 1949) is seen as a personal skill as well as a quality of organisations or cultures. It means that an individual or a group can cope with ambiguous, unclear, complex or inconsistent situations by viewing them as interesting, challenging and desirable without neglecting or denying their inconsistencies.

#### 3.2.2 ROLE-TAKING

Role-taking (Goffmann, 1961) means showing empathy for the partner with whom we interact. It is the basic communication skill for every participant in the communication process. When we as counsellors have to deal with all the inconsistencies and ambiguities involved in acquiring our professional identity and the identity of our services and institutions, we can give an example of how to handle these situations by using role-taking.

#### 3.2.3 ROLE-MAKING

Krappmann (1971) points out that role-making should supplement role-taking. It helps to create a new social identity by combining all the components of the respective roles and shared social identities within a group. Sometimes allegedly clear role concepts have to be disintegrated in order to find constructive solutions and new roles. If the persons concerned reflect on this process, they get their organisations to learn. The present changes in the HE area, for example, should be understood as opportunities to learn to develop and present new identities, as well as to consolidate tried and trusted components of HE organisations.

## 4 HOW CAN AN ORGANISATION DEVELOP A BALANCED IDENTITY?

### 4.1 THE BASIS OF ORGANISATIONS DEVELOPING A BALANCED IDENTITY

By analogy with the preconditions of an individual's identity balance, organisations also need a base upon which to negotiate their interests with competing institutions, their own hierarchy and students, and the wider economy and politics.

The key role in building that basis is, of course, played by staff members who try to develop their own identity balance in daily communication. Only by exercising the abilities mentioned above can a „discussion culture“, including conflict management, arise. Furthermore, a certain sense of uniqueness (tradition, excellence in research...) will prove useful, as well as a clear legal and organisational framework reflected in a clear, non-constricting mission statement.

### 4.2 A WAY IN-BETWEEN

Such preconditions will help staff members to perceive the heterogeneous demands from outside, as well as their own often inconsistent interests, in a positive light and find a way “in-between” to detect and present the uniqueness of a balanced identity.

## 5 CRITICAL OBJECTIONS

Not least from a psychological point of view the concept of identity balance seems at first glance to be rather far removed from reality. To begin with the individual: Many needs that influence us are almost hidden in the unconscious mind. This also applies to communication in and between organisations: Many interests are part of the “hidden agenda”. Authority, power and influence are also poorly reflected in this model. But concepts of balance, learning process, inner space, role distance, inconsistencies and uniqueness actually implicate and harness subversive power against the background of academic and social reality. Sometimes, a coach is required in order to perceive and deal with such situations.

## 6 FINAL REMARKS

An evaluation of the efficacy of HE should include some core elements of identity balance. Helping students develop a balanced identity could and should be a main objective of guidance and

counselling in HE. The interplay between “learning students” and “learning academic organisations” in the development of their respective identities should be based on a common culture of learning, research and communication where conflicts and inconsistencies are welcome.

Guidance and counselling institutions, as part of the academic culture, can exercise considerable influence there, provided they rank high in the hierarchy of academic organisations.

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## THE STUDENT COUNSELLING SERVICE AS A CONTAINER

Ann Heyno

Independent Consultant, Commissioning Editor for the  
Journal of Psychodynamic Practice  
London/United Kingdom  
ann.heyno@googlemail.com

### ABSTRACT

This paper will look at the organizational role of the counsellor in a university setting. It will argue that, in this setting, a counsellor has a symbolic role as well as a clinical role. The nature of this organizational role may not be immediately obvious and it is sometimes uncomfortable to live with. However, it does account for why student counsellors sometimes feel demoralised, isolated, under resourced and even unwanted within their organization.

The paper suggests that student counsellors who understand and accept the symbolic meaning of their organizational role, without trying to retaliate, are more likely to be effective within their organization. They are also in a better position to protect the one to one, clinical work. Student counsellors who hide behind closed doors, within the apparent safety of the one to one relationship, always face the danger that the one to one work will be at risk.

Keywords – Student Counselling; Organisational Role; Containment

In his book "Organisations, Anxieties and Defences", R.D. Hinshelwood talks about the psychological function of mental hospitals in society. He says that patients are often admitted on the basis of the assumption "that madness cannot be contained and accommodated as part of ordinary personal and social life. It is beyond the pale, or it should be beyond the pale. If it is kept inside it will destroy: destroy the individual, the family, the fabric of society. At all costs it must be separated off and sent somewhere else, and

the main task of a mental hospital is to be that 'somewhere else'." There are exact parallels in universities.

At a conscious level, universities employ counsellors to see troubled students. At a less conscious level, they do so to provide that "somewhere else" that Hinshelwood describes. They do this because they are afraid that the disturbed and disturbing parts of the university cannot be managed within their everyday structures. Universities need counsellors to act as a receptacle for all the unacceptable, disturbing and unwanted aspects of the institution and the uncaring parts of themselves that they cannot consciously bear.

To understand this in more theoretical terms, I will turn to work of the psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion. It was Bion who introduced the notion of containment. He said that our first experience of containment is in the mother/baby relationship. Bion suggested that when a baby experiences intolerable anxiety, he deals with it psychologically by projecting his unacceptable feelings into his mother. The mother then responds by acknowledging the feelings, thinking about what they mean and acting appropriately by doing whatever it is that will alleviate the baby's distress.

As a result, the baby experiences the mother as someone who can tolerate the feelings he finds so unbearable. This makes the feelings less frightening and more bearable. Gradually, over time, he is better able to tolerate his pain himself and eventually he will develop the capacity to work out that if he is hungry, he will eventually be fed and if he is unhappy, he will eventually be comforted. A child who has had a good experience of early maternal containment will eventually be able to tolerate and think about his own feelings in the way his mother did in the early stages of his development. Bion called this capacity in a mother reverie and he said that containment was the basis of a healthy mental life and the capacity to think. However, he pointed out that some mothers do not have the capacity to tolerate their baby's projections and some babies are too aggressive or too envious to accept the reverie. This leads to children who are troubled, unable to think and usually unable to achieve at school. It can also lead to psychosis.

Although this process seems complicated at first, we all have the experience of it in reality. When we hear a baby cry it is often an unbearable sound and we normally wish the mother would do something to alleviate it. If it is not our baby we are unlikely to know what the anxiety is about. However, it is interesting to observe

that most mothers are in tune with their babies and do seem to know intuitively what they want and what is troubling them. Because babies can't talk, they need to communicate in this way for their physical and psychological survival. Once children can talk, they slowly develop the capacity to communicate their needs and feelings verbally. However, throughout our lives we retain a part of ourselves that cannot communicate verbally and as adults we continue to use projective mechanisms either to communicate or to rid ourselves of unbearable feelings and anxieties.

In counselling, based on psychoanalytic thinking, the counsellor does not act on the projections in the way the mother would in her state of reverie, but instead she verbalises what she experiences in a way that is helpful to the client.

Wilfred Bion developed his ideas on containment from the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein's thinking on Projective Identification. Originally, Melanie Klein suggested that children aggressively project their unwanted and unbearable anxieties into their mothers both to get rid of the feelings and as a way of attacking and controlling their mothers. They then identify their mothers with these unacceptable feelings and experience them as frightening and capable of retaliating aggressively. Later, Mrs Klein concluded that not all Projective Identification was aggressive. She thought it could also be used as a positive way of communicating anxiety that could be picked up and understood by the mother. Bion's theory of containment developed from this thinking.

Melanie Klein's original concept of Projective Identification as an aggressive psychological mechanism is very helpful in trying to understand why counsellors in education sometimes feel undervalued, under resourced, marginalised and even unwanted. If they represent the "somewhere else" that Hinshelwood talks about, it is hardly surprising that this happens. Institutions need to marginalise counsellors as a way of trying to get rid of the unacceptable parts of the institution that they represent. However, if they do project their unwanted parts onto the counselling service, they are also likely to identify counsellors with those unwanted parts and fear that they might retaliate aggressively. These sorts of projections probably account for the fact that counsellors are often given poor accommodation, inadequate resources and a sense of being on the edge of the main activity of the institution. After all what would it mean to an educational institution if it felt it had a strong,

powerful and high profile counselling service? It could mean that the institution felt it, too, would be identified with problems and psychological disturbance. Society still equates psychological disturbance with failure, and no university wants to feel it is failing.

Accepting that student counsellors are likely to be the recipients of these organisational projections may also help us to understand why counsellors in universities can sometimes feel isolated. Over the years I have come to realise that one of the downsides of a student counselling job is that you are always "on duty" whether you like it or not. The fact that we carry institutional projections forces us to stay in role even outside the counselling room. For many years I found this quite upsetting and hurtful, particularly at meetings on more social occasions. I wondered why most people outside the service treated me in a slightly unfriendly, distant sort of way. I now see this as part of the job. I realise it isn't me they are relating to but me in the role of counsellor. As a colleague, who was contemplating a counselling training, said, "It's what counsellors represent that puts me off." What she meant was that she wasn't sure whether she was ready to be at the receiving end of all the negative projections.

In the book "Organisations, Anxieties and Defences" that I mentioned earlier R.D. Hinshelwood describes the position of a psychotherapist in a psychiatric hospital as representing a "counter-culture" which is both feared and denigrated. The position of a counsellor in a university is similar, even though they aim to support the learning process. Our work can be seen as counter culture to that of teaching and learning. Hinshelwood also describes the way a psychotherapist is seen in a prison as "a soft, gullible, weak point in the system." This is all too familiar to counsellors in education. At other times, Hinshelwood says, a psychotherapist in a psychiatric hospital "may be idealised and turned to for magic – an attitude that the psychotherapist may himself be tempted to encourage." That is certainly true of student counsellors who are very often invested with the power to sort out situations no one else can manage, including them.

All these projections add up to what another analyst, Donald Melzer, calls the toilet breast into which all the excrement is dumped, to be flushed but not processed. To be a counsellor in a university you have to understand that these projections are not personal, that they in no way reflect the quality of a counsellor's work or the

value of what he or she is providing. They are simply part of the institutional role, part of what you have to expect if you work as a student counsellor. When a director of finance greeted me by saying "here comes the soft face of the university" it jarred. However, it would have been pointless to challenge him. Institutions need counsellors who can carry and survive their projections without retaliating.

To return to theory: Melanie Klein and Wilfred Bion pointed out that not all Projective Identification is aggressive. Some of it is about communication. What I would like to suggest is that if student counsellors are able to accept the reality of their symbolic role within a university and tolerate the negative projections, then that frees them to be available for other forms of Projective Identification which are less hostile and more about communication. If they can maintain a professional stance in the institution, as they do in the counselling room, they can allow themselves to be available to the university in many different ways, some of which may involve doing things which counsellors outside universities might consider "inappropriate", or outside the boundary of the role of the counsellor. What student counsellors do in the wider institution is probably more akin to what mothers do when they respond to their babies. In the counselling room they respond to projections with words. In the university, they usually respond by action. In another book by Hinshelwood, "Thinking about Institutions", he says, "Action is a necessary part of life. In a social context, it cannot be dismissed as it has to be in the psychoanalytic setting." He goes on to say, that "There are two kinds of action: one is A+T, action based on thought; and A-T, thoughtless action, or acting out, with a completely different aim, that of discharging experience."

In universities, counsellors are often drawn into action which is minus T. The art is to distinguish between minus T and plus T action. I would like to give examples of both to show what I mean. At the university where I worked for many years, we had a very tragic incident in which a member of staff was murdered. As Head of the Counselling and Advice Service I was phoned at home and called in at eight o'clock the morning for a meeting of senior staff to discuss how to deal with the situation. In the middle of the meeting I was called out to "counsel" a very distressed member of staff. I was ushered into a room, introduced myself and sat down to

listen to her story. After a few minutes, she said, "You people, you never get it right." For a moment I wondered what she meant. I commented that she was feeling very angry with the university to which she replied, "No not the university, I'm angry with you lot." It was only then that I asked her who she thought I was. To my horror she thought I was the police. I had dashed mindlessly into a situation because I was caught up in the university's acute anxiety and also in their rescue fantasy that the counselling service would solve everything, or in Hinshlewood's words perform magic. This was action minus T. The same morning I rang the other counsellors and said, "Cancel all appointments." I had been infected with institutional anxiety and I was unable to think. As a result I wasn't a very effective container for institutional anxiety. What I should have done is asked if the person in distress wanted to see a counsellor and if she didn't I could have helped the people who were concerned about her, to deal with their anxiety and think what else they could do to help.

On another occasion, following the sudden death of a student, I was asked by the head of the department to help her think about how to deal with the very upset students when they came back after the Christmas holidays. On the day I visited her, she asked me to go with her and introduce myself to the students to provide an acceptable face of counselling in case someone needed help. I rather reluctantly did this because I felt it would contain the lecturer's anxiety and I think it did. From the students' point of view, it was a bit strained and difficult but that wasn't the point. What was important was that I had understood the lecturer's anxiety and I had responded by doing what I felt would help her feel less anxious and that was more like A+T.

What distinguishes these two stories, for me, is that in the former case, I acted without thinking. My client was the university. The distressed staff member I saw was not asking to see a counsellor. Someone had seen that she was distraught and had assumed that a counsellor was needed. In the second example, awkward as it was, my focus was the member of staff who had asked for help. Responding to her request was a containing experience for her. As I have said, student counsellors often have to do things that counsellors in other settings may not see as part of their role. For example, they can't pick and choose who they see. If a student turns up or is referred, their anxiety needs to be addressed. They may need to be referred on but counsellors in universities can't

say that they won't see people with certain types of problems. Their role is to protect the university from unnecessary anxiety by dealing with whoever comes their way. This is part of the process of the Counselling Service as a container.

Currently there are increasing numbers of students in universities, both in the UK and in Ireland, with serious mental health problems. There are also many students, who may have mental health problems who are potential litigants. Increasingly student counsellors are seeing more of these students. Strictly speaking, they are not always suitable for counselling but they need supporting through their studies. Some of these students would litigate if they weren't seeing a counsellor. If a student, like this, is referred to a student counsellor it would be churlish to say to the university that they were not suitable for counselling. Part of the containing role of a student counselling service is to think about how to deal with students the university can't manage, as long as these students want help. There's an enormous difference between students who need and want support but may not be traditional counselling clients and being drawn in to perform magic by trying to deal with people who are resistant. One is A+T; the other is A-T. The former is containing, the latter isn't.

My last example is one where the temptation to act in minus T and be angry with the institution was enormous. The projections were very hard to manage and it would have been easy to miss the communication involved. It concerns a complaint, from a part of the university, where there was no counsellor on a Friday at one of the two campuses where counselling was offered. Over a long period there had been a series of what felt like unfair attacks and criticisms about what was provided on that site. This culminated in a complaint from the Students' Union, which was addressed. Some months later the absence of counselling one day a week was again brought up as an agenda item at an on-site committee meeting. This brought the complaint into the public arena.

As head of service, I was particularly hurt by this very public complaint because the person who made it was someone with whom the service had a good relationship and who I thought was an ally. I was ready to get angry and respond by suggesting that this campus was only one of four campuses, that they already had more counselling provision than any other campus and that we



didn't have enough staff to be on there every day of the week. Fortunately I stood back and bit my tongue. It was only when I was talking to my line manager about it that I realised we were on the receiving end of a huge amount of anxiety. What she told me was that she was really very worried that the Students' Union might not be able to cope if a counselling emergency arose on the day we weren't there. Immediately I realised that the complaints had been prompted by fear and panic and a dependence on what we offer, rather than a complaint that we were not providing an adequate service. Institutionally, the campus wanted a counsellor there every day of the week to contain their anxiety. Realising that it wasn't just the staff persecuting us but a genuine psychological need for us, made it easier for us to discuss sending a counsellor there every day, however inconvenient and difficult it was for us.

In conclusion, I am suggesting that student counsellors have to understand and accept that universities, like society, need somewhere to put their unwanted and unacceptable feelings. Unless they do accept this, it is very difficult for them to be at the receiving end of all the negative projections. If they retaliate by fighting the negative projections, they will be seen as unhelpful and this could put the individual work at risk. On the other hand, if they can accept the projections without retaliating, then they are more likely to be effective containers of organisational anxiety and to help their universities manage and even understand some of their anxieties. Universities that do not perceive their counselling services as being able to do this may question the need for having them.

## **AM I CRAZY TO IMAGINE I COULD SUCCEED IN MY DEGREE? A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH SE- RIOUS AND ENDURING MENTAL ILL- NESS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD**

Elsa Bell  
University of Oxford  
Oxford/United Kingdom  
elsa.bell@counserv.ox.ac.uk

### **ABSTRACT**

Legislation in the UK requires educational institutions to take anticipatory action to ensure conditions within which students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to succeed. This paper describes work in progress at the University of Oxford to provide regular mentoring support for students with long-standing mental health problems. It gives a description of, and a rationale for, the scheme and uses a case study to illustrate the scheme in action. It demonstrates how two services, the Disability Advisory Service and the Student Counselling Service, have collaborated to provide coherent and professional support to students with severe and enduring mental health problems.

Keywords - Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA); Severe and Enduring Mental Health Problems; Ability; Disability; High Academic Achievers; Mentoring; Therapy.

The Special Education and Disability Act (SENDA), implemented in 2001 as an amendment to part 4 of the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), is the legal framework in the United Kingdom within which all educational institutions are obliged to ensure that

students with disabilities are not disadvantaged and that they have an equal chance of being successful in their studies as those without a disability (Office of Public Sector Information, 2010). Even before the Act came into being UK universities had an impressive history of working towards equality of access and progression for students with disabilities, although it would be fair to say that the record in some universities was more impressive than in others! Certainly the newer universities that were often built in the 1960s were more able to design or adapt buildings to allow, for example, for wheelchair access and hearing loops than some of the more ancient universities that were caught between two legal frameworks – on the one hand the requirement to adapt buildings to comply with SENDA and on the other the requirement to preserve buildings of historical significance. The willingness to adapt but in reality being confined by ancient buildings is not peculiar to the UK and the debate is repeated in most European countries as I know from conversations in FEDORA over many years. Of course it might be argued that the slowness to change in some places has not just been because of the inhibitions in the environmental context but has been equally because of inhibitions of a more sociological or psychological nature but it is not my intention to examine those in detail in this paper. I simply want to note that inclusiveness is not achieved without frequent, and often spirited, debate.

This paper will outline how the University of Oxford Disability Advisory Service and the Student Counselling Service have been collaborating closely during the last eighteen months to provide appropriate support to students with enduring and serious mental illnesses such as Bipolar Disorder, schizophrenia, serious eating disorders and disabling depressive or anxiety disorders. But first a little background for those who are not familiar with Oxford University since its unique structure has influenced the way we have developed the programme. I hope however that it will be possible to extract from this very specific context something that is transferable to other traditions and frameworks.

## 1 BACKGROUND

Teaching has existed in Oxford University since 1079 and in 2009/10 there were approximately 20,000 students made up of 11,766 undergraduates reading for a first (Bachelors) degree and 8,701 postgraduate students pursuing Masters or Doctoral (called

a DPhil in Oxford) programmes. Oxford has the lowest student drop-out rate in the UK (Oxford University, 2010a) with only 1.8% of the population dropping out compared with the national average of 9%. It is a collegiate university where 38 independent and self-governing institutions come together to form the University. In structure it is somewhat akin to the EU or the USA with a great deal of importance attached to subsidiarity, a general willingness to work together for the common good and not a little degree of suspicion of the central administration where it might be thought to interfere with the autonomous states that are the colleges. The college is where the tutorial, the core of undergraduate teaching and learning, takes place during which students meet their tutor on a one-to-one basis or with one or two other students. As well as the colleges there are 100 University departments managed by the centre and while graduate students are all members of colleges it is with the department that they often strongly identify.

All students admitted to the University are high academic achievers and have been through an intensive selection process. In 2009/10 more than 17,000 people applied for 3,200 undergraduate places. Based on their academic record, their personal statement and references, 10,545 candidates were invited to attend selections interviews and tests and in total 24,000 interviews were conducted (Oxford University, 2010b). Competition is fierce since all applicants will already have ample evidence of their academic achievements and the interview process is designed to discover those with most potential to achieve even more.

It is significant for this paper that in English we are as likely to describe someone who is a high academic achiever as having high academic ability. So our native language, and the University's tradition that aims to select the finest and fittest minds creates a specific context in which the concept of disability is a major challenge to how we view institutional success.

If accepting students with physical disabilities into all our universities produced challenging debates then the inclusion within SEN-DA of students with enduring and serious mental illnesses has proved a very specific challenge. It has forced us to think about who can succeed at university and indeed, who a university is for. The debate goes something like this – the main tool that students use to succeed in their occupation (the occupation of being a student) is their brains or, using a more general term, their minds. If their main occupational tool is not permanently functioning well, what

does that mean for their ability to be a student? In many ways the confusion expressed by even thoughtful colleagues is similar to the confusion that was evident when students with dyslexia first appeared in our universities. There were heated discussions in the 70s and 80s about whether a student who 'could not spell' should be admitted to university since the ability to write coherently was considered to be a primary requirement in obtaining a degree. In a similar way, we have had to confront some of our beliefs and even prejudices about whether a student whose 'beautiful mind' is, at times, unavailable for their academic project is able to be a student at all.

Added to this powerful debate is the requirement within SENDA that institutions should not just be reactive, that is not just providing facilities once a student appears within its walls and defines his or her needs, but that it should be proactive. The Act demands that institutions should take anticipatory action, to think ahead about what might be needed and what reasonable adjustments to our usual functioning might be required so that all students with any disability will find us waiting and ready to welcome them. The mentoring scheme for students with longstanding mental health problems is one example of a number of initiatives that have been taken at Oxford University to provide students with appropriate support.

## 2 THE MENTORING SCHEME

The Scheme is organised and managed by the University's Disability Advisory Service (DAS) but is carried out with significant input from the Student Counselling Service. These are discrete services with, at the time of writing this paper, separate reporting structures within the University but have a history of working closely together on a number of projects. The mentoring scheme has been an ideal context in which to share expertise and experience for the benefit of students. The scheme provides tailored support to individual students who meet their mentor on a regular basis (most commonly for an hour each week) for as long as they need that support.

### 2.1 WHO ARE THE MENTORS AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

When the programme first started it was envisaged that mentors would be current graduate students who would be employed to provide this specific support. This was a tried and tested model

within the DAS, with graduate students already providing support sessions to students with a range of disabilities. However, it very quickly became apparent that the graduate students providing mentoring for students with histories of mental health problems often found the task too demanding of their personal resources. Without the necessary experience or training that would have given them a theoretical framework within which to understand 'their' students and set boundaries for the work, they became drawn in to the difficulties and, at times, became overwhelmed. This was not good for the graduate mentors, nor for the students they were mentoring. This is not to undervalue a great deal of helpful work that went on at that time, but as a recognition of the principle that emerged. The health and academic success of the students with mental health problems and, indeed, of the mentors themselves could be better served by the mentors having a professional background in mental health and by developing a much more formal structure for the support of mentors. Thus currently all mentors in this scheme are psychologists, psychotherapists or counsellors with experience of working in other contexts with students. They are selected and recommended to students by the DAS after advice from the Counselling Service on their suitability for the work.

The mentors' task is to focus on study and the student's relationship to study within the context of their mental health disability. Content of sessions varies according to student need – with one student it might be on time and work level management in the light of the effects of specific medication; with another it might be developing motivation while recovering from a depressive episode; with another it might be developing greater focus on completion of academic work within the context of an obsessive compulsive disorder. The work becomes effective when the quality of the relationship between the student and mentor has been allowed to develop, and this is where the therapeutic backgrounds of the mentors are particularly important. They have a theoretical framework for understanding the relationship with all its many challenges, and these challenges often occur. It is not unusual for students to be disparaging about the help on offer, to be denigrating of their mentor and to be difficult to manage when they desperately need to take out their frustrations with themselves and their difficulties on someone else. If the mentor's training and

experience help them to understand that the student does not really mean to dismiss them but is likely to be attempting to communicate what it is like to be a student who feels denigrated and excluded by their mental health history, then it becomes more possible for the mentoring process to survive. Equally students can become unhealthily dependent on their mentor or inappropriately demanding of time and resources as a way of communicating distress. Knowledge of and experience in keeping boundaries and the ability not to get drawn in to a drama, while still maintaining a facilitating relationship, are vital elements in effective mentoring. These elements are enhanced if the mentor already has experience of managing intensive one-to-one engagements and knows how to protect both participants from the dangers of idealisation and dependency.

In order to ensure that the work is effective each mentor has regular supervision of their casework with me as the Director of Student Welfare and Counselling, and we meet as a group three times a term to share good practice and work in progress. The content of the work with students is discussed in detail but so are the boundaries between mentoring and therapy. Whilst this latter can be a grey area, since the relationship is so central to both functions, it is possible to be clear about a defining underlying principle. Whilst in therapy the relationship is the focus of the work, in mentoring academic work is the focus with the relationship the means through which it is achieved.

Defining what mentors do is almost easier if what they do not do is defined. They do not provide therapy – although their work relationship might be therapeutic in and of itself. Neither do they provide subject specific extra tuition – although students' attachment to and success in their academic project is frequently increased because of their engagement with mentoring. The mentors' task is to work collaboratively with their students to ensure that the student's specific and mental health disability-related barriers to learning are addressed, so that they have a more equal chance of academic success and are more able to engage with the whole experience of being a student. These principles are illustrated in the following case study which will give you a more concrete idea of what mentors do and how they do it. It is, of course, of one mentor and one student and the reality is that there is no single template for how mentoring should be conducted. Each student

requires the mentor to be flexible both in their approach and in the content of sessions but the illustration will stand as an example of what can happen when the contact works well.

### 3 CASE STUDY

The student was an international undergraduate male student from a developing country who had severe Bipolar Disorder and was pursuing a very structured and demanding 4 year degree in a science subject. He had been suspended from college, and therefore studies, on disciplinary and academic grounds but the college was keen to support his re-entry to the course. The college therefore approached the DAS for advice on Disability Discrimination Act procedures and on what might be the student's specific support needs. The latter was particularly important because the student would be returning to catch up on missed work but would be expected to cover also the new topics that would emerge that term. Oxford terms are just eight weeks long so the academic challenge was great for this student given the pace and length of the term.

#### 3.1 ISSUES TO CONSIDER AND SELECTING THE MENTOR

The student had no family support in the UK, was in difficult financial circumstances and belonged to a culture where a high degree of stigma was attached to disability and mental illness. To balance this, the student was in a long-term supportive relationship and had regular contact with his General Physician (GP), a psychiatrist and the college academic and pastoral support systems. He had a recent history of frequent hospitalisation after a psychotic breakdown and his current medication would be likely to impact on his ability to focus on academic work. The Head of the DAS discussed these issues with me and a mentor was selected on the grounds of her relevant experience of working in an educational context, appropriate psychological training and experience and specifically of working with people with illnesses where there was a psychotic component and, fortuitously in this case, experience of working in the country from which the student originated.

#### 3.2 SETTING UP THE MENTORING PROCESS

The DAS allocates specific advisors to individual students to act as the key link for the student, the college and the department. The advisor facilitates an initial meeting between the student and the



potential mentor in a confidential meeting space in the DAS office and during the meeting with this particular student the mentor covered his pre-illness history, his experience of hospitalisation and, very importantly, his history of academic success. It is vital that in this first meeting the mentor conveys what the experience of mentoring might be like so that the student can make an informed choice as to whether to proceed and, indeed, whether to proceed with this specific mentor. Because she demonstrated that she was able to hear about his difficult and frightening experiences of being ill but that she was also able to recognise his non-ill and academically successful self, this student decided to take up the offer of mentoring.

### 3.3 THE MENTORING PROCESS

#### A. Stage 1

The mentor and the student then met weekly in a cafe near to the student's lectures. The student chose this location because he felt under time pressure and did not want to add to his pressure by having to walk to a more private space somewhere else. A cafe is not an ideal place for a confidential conversation but he was happy with it and mentors have had to get used to adapting their way of working to the many unusual locations that students have chosen as their regular meeting place. They have discovered that this element of student choice in deciding the venue is important in developing a collaborative relationship and thus agree to meet wherever the student wishes providing, of course, it is not likely to put the student, themselves or the public at risk. During this first phase with this particular student the following were the main areas of work:

- Establishing that the student was not at risk of suicide
- Exploring his sense of the loss of his old self
- The student's enjoyment of his manic phases but recognising that each time they culminated in, to quote him, 'debt, failure and hospitalisation'
- Strategies to develop a more balanced way of living with his condition
- How this balance would impact specifically on how he managed his study.

At the end of this period the student felt positive about the mentoring process and its usefulness. As a result he became more proactive about seeking academic support instead of trying to hide his difficulties for fear he would be judged as completely incompetent.

#### B. Stage 2

During this period the mentoring sessions focussed specifically on preparing for examinations where they:

- Developed a work plan
- Established a clear picture of demands including discussion of a realistic 'concentration' period. The student proposed 5 hours continuous working but was eventually able to agree that a 30 minute study/30 minute rest was more achievable.
- Factored in sleep, leisure times and optimum times to study taking into account medication effects and mood.
- Used the weekly meetings for him to air and work through his anxiety about his health and his academic performance.

#### C. Stage 3

The mentor supported the student during the actual examination process. This was particularly important because he had been physically ill for two weeks before the examination period. The Oxford examination process is mainly carried out through the 'final paper' system with a number of three hour written examinations taken within a limited number of days. This is demanding of anyone even in good health and is particularly demanding of those with disabilities. In recognition of this the University allows students with defined health problems or specific learning difficulties (dyslexia etc.) to apply for a formal extension of time in the examination. The mentor helped the student to face his reluctance to apply for extra time and to negotiate the system of application. During this period the student was battling with depression and more frequent appointments were arranged with the student's psychiatrist with whom the mentor liaised. The psychiatrist decided to reduce the student's medication to enable more effective study and concentration but to monitor this carefully. The student passed his examinations and described himself as 'jubilant'. He had feared he could not do it and feared even more that his academic supervisors would equally doubt his ability. He had, through his success in the examinations, reminded himself and everyone else that he was academically able.

#### D. Stage 4

The student returned for the new academic year and his final year as an undergraduate. He was anxious at the thought of the challenges ahead and these anxieties were the main focus of the mentoring work for most of the first term. Winter had historically been a difficult time of year for him and so the mentoring focused on helping him to manage the dark weather as a reality and as a metaphor for his internal world.

During the second term he became more depressed and was not sleeping and so was referred to a sleep consultant. The mentor continued to meet him weekly and for a few weeks increased contact in order to help him monitor how well he was putting into place the advice of the sleep consultant. Unfortunately the student's psychiatrist became ill during this year and was not available to see the student. Regular meetings with the mentor, who was by now a familiar and stabilising factor in his life, helped him to negotiate the destabilising reality of dealing with a new psychiatrist who was not as familiar with him nor he with her.

Throughout this year the challenge in the mentoring was to address both the reality of his illness and the reality of academic demands. Despite all these difficulties, of battling depression and changing medication that impacted on his ability to study, with the mentor's support, the student submitted his research project (part of the final examination assessment) on time and completed further written examination papers.

#### E. Case summary

The student was on the brink of failing academically because of his mental health problems but with intensive mentoring support achieved the academic success of which he was capable. The key challenges in the mentoring process were his unrealistic expectations of himself to be what he used to be. He compared his performance and the sense of the endless possibilities in life that he enjoyed before his diagnosis with the reality and, at times, despair of his current circumstances and was particularly frustrated by his ongoing dependence on powerful medication. Key factors in his success were that he was motivated to succeed and persevere in exacting circumstances and that he had the regular support of his girlfriend who never lost faith in his academic ability despite all the evidence of his mental health disability.

#### 4 SUMMARY

The mentoring scheme for students with enduring mental health problems at Oxford has, to date, proved successful. Students who were likely to fail academically or drop out on health/disability grounds have managed to complete successfully their academic projects. This applies equally to those pursuing a doctoral degree as to those undertaking undergraduate studies as illustrated in the case above. Oxford is not alone in providing such schemes and in other universities the precise design reflects the context in which they are delivered. Whilst they might vary in design the key shared elements are those of flexibility and a multi-disciplinary approach. This integrated approach is of itself symbolic of the message we want to convey to our students – that it is possible to work across the many parts of ourselves and succeed in the demanding tasks we have set for ourselves. For those of us who have been involved in the scheme it has been a privilege. For the students it has been vital in allowing them the success of which they are capable. For the University it provides increasing evidence that those with less than perfect minds are able enough to take up their rightful place within our academic community and not just take up their place but be a contributing factor in the University's continuing reputation for academic and personal success – that minds that are on occasions broken are not a threat but are a benefit to its unbroken record of outstanding achievement.

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## **EFFICACY AND COUNSELLING: “AS YOU LIKE IT”? COMMENTS ON AN UNSTEADY RELATIONSHIP**

Peter Figge  
University of Hamburg, Central Student Counselling and  
Psychological Counselling Service  
Hamburg/Germany  
Figge@uni-hamburg.de

### **ABSTRACT**

In the course of 35 years of counselling in Germany efficacy concepts have been subject to changing influences through political and social processes, university policies and expert agreement. In this context there is a need to continuously review one's own counselling objectives and deliberately choose corresponding concepts of efficacy as well as adequate methods of research.

Keywords - Efficacy; Student Counselling; Psychological Student Counselling; Innovation; Research Projects

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Looking back on 35 years of counselling in German HE I have witnessed an ongoing transformation regarding objectives in counselling and of the corresponding concepts of efficacy. This process has been affected by the current Zeitgeist, as well as by social and academic conditions, individual preference, and institutional requirements. So the question arises which objectives are to be followed, what kind of efficacy are we after?

You might have heard the story of the hesitant, somewhat suspicious patient entering the practice of this prominent psychotherapist for the initial interview. The patient, looking for assurance, asks "How can I be sure that I'm in good hands here? Can you really help me?" The psychotherapist, slowly approaching from

behind his impressive desk, replies “Why don’t you take a look around? Could I be anything but a good professional? That’s how I’ve earned the money for such a privileged location and all these exclusive furnishings.”

This is of course one way – deducing the degree of efficacy from the financial values presented. But judging by the usually modest setting of counselling centres in German universities, this approach would (hopefully) not seem a valid criterion for their efficacy.

## 2 LET’S TAKE A LOOK AT THE LATE 1960s AND EARLY 1970s

Two developments proved essential for the expansion of student counselling in Germany at that time: first the student movement of 1968, with students demanding extensive political and social change for the post World-War II society – including, of course, their own academic environment; secondly empirical studies focusing on the social and psychological situation of students. Authors like Sperling and Janke were predecessors to various long-term surveys we rely on nowadays. But it was a 1974 study by Volker Friedrich that had a far-reaching impact on counselling at universities. The widely published findings reported disproportionately high suicide rates, when compared with non-academic samples, among students at the University of Göttingen.

Stressing the evident need for student counselling in the light of these findings, students began to demand the establishment of counselling institutions as a standard service at their universities. And that included academic as well as psychological counselling. Those who are familiar with the ongoing discussion at that time might recall the claims of students: efficient HE should contribute to the political and social education of students and should develop class consciousness, serving the underprivileged and not the interest of the capital. And so far as the university counselling centres were concerned: according to students they were definitely not meant to act simply as repair shops for capitalist interests, making students fit for the market.

I remember heated discussions with student groups about various psychotherapeutic activities in our counselling centre. In the eyes of quite a few we were not efficiently following the objectives they had stipulated. Instead we were suspiciously regarded as potential servants of capital.

At the same time within psychological counselling institutions counselling veterans such as medical doctors of psychodynamic

orientation suddenly encountered young psychology graduates on their staff, full of new ideas emerging from behavioural therapy, client-centred therapy and gestalt therapy. Again I remember controversial discussions when psychoanalyst colleagues were challenged to prove the efficacy of the traditional approaches they had been using for years.

### 3 THE LATE 1970s

In the late 1970s – a time of anarchy – what did the West German HE administration do to determine their approach to university counselling? They funded a working group to examine the efficacy of nine model student counselling projects suggesting standards and offering orientation.

These were the times of empirical, for the most part quantitative research, predominantly following Bergin and Garfield's credo of efficacy as a research paradigm. Accordingly empirical outcome research tended to be directed towards answering the question "What treatment, by whom, and under what set of circumstances is most effective for this individual with this specific problem?"

This paradigm, of course, provided bread and butter for the next generation occupied with efficacy research, but it also produced lively conflict within the services when the young generation of counsellors and researchers postulated that counselling should open itself to new approaches and provide efficient short-term service for identity problems, anxiety, phobias, depression, and problems in social relationships, including sexual problems. And that success in counselling and therapy could be researched in an empirical way.

As a consequence, counselling and the evaluation of efficacy tended to be focused on individual and social development. Students who turned to the services with personal problems were also looking for new dimensions. They were open-minded, looking for group experiences like encounters, aggression labs and experience-oriented psychotherapy (e.g. drama and theatre therapy), as well as for gestalt therapy and client-centred psychotherapy with its open focus on supporting self-determined processes of development.

At the counselling centres, a wide and eclectic scene of counselling and psychotherapy developed. Sometimes dramatic happenings and the highly emotional experiences evoked by some methods were mistaken as criteria of efficient interventions. But



in general counselling approaches focused on meeting the needs of students for personal and social development and, consequently, efficacy research tried to find empirical means to prove how effectively and successfully these objectives were being met.

#### 4 IN THE 1980s-90s

The general education offensive in the 1980s-90s aimed at encouraging all high school leavers to consider HE. The percentage that took up a course of study at a university increased considerably. Unfortunately, this development was not accompanied by a corresponding increase in buildings, personnel, and funding. Universities were overcrowded, the lack of money was apparent everywhere, and step by step the managers and administrators of HE institutions tended to restrict admission to students with better grades.

Under these circumstances, counselling institutions and their activities tended to be regarded as too expensive, offering a luxury service to few, while the university they belonged to was swamped with masses of students.

Now the prospects for a generous concept of counselling grew dimmer. Instead, counselling institutions got used to cutbacks in personal resources and became accustomed to suspicious looks from the university management regarding their counselling objectives.

Not surprisingly, the inevitable adjustment to the changing conditions also affected everyday counselling. Psychological counselling started to focus increasingly on short term interventions instead of psychotherapy. Increasingly well defined study-oriented skill-training was provided, at the expense of focusing on the general social and personality development of students.

Skill training was directed towards stepping up the speed of study, the lowering of dropout rates and the development of study skills such as academic writing, effective reading, or examination competence. Increasingly not the students nor the counsellors but the institution of "the university" began to impose specific efficacy demands on counselling services to prove they were worth the money they were costing.

Psychotherapy was frowned upon and considered not necessarily a university service at all. Psychotherapeutic support was left to the Studentenwerk, the national organisation for student welfare or to the general health service.

When at the turn of the century a new law for psychological psychotherapists was passed in Germany it implied a better provision of psychotherapy within the health service. As a consequence, psychological therapy was more or less banned from university counselling. Accordingly, many colleagues left the services and opened their own practices.

#### 5 THE NEW MILLENNIUM

After the turn of the 21st century universities became players in a competitive market – they started to compete for the public funds awarded to institutions that fulfilled standards of excellence (fast turnover of students, best grade average, low drop-out rates, high research standards). This in turn generated a growing competition for the so called “best students,” who, once inside the university should be well cared for. Subsequently, university policy asked for a visible and efficient contribution from counselling services.

It was suggested, for example, that counselling institutions should be part of the university’s marketing initiative, or that they should play a part in the screening and selection of applicants. Their contribution was suddenly asked for when the universities began to introduce ability tests with various assessment instruments as an additional entrance qualification. And following the implementation of the Bologna Process it was expected that counselling institutions should play an effective role in preventing or mending dysfunctional conditions in students who experienced difficulties with the new programs, which proved extremely time-restricted and examination-oriented.

Gradually, universities have begun to appreciate the value of counselling and have been ready to support the relevant services financially with allocations from the newly introduced study fees.

The standing of counselling services within the university has, therefore, been growing – sometimes they are even regarded as a possible asset in the competition between universities. But this has two sides, for attention from the university administration – often long sought for – may eventually jeopardize the independence of the counselling services. Being increasingly regarded as a part of the university administration, the services are becoming subject to current quality management procedures, following general administrative guidelines on efficiency rather than counselling concepts of efficacy.

## 6 CONCLUSION

Concepts of counselling and the different methods of examining their efficacy are products of their time. The past decades have seen a transition from contributing to political and social consciousness to supporting individual and social development; from providing specific study skills training to complying with assessment and marketing demands. Counselling services have been and still are performing a balancing act between openly advocated objectives in the commitment to the individual on the one hand and the loyalty and responsibility to the university on the other. Whatever objectives chosen, I find it wise, indeed indispensable, for counsellors to make publicly evident what their respective services stand for, to advocate these goals, to reserve resources in order to evaluate how efficiently those goals are pursued and achieved – and to share the findings, too, with the public.

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## QUALITY DEVELOPMENT IN CAREER GUIDANCE – JOINT EFFORTS FOR A SUSTAINABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Karen Schober  
German National Guidance Forum – nfb  
Germany  
karen@schober-brinkmann.de

### ABSTRACT

Career guidance – whether for all citizens or for special target groups like students, the unemployed, the workforce or marginalised groups in society – needs commonly agreed standards for quality of service, ethics and staff competences. Several approaches have been taken by international guidance bodies (IAEVG, ELGPN, CEDEFOP, FEDORA and others), as well as the German National Guidance Forum (nfb)<sup>1</sup>, in order to develop standards and guidelines for service delivery and implement quality assurance systems that not only make the service transparent for users and for funding bodies but are also binding for providers and flexible in practice.

Keywords - Career Counselling; Quality Standards; Career Management Skills; Career Guidance Competences; German National Guidance Forum

### 1 INTRODUCTION

I am very pleased to be invited to speak at this symposium, which highlights once again the benefits of career guidance and counselling for both current and future students in HE, as well as for the system of HE in general and the Bologna Process in particular.

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<sup>1</sup>Nationales Forum Beratung in Bildung, Beruf und Beschäftigung e.V. – nfb; [www.forum-beratung.de](http://www.forum-beratung.de)

## 2 CAREER GUIDANCE AS A PUBLIC AND A PRIVATE GOOD

Anyhow, I will not talk so much about HE – I am not an expert in this specific issue. I want to talk from a more general, public policy point of view. According to the EU, the OECD and other supranational organisations **career guidance is a private and a public good**.

It helps **citizens** of all ages and biographical backgrounds to manage their individual educational and working careers and to make informed and well thought-out decisions throughout their lives. So lifelong and life-wide career guidance and counselling is definitely crucial to individuals – it is a **private good**.

But it also helps **policy makers** in governments, educational institutions, labour market agencies and private companies to reach their policy goals and objectives. These can be classified, according to the OECD and EU, as:

- learning goals (making lifelong learning a reality and assuring the effectiveness and efficiency of educational institutions at all levels)
- labour market goals (improving employability of the labour force and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of labour market policies to avoid or diminish unemployment and reliance on state benefits)
- social inclusion goals (improving the integration of marginalised groups in the population and groups at risk of social exclusion – e.g. disabled persons, people with migrant backgrounds, disadvantaged young people etc.).

## 3 EUROPEAN CAREER GUIDANCE POLICY ISSUES

The joint policy review on career guidance conducted by the OECD, the European Commission and the World Bank between 2001 and 2003, "Career guidance and Public Policy – Bridging the Gap" (OECD, 2004; OECD and EU, 2005), outlined career guidance policies in 37 countries around the world. This work has had an enormous impact on the awareness of guidance issues in national and supranational politics.

Two European Resolutions agreed on by the European education ministers in 2004 and 2008 focus on lifelong guidance policy and recommend that member states and to the European Community enhance lifelong guidance policy by:

- designing a coherent strategy of guidance systems and guidance provisions covering the educational as well as the employment and labour market sector
- improving and enlarging access to guidance services by user-friendly and easy-to-reach services, including the enhanced provision and use of ICT tools and web based services
- improving the quality of services in accordance with commonly agreed standards and guidelines
- providing high quality education and training for guidance practitioners in line with internationally accepted standards
- designing and implementing means of developing career management skills for all citizens: namely career education programs in schools and HE but also programs for those outside formal education institutions
- improving workplace guidance for the employed
- and, last but not least,: building up coordination mechanisms like national guidance forums or networks for career guidance with strong leadership in the field, in order to better liaise and connect the different services into a coherent and transparent guidance system.

#### 4 THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL AND SUPRANATIONAL BODIES IN QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

After these introductory remarks I would like to focus on the various initiatives taken to design and improve quality standards and guidelines in career guidance, including competence profiles for guidance practitioners.

The need for quality standards and guidelines in any field of social services usually rises from the bottom upwards, from the practitioners themselves, who feel an urgent need to professionalise their job long before administrators and politicians recognise the importance of quality development and quality assurance for the outcomes and impact of the service to the wider community and society.

In Germany and many other countries quality development and quality assurance mechanisms in career guidance are mostly sector-based or restricted to single institutions, guidance providers or professional associations. Accreditations and certificates, which do exist, are mostly limited to a specific area and not nationwide and transversely confirmed. Only few countries regulate professionalization and quality standards by law. So actually, although

numerous standards, guidelines, accreditations and certificates exist, there is no common agreement that users (customers or clients) and funding institutions could rely on.

And – interestingly enough – supranational organisations and international bodies like

- the OECD, the European Union, the UN/UNESCO and ILO on the one hand and
- IAEVG, WAPES, FEDORA and many others (which I cannot list exhaustively here) on the other

are very often the **drivers and catalysts** in the process of quality development and professionalization at national level. The history of quality development in career guidance is a very good example of this. Thus the main international initiatives for quality development in career guidance are:

- IAEVG Ethical Standards 1995 (IAEVG, 1995)
- IAEVG International Competences for guidance practitioners 2003
- IAEVG International Conference in Berne 2003 on “Quality in guidance”
- EU: PETRA and Leonardo da Vinci Programme with several projects on quality in guidance
- EU: Expert Group on lifelong guidance (2002–2007): Common European Reference Tools (CEDEFOP, 2005)
- EU: Joint Actions Programme (2004–2006) (Härtel et al., 2007)
- EU: ELGPN – Work Package 4 “Quality Assurance and Evidence Based Policy” (ongoing) (ELGPN)

Within the framework of these various initiatives and programs, national activities in many countries around the world – including Germany, to which I will refer later – have been endorsed by mutual learning and exchange of ideas and good practice.

## 5 INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION OF CAREER GUIDANCE PRACTITIONERS

Alongside the international and European initiatives mentioned above, and because education curricula and training programs for guidance counsellors differ so widely, a need for improving the comparability and mutual recognition of guidance counsellors’ skills and certificates has arisen.

The EC has recently funded two Leonardo da Vinci projects to establish European accreditation for guidance practitioners:

- EAS: European Accreditation System for Guidance Practitioners<sup>2</sup>
- ECGC: European Career Guidance Certificate (which emerged from the MEVOC project led by Austria): the final conference on this will take place in Vienna next month (16.-17. October)<sup>3</sup>.

The IAEVG – operating on a worldwide basis – recently launched the Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioner Certificate (EVGP)<sup>4</sup> – an accreditation awarded by IAEVG and administered by the Institute for Counsellors' Certification which, as a sub-organisation of the US American NBCC, is related to US Standards. These were derived and developed from the Life and Work Blueprint. I am sure that there are many more international certificates in the counselling sector – especially in psychological and therapeutic counselling – which I do not know about. So again many practitioners experience a lack of transparency and do not know which of the various certificates would most benefit their professional standing and career. It is, again, a huge challenge to harmonise these different approaches or at least to make them comparable and transparent.

## 6 THE GERMAN APPROACH TO QUALITY DEVELOPMENT IN GUIDANCE

I would now like to give a short overview of a recent initiative to develop commonly agreed standards and guidelines for quality in guidance, and to develop tools and instruments for implementing a quality assurance framework (QAF).

In Germany, as in many other countries, guidance systems and their provision is split up among different legal bodies, institutions and providers (schools, universities, employment agencies, adult education institutions, youth services, services for migrant people, as well as services for disabled persons or women's guidance services). Many of them – though not all – are publicly funded, but there are no commonly accepted quality standards according to which a funding body might assess the service quality of the provider they are funding.

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<sup>2</sup> EAS: European Accreditation Scheme for Careers guidance practitioners; see: <http://www.corep.it/eas/>

<sup>3</sup> ECGC: European Career Guidance Certificate; see: [http://www.ecgc.at/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=5&Itemid=13](http://www.ecgc.at/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5&Itemid=13)

<sup>4</sup> EVGP: Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioner; see: <http://www.iaevg.org/iaevg/nav.cfm?lang=2&menu=1&submenu=2>



Following the Lifelong Learning and Lifelong Guidance initiatives of the EU, the German Federal Government has established a number of programs to “make Lifelong Learning a reality”. Part of the program is focused on Lifelong Guidance.

The German National Guidance Forum (nfb), which was established in 2006, is currently starting a quality development project in collaboration with the University of Heidelberg and with funding from the the Federal Ministry of Education. The project is designed as an “open process of coordination” involving a large number of actors, stakeholders, policy makers, professionals and researchers in the field of guidance. The overall aim of the project is to develop

- commonly agreed standards and guidelines for quality in guidance,
- commonly agreed competence profiles for guidance practitioners as a basis for education and training programs for guidance professionals,
- a Quality Development Framework – including the development of tools and guidelines for quality assurance – which can be used or adopted by guidance providers within their own quality management system,
- and test these in a pilot study with a small number of guidance institutions, and
- recommendations for a sustainable implementation addressed to the professional guidance community as well as to policy makers in the various fields of career guidance.

The huge challenge will be to bring all the relevant actors, policy makers and stakeholders together and to develop a common understanding of the essentials of quality in guidance that will apply to all fields of guidance and counselling without – and this is crucial – neglecting the natural and necessary differences in legal and institutional frameworks, guidance settings, and other circumstances under which guidance services are provided in this country. This will not be an easy job; but so far we have received much support from many professionals and organisations and widespread willingness to participate in the project.

Our vision is to produce something like the “Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Guidance” (National Steering Committee for Career Development Guidelines and Standards, 2004), which were developed as a bottom-up process over several years,

supported by the Canadian Department for Human Resource Development, and which – once they were adopted and disseminated – had a remarkable impact on guidance services and guidance funding in Canada.

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## LIFE COMPETENCE

Istvan Kiss  
Eötvös Lorand University  
Budapest/Hungary  
kiss.istvan@ppk.elte.hu

### ABSTRACT

Individuals practicing problem-solving skills in different fields of life develop divergent self-efficiency patterns. The construct of life competence comprises the critical skills required to cope with life and in doing so to experience self-efficiency. Life competence is a broad capacity. In contrast, life competency (plural competencies) is a narrower, more atomistic concept used to label particular abilities. It can be measured as a domain-specific self-efficacy pattern. It depends firstly on adequate self-recognition and self-knowledge; secondly a set of skills that helps one to manage a certain situation with regard to time, place and attitudes; thirdly on the ability to analyze one's activities in connection with past, present and future; and finally on the possession of a set of skills for this specific domain of everyday life. An instrument was developed to determine relevant psychological and life-skill domains for students in HE. Factor analysis revealed seven factors of variables reflecting life-course competencies needed for successful coping in everyday live and life-course planning.

Keywords - Life Competence; Self-Efficacy Pattern Analysis

### 1 PRELIMINARIES AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The period spent in HE is an intensive phase of career development and a privileged era in the lives of young people. Moreover, higher studies may also be considered a significant component of lifelong learning. Time spent in HE is not only about gaining new knowledge, skills, and professional competence but also about what can be called self-authorship, characterised by gradually gain of autonomy in life (Baxter-Magolda, 1998). Self-authorship forces students to convert different parts of their self and face the details of many self-reviews. For people who might have challenges to

overcome, the environment of HE may become a major risk factor for their mental health if they do not apply the appropriate tools to solve their problems.

According to Boulter (2002), more than half American students enrolled in different study programs drop out, and two thirds quit within the first academic year. At 45% the drop-out rate in Hungary is similar - unfortunately significantly higher than in member countries of the OECD, where the rate is about 31% (OECD, 2008).

Research by Chickering and Kytle (1999) and Stevens (1998) has shown that a student-friendly educational environment possesses key features such as personal care or intensive communication between teachers and students, although the system sets an advanced level of requirements that contrasts with earlier decades of practices. Besides these factors, the individual student's initiative and involvement are also priority issues in a student-friendly environment.

In Hungarian HE there is no specific information about what types of college students and teachers meet on the course of everyday educational routine. There is also a lack of effective counselling services providing a life-skills-based advisory model for successful HE studies and campus life.

In this context one might encounter difficulties in setting up a career-planning concept, because indicators of quarter-life crisis are unknown (Horvath, 2007). It is difficult to predict the career paths of students, the persistence to a certain path, or the possibility of change in career plans. Therefore, advisors working on career education issues for the management of HE (evidence-based data or methods) are faced with challenges in defining the right indicators to enhance the effectiveness of career socialisation processes.

Bugán and Margitics (2006), for example, analyzed drop-out rates and mental status and revealed a connection between personality traits, negative attribution style, and dysfunctional attitudes. On the other hand, research on students' life satisfaction and life-span career development is rare (Diener & Diener, 1995). There is also little exploration of students' results in relation to life skills: whether successes and failures are related to areas of campus life, and how these experiences shape overall satisfaction. Moreover, changes in self-efficacy beliefs generally go unrecognised during college years.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In specifying the theoretical framework of the research, which requires adequate examination of the life skills of college students, I have chosen the results of the life span career model proposed by Super (1984), the social learning theory by Bandura (1993), and the socio-cognitive career-building (SCCT) model by Lent, Brown and Larkin (1986). In applying these models, different types and groups of life skills were assumed for the effective student career.

Assessing the patterns related to the experience of self-efficiency, a new term, life competence, seems appropriate and this must be accompanied by an index of the qualities it entails. Life competence is based on self-efficacy beliefs and connected to the effective practice of life skills. The present research seeks possible solutions to the problematic mental status of college students by suggesting ways to overcome crises both in career building and life (conducting) competencies. According to Super's career-building model (1984), there is an integrating and synthesising process going on in a college student, based on his or her genetically inherited capacity; this shapes the occupation-related self-aspects by skills developed during training and the experience of different role models. The level of satisfaction resulting from this process depends on whether the individual finds the skills, needs, values, expression of personal traits, and appropriate actions connected to the self either within the framework of a profession or as the result of recreational activities. Career building is a process in which the individual faces developmental tasks whose resolution is likely to keep them wholeheartedly and constantly motivated. Since the self and its situations are continuously changing, the correspondence between these factors presents ongoing challenges for the individual.

The years between the ages of 18 to 25 are about exploring the possible directions for career paths. Super (1984) stated that it is important to clarify primarily, the advisory tools and methods that should be applied to solve young people's problems, and secondly, to find professional ways to assist them through different development processes.

Bandura's (1993) model of perceived self-efficacy adequately reflects on Super's concerns. In the early descriptions of social learning theory self-efficacy was observed in the performance of specific tasks. In the first phase of experimental research these



were connected with commitment to studies and achievement-motivation.

Sources of self-efficacy:

- effective problem-solving in different situations
- information feedback from the environment (e.g. school environment, family socialisation, and their impact on various tasks),
- emotional and motivational characteristics experienced during problem-solving (arousal, aversion, curiosity)
- successful models.

These four sources of information, obtained from a combination of cognitive-motivational bases, can develop into decisive factors where thinking, emotions, behaviour and motivation are key issues in new problem-solving situations.

Autonomy, goal-orientation, proactive coping, and self-government are central factors in the experience of self-efficacy. This impacts not only mental status but also those aspects (e.g. motivation, implementation methods, organisation) that are connected with reconstruction of the (social) environment.

Lent, Brown and Larkin (1986) introduced the concept of career self-efficacy into career building. Experimental research shows that procrastination about shedding the student role and delay in career-related information-gathering are good indicators of effective decision-making in this area.

The social-cognitive approach provides the framework for the latest interpretation of this research, since it integrates the most important factors related to career building, such as interest, motivation, goals and values, as well as distant and proximate obstacles. Labour market trends, occupational prestige, and the support gained from parents and friends will also play a role in career-related decision-making.

Based on Lent and Brown's work (1986), different dimensions of career related self-efficacy experience and self-ruling capacity related to a socio-cognitive career development model have been examined and published in the last two decades. Related studies in different contexts clearly indicate the central role of career self-efficacy in students' completion of their degree programs, as well in issues of professional and life success (Lent, Brown and Hackett 2000; Lent & Brown, 2001; Lent & Brown, Hackett 1994; Lent et al. 2005; Betz, 2002).

## 2.1 AIMS

The present study aims to investigate the major areas of interest, life competence and life skills of Hungarian students in HE. It therefore explores the critical areas of Hungarian college life, investigates areas in which students are forced to pursue transformative activities in order to manage everyday life, and inquires into different types of life course activities related to campus life.

The experimental research on which the study is based focused only on life competence, including skills and skill-related self-efficacy patterns. By clarifying these skills and patterns, students will be able to deal successfully with career-development tasks and life course activities throughout their academic studies.

## 2.2 DEFINITION OF LIFE COURSE COMPETENCE

Life competence is defined as an age-related problem-solving strategy, also called a meta-cognitive system. Life competence is based on skills which are task-related and pattern the experience of the self as an efficient and effective performer.

The determinants of life competence in a given period of life are:

- psychological situations, including challenges from development tasks and actual event-related crisis that require problem-solving
- the specific skills and perceptions that the individual applies in such a situation.

Life competence is the set of skills, abilities, and attitudes that serves the development of individual strategies for living in social systems. It is a toolset of can-do, evolving as the sum of individual experience-coping strategies in different situations.

The psychological projection of life competence is the experience of self-efficiency: an attitude-like pattern defining the individual's process of situation evaluation and including synthesizing, motivational and behaviour-related components.

The construct of life competence as related to the experience of self-efficiency differs from the construct examined by earlier researchers in highlighting skills connected with self-efficiency, thus establishing a self-efficiency experience pattern or profile that makes the socio-cognitive career theory model open to further differentiate.

### 2.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Depending on personal traits, campus life may provoke different types of problem for students starting their academic programs. Based on the model of life competence, this research aims to reveal critical areas of student life in the Hungarian HE system. It is assumed that a valid life competence model for any group of people may comprise different life skills. The concept of competence directly refers to tasks practiced and applied in specific areas of everyday life. Nevertheless, pinpointing criteria that may guarantee a successful life course is a difficult task.

Psychological literature provides some indications of the parameters of successful life course management. First of all, the idea of well-being introduced by Ed Diener in 1995 may be used as a determinant of life competence. It is supposed that students living in environmental harmony and working hard for their goals perceive themselves as more successful and report a higher level of (subjective) well-being.

Lack of such competence may result in difficulties in academic life, social isolation, and loss of personal values and goals. Moreover, it may drive a person to a lower level of self-esteem and loss of faith both in the future and in the world. These problems are familiar to counsellors working with college students. Their problems can be related to symptoms of depression such as a dysfunctional attitude or neurotic cognitive structures (Lisznyai, 2007). These symptoms may connect to a lower level of competence even at sub-clinical levels: thus the pursuit of perfection and the need for external confirmation may work as risk factors for depression (Bügan & Margitics, 2006)).

It is generally supposed in analyzing coping strategies that students with a higher level of life competence will stand out so far as problem-centred results and positive coping strategies related to their emotions are concerned (Oláh, 1999). On the other hand, self-punishment and acting out may be related to a lower level of competency, and in this case it is assumed that hesitation will determine the life course. Parallel to these, a less mature level of career choice and unclear future plans can also be presumed (Crites, 1985).

## 2.4 THE COMPONENTS OF LIFE COMPETENCE AND ITS EFFECTS ON LIFE COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Life competence skills define the level of success in different situations and present information about the genesis of the self-efficiency experience. This, in turn, expresses the cognitional characteristics of life competence (e.g. a depressive information management strategy indicates to a lower level of life competence), and influences the progress of motivation, clarification of values and goals, perseverance and endeavour, as well as determining pro-active and motivation-controlled activities. The self-efficiency experience also impacts the emotions (e.g. anxiety and degree of depression), and enhances the practice of feeling-centred coping strategies. Moreover, it affects area-specific actions like the choice of environments and activity that supports one's field of interest.

Based on empirical research (Kiss, 2000), life-competence related skills are characterised as:

- body-related skills, including costs of living and the management of basic emotional stability
- learning-related skills, including the attainment, ordering and time-tabling of academic requirements
- skills in understanding and re-examining personal values, practicing autonomy and making reasonable personal choices and decisions
- self-management skills, referring both to long-term strategies in the management of goals and everyday life, and the organisation of short-term tactical activities
- skills in interpersonal communication, including self-expression, verbal and non-verbal communication strategies
- skills in managing close relationships, referring to the tools for managing new companionships within a close social community – social skills also belong to this group, since communication and companionship management are important motivational factors
- skills that enable the individuals to belong to communities, to formal institutional systems and to society as a whole.

College students who have experienced disadvantages in the development of life competencies during their primary and secondary socialisation processes will possess a low level of life competence at the beginning of their academic studies. Their dys-

functional attitudes, such as perfectionism and a high need for external reinforcement (Bugán & Margitics, 2006), will result in depression. Under stress, such dysfunctional attitudes appear in physical, emotional, and motivational symptoms. Students in this group will frequently also have non-adaptive coping strategies, experience a high level of stress, and show signs of subclinical depression and narrow social skills. Having a skill deficit and a low level of self-efficiency, they will apply less effective problem-solving strategies.

A taxonomy of life-competence skill related to the problems that college students experience can be developed from the theories and experimental research detailed in this article. Area-specific characteristics of self-efficiency connected to the skills described, and the measurement of life competence can be joined to the index of a student's subjective well-being.

After clarifying the question of basic life competencies, student counselling programs need to be developed. In case of primary prevention, students should be supported with direct intervention concentrating on the skills that have to be developed in order to achieve career goals.

## 2.5 HYPOTHESES

### Hypothesis 1

Student life competence positively correlates to life satisfaction and problem-centred coping strategies. These two factors show negative correspondence to indicators of depression and inadequate coping methods. The student life satisfaction index is expected to be in positive correlation to their evaluation of their own and their family's financial situation.

### Hypothesis 2

It is assumed that students in HE can be divided into groups based on their reports on self-efficacy experiences related to the seven life course factors. These groups significantly differ in quality of life competence.

### Hypothesis 3

Student groups modelling Hypothesis 2 differ significantly from each other in their mental health indicators, life satisfaction, and coping strategies. Correlation as in Hypothesis 1 is presupposed in comparing the groups. Groups showing a lower level of life

competence (and a correspondingly higher level of depression) will probably possess a lower level of life satisfaction. A lower level of problem-solving strategy, a high level of emotional focus, and inadequate coping strategies characterise a low level of life competence.

#### Hypothesis 4

Groups that show differences both on intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of life competence probably also differ from each other in efficacy of life development. Student groups differ in career building effectiveness, too. A higher level of life competence is connected to a higher level of career efficacy. A lower level of life course competence associates with a lower place on the career development index.

Significant differences between the groups are expected in terms of maturity of career choice and career interest. Groups with a lower level of competence will show a lower level of maturity and interest in their career.

## 2.6 METHOD

### Sample

During the experimental research, two samples of student services in HE (high school and college students) were selected for testing. The choice of samples (not in relation to the entire student population) can be considered reasonable for developing and designing programs for student counselling services. The test persons delivered the data voluntarily. In order to test the first sample a paper-pencil test survey was used, while for the second sample data were collected in the form of an online questionnaire. The paper-pencil questionnaire was filled in by 523 students with an average age of 20.48 years (ranging between the ages of 18 and 25, meaning 1.59 years difference from the average). The online questionnaire was filled in by 1870 college students (541 men and 1329 women) with the average age of 19.99 years (ranging between the ages of 18 and 26, meaning 2.25 years difference from the average).

Students who were taking part in this experimental research found the questionnaire whilst reviewing the BA and MA programs on a special website about the Hungarian HE system (<http://www.felvi.hu>).

#### Test instruments:

##### Life competence skills measurement

Hungarian Domain Specific Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, HE-Form (Kiss, 2003) (HDSEQ-HE)

##### Measurement of mental hygiene status

Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) (Beck, 2005),  
Dysfunctional Attitudes Scale (DAS) (Weissman 1980),  
Neurotic Cognitive Structures Questionnaire (NCS) (Lisznyai, 2007),

##### Life satisfaction

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, 1995),

##### Coping strategies

Preference of coping strategies questionnaire (Oláh, 1999),

##### Career maturity, career interest differentiation

Crites' Career Maturity Inventory (CMI, Hungarian form) (Crites, 1985) Self Directed Search Questionnaire by J. Holland, (SDS Hungarian form), (Holland, date n.a.)

## 2.7 RESULTS

In order to present the results of the research, path analysis models were used. The most important advantage of such models is their ability to handle the psychological variables of whole models in a system. From among the indicators outlined by the results, it is worth taking into account the self-efficacy expectation patterns, subjective wellbeing, life satisfaction, and the totality of life-skills and life-conduct competency of students. The correlation of the central variances is shown with a double-ended arrow. See Fig.1.

Students' mental status – used in the model with measuring the depression status – shows a significantly negative relationship with life satisfaction ( $r=-0.30$ ). Mental health status and life competence are in a reverse relationship.

The mental hygiene status of students who took part in the sample was in high negative correlation to life satisfaction ( $r=-0.30$ ) (using a special tool measuring depression status). The attributes

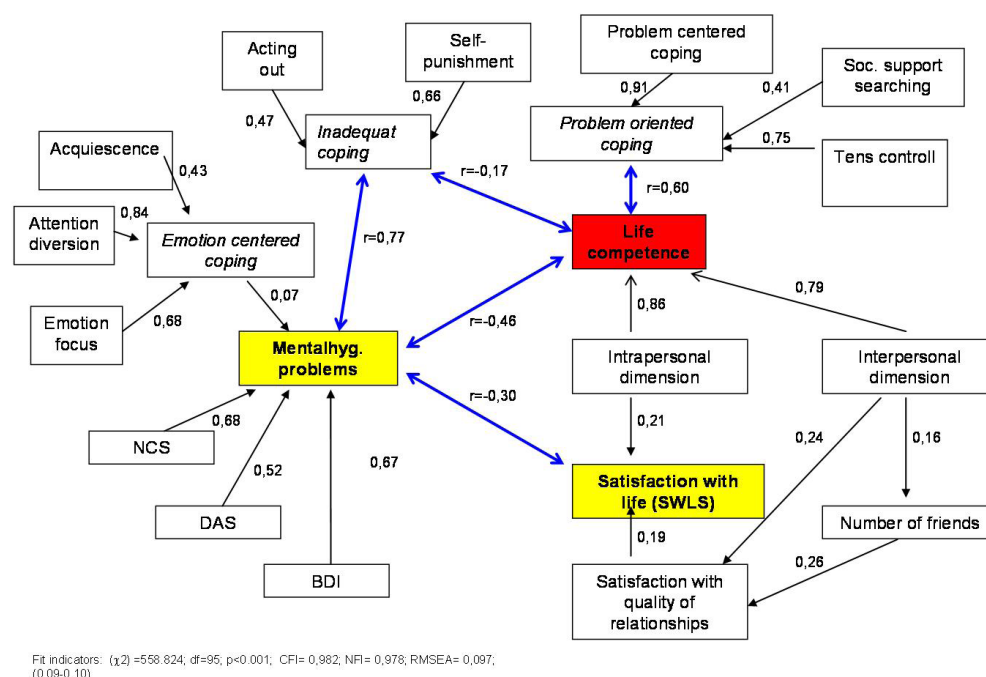


Fig. 1.: Life competence, mental health problems and wellbeing in context

of mental hygiene status, used as underlying factor, were outlined by the Neurotic Cognitive Structures Questionnaire (regression weight 0.68). This was followed by the Beck Depression Questionnaire that revealed the symptoms of depression (regression weight 0.67). Finally, the Dysfunctional Attitudes Scale (DAS) presented the attitudes that showed the least relation to depression (regression weight 0.52).

A higher level of competence is associated with a lower level of the negative mental hygiene characteristics ( $r = -0.46$ , the whole model,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The intrapersonal life competence dimension directly impacts students' life satisfaction. The major regression weight (0.21) of life competence refers to the relationship between the paths of int-



rapersonal competence and life satisfaction. Those students who possess the required skills, such as reflecting their own value structures and organizing their everyday life are able to fulfil academic requirements, manage financial, physical and mental health, and report a higher level of efficiency and satisfaction.

The interpersonal competency dimension directly impacts life satisfaction, and two important variables need to be considered. The first (and more important) variable represents satisfaction with the quality of close personal relationships (0.24). A higher value in the interpersonal competence dimension will lead to a higher level of satisfaction with relationships. The second variable refers to a student's number of companionship (0.16). In cases of higher interpersonal competence students reported a higher number of friendships, though the number of friendships is not directly related to life satisfaction. The number of companionships reveals an impact on the satisfaction with relationships (regression weight is 0.26). This satisfaction also influences life satisfaction (regression weight 0.19).

According to the three underlying factors derived from coping strategies, self-punishment is characterised by acting out a coping strategy, and there is a strong correlation between the underlying factors of avoiding problem-solving and a student's negative mood ( $r=0.77$ ; the total model  $p<0.001$ ). Secondly, there is also a strong and positive correlation between the groups possessing life competence and pro-active problem-centred strategies (problem-centred coping, emotional state control, and seeking social support) ( $r=0.60$ ; the total model  $p<0.001$ ). Finally, due to the expectations involved, a higher level of life competence is in negative relation to a holding-back strategy ( $r=0.17$ ; the total model  $p<0.001$ ). It may be concluded from this experimental research that life competencies and their practices connect to the shaping of a self-efficacy experience pattern and, as such, are central factors in the development of a student's mental hygiene status and career development.

#### Unfolding hypothesis 1

Research into college students based on hypothesis 1 shows that life competence as measured by self-esteem correlates positively with life satisfaction. A higher level of perceived self-efficiency goes along with favourable mental hygiene characteristics in the dimensions both of intra- and interpersonal life competence.

The intrapersonal dimension, as indicated by an analysis of the connected skills, is based on clarification of self-value, a well-organised daily and weekly routine and a set of skills for academic achievement. The interpersonal dimension, on the other hand, comprises two major elements of life satisfaction: a developed social support network can increase the number and enhance the quality of companionships, and communication skills – as well as those required for effectively reviewing, working and living in major systems (university environment, college campus, society) – are a key function in the development of relationships.

Modelling of the intrapersonal life competence dimension shows that awareness of one's value system and appropriate goals, a continuous review of values and motivation factors and the use of self-management strategies directly impact the experience of life satisfaction. This satisfaction can influence a person's identity, as the self pursuing a career correlates to his or her value system. In the case of college students this might appear in the choice of a special field of academic interest that leads to the profession the individual seeks.

Surprisingly, the evaluation of a student's own and family financial status was not eligible for building into the structural model. The indexes referring to the body and basics performed less confidently and were less differentiated among the groups. The reason might be that basic needs can be uniformly satisfied. Because of this, the characteristics of different relations (strong personal relationships, companionships, friendships) gain greater emphasis.

#### Unfolding hypothesis 2

To support the second hypothesis, five different groups possessing different life competence profiles were distinguished, based on skills related to the characteristics of area-specified self-efficacy.

#### Unfolding hypothesis 3

Researching the third hypothesis, five student groups can be distinguished as follows:

1. Model students are characterised by a high intra- and interpersonal life competence, good academic achievement and a good set of companionship.

2. Individualist students are characterised by high intrapersonal life and average interpersonal life competence that mostly focuses on reaching their personal goals. Thus these students have less connection to the college community.

3. Average students (the square group of the two dimensions above) are highly concerned about their academic achievements and social concerns, and have highly developed skills. The reason might be that these students tend to attend counselling programs, suggesting a relation to institutional procedures and a higher level of related skills. However, use of an electronic information system as an active organising element is not necessarily a defining characteristic of life competence in this group. The result tends to be the outcome of the sampling procedure rather than the standard difference between the student groups.

4. Student groups with unsubstantiated goals can be characterised as possessing a below average level of intrapersonal and an average level of interpersonal life competence. They report uncertainty about their academic achievement, values, and goals. These students tend to meet obstacles in fulfilling academic requirements and to withdraw from problem-solving and social relationships. In this case, interpersonal life competence skills are still able to ensure a stabilised mental hygiene.

5. Finally, a low level of both intrapersonal and interpersonal life competence is typical of a group that is threatened by drop-out. One in ten students who attend counselling services has a low level of life competency and thus presents a high risk of drop-out. Mental hygiene may reach a subclinical level of depression that endangers career-planning and the continuation of college studies in these cases. Supposedly, these students are in that 45% drop-out rate that characterises the Hungarian HE.

These groups significantly differ from each other in the two basic dimensions and skills of life competence. Model students and those who are threatened by drop-out show significant differences in both life satisfaction and depression-related characteristics. The presumption stated in hypotheses 1 is shown by group number five.

Based on the first sample, 9,6% of students show the lowest level of life competence and tend to experience drop-out. Parallel to this, the indicators of the fifth group's mental hygiene status suggests an acute possibility of depression and dysfunctional attitudes, and neurotic cognitive structures occur significantly more

often. The indicator of life satisfaction is lowest in group five. Based on the related literature review, this group reports the lowest level of satisfaction with the quality of companionships, which also represents protective aspects. Concerning the skills related to intra- and interpersonal life competence, the fifth group, threatened by drop-out, reports the lowest level of self-efficiency. This group also reports a poorer quality of life than do their fellow students.

Summing up the results of the initial research, for students in HE seeking student counselling (personal or in groups), life competence and perceived self-efficiency when working on tasks related to campus life are central factors of mental hygiene.

Concerning Lisznyai's recommendation on his Neurotic Cognitive Structures Questionnaire (NCS) (2007), students who are threatened by drop-out might experience the environment of the institutions of HE as hostile and less supportive. These students are also dissatisfied with the social resources they get.

Taking the time spent in HE into account, students report a different level of life competence. The life competence index reveals a significant difference between sophomores and seniors and also displays significant differences between seniors and graduates. (Since the introduction of a credit system in Hungary, these terms only refer to the time spent in HE.)

Sophomores' level of life competence is lower than that of seniors or graduates. The relation between the "classes" of academic years and the level of life competence is not linear. Therefore, class variable cannot be adapted to the structural model introduced at the beginning of the research. The groups differ from each other in self-management, social awareness, and the skills of relationship management. Moreover, the groups apply different strategies for problem-solving. Those who are threatened by drop-out report a low level of problem-solving capability, while they show a higher level of inadequate coping strategy and the ability to stabilise emotional status.

Groups characterised by either a low or a high level of competency significantly differ in their adaptation to institutional conditions. According to the life competency model, adaptation, stress, and general mood management seem important variables for the members of these groups.

Unfolding hypothesis 4.

According to the fourth hypothesis, there is a set of skills of the intrapersonal and interpersonal life competence that is required for career planning. There is also a correlation between the differentiation of career ideas and a student's life competence.

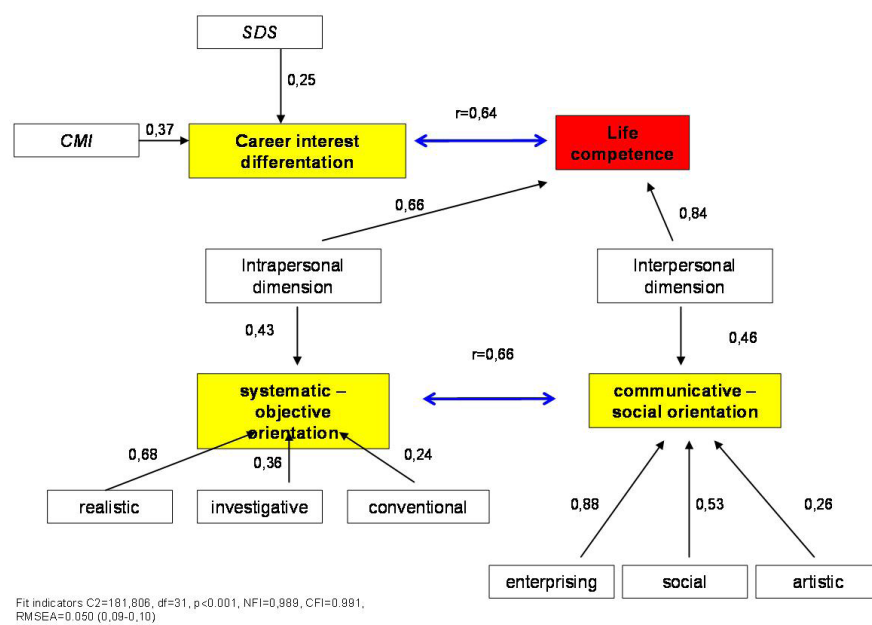


Fig.2.: Differentiation between life competence and career interest

The central factors of the applied structural model are the indexes of career interest differentiation, life competence, and the two major groups of interests (systematic objective orientation and communicative social orientation). These factors are highlighted in Fig.2.

The index of career interest differentiation is shown by the characteristics of Crites' Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) (regression

weight is 0.37) and the Self Directed Search Questionnaire (SDS) which presents the distribution of objective orientation (regression weight is 0.25).

In the differentiation between life competence and career interest (awareness of career planning, the elaboration of objective orientations, and career maturity) a positive correlation was found ( $r=0.64$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), represented by a double-ended coloured arrow in the chart. Consequently, a higher level of life competency correlated with a higher level of career orientation.

There is also a strong correlation index concerning the two groups of orientation (systematic-objective and communicative-social orientation) ( $r=0.66$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The chart shows that groups with entrepreneurial, social and artistic fields of interest gave initiation, creativity and social pro-activity a stronger regression weight (0.46) through the interpersonal life competence dimension. The level of interpersonal life competence skills (communication, managing close relationships, adaptation to an institution or society) and the variables of self-efficiency satisfaction while practicing these skills have distinctive features in entrepreneurial, social and artistic professions.

Intrapersonal life competence (with a 0.43 regression weight) characterises conventional, research, and/or technical fields of interest related to those motivational variables that presuppose organised working methods and analytical thinking. Those who possess the skills to establish a self-value system, can plan strategies to handle problems, and manage to resolve academics or cost of living problems perceive a higher level of self-efficiency that manifested in this group.

A strong correlation was found ( $r=0.66$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) in the occupation preference dimension defined by the two irregularly differing fields of orientation. Concerning the data of the correlation matrix, referring to the overlap of the two areas noted above, the conventional and entrepreneurial fields of interest can be characterised by organisation and initiation.

Summing up the results presented here, interpersonal life competence can be related to the creative, entrepreneurial, and social fields of interest while intrapersonal life competence suggests orientation to conventional, research, and/or technical fields of interest. The skills determining life competence incorporate a logical set of tools that can be reasonably connected to specific occupations and their professional practice (e.g. an occupation of a con-

ventional field of interest assumes a synthesising working method and skills that help to manage analysis and time management in the intrapersonal life competence dimension).

### 3 DISCUSSION

Life competence (a perceived domain-specific self-efficacy pattern) influences whether individuals manage to achieve their intention in important areas of their self, such as managing key tasks and activities. This achievement depends first on adequate self-recognition; secondly on a set of skills that helps to decide how to manage a certain situation concerning time, place and attitudes; thirdly on the ability to analyze their activities in connection with past, present and future; and finally on possession of the relevant set of skills for life competence.

The construct of life competency differs from the general self-efficacy construct examined above since it uses system-analysis to measure the level of satisfaction the self experiences in the management of specific tasks.

This study complements the socio-cognitive model theory that supposes the development of a general self-efficacy experience in the practice of different skills. This experience also defines the motivational characteristics of further activities and choices of goals, and determines the significant areas related to achievement.

The skills advised in relation to life competence, and the self-efficacy experience related to the practice of these skills make it possible to further differentiate the socio-cognitive career theory model.

The standard of life competence-related skills determines the level of directly experienced success in different situations and gives information about the formation of this experience.

As far as practicing skills is concerned, the genesis of a self-efficacy experience is a major central variant in connection to success in life competence. This experience determines the characteristics of cognition regarding life competence (e.g. a depressive information management strategy indicates a lower level of life competence) and influences the progress of motivation, the clarification of values, goals, perseverance, the degree of endeavour, and pro-active and motivation-controlled activities. The self-efficacy experience also impacts emotions such as anxiety and degrees of depression, and enhances the practice of emotionally-centred co-

ping strategies. Moreover, it affects area-specific actions like the selection of environments and activities that support the formation of a field of interest.

The research indicates that individuals develop divergent self-efficacy patterns by practicing problem-solving skills in different fields of life competence. The intrapersonal and interpersonal life competence dimensions correlate with each other, though the impact of the two dimensions takes various routes.

Moreover, referring to the results concerning the correlation between the practices of competence-related skills and age, it can be stated that the first variance plays a more significant role, as the individual experiences perceived self-efficacy in the fulfilment of requirements. This fact refers to differences in tendency levels among the classes in HE, but the age variance did not appear as a significant factor in describing the life competence model.

In conclusion, competence development and structural rearrangement points are assumed to be similar to the roles and steps of development in Super's life span career model. In career practice, or in the event of a change of role, the life competence model and set of skills need to be reviewed periodically. This routine might lead to permanent insecurity, but as the individual continues practicing the required skills, the level of efficiency experience will rise until the next change. Changes can concern coping strategies when entering into HE or a change from the academic environment into professional life, although points cannot be connected to age; rather, situations and roles have a significant function.

Students encounter a normative career development crisis during HE. This crisis can be adequately measured with the life competence construct. Life competence-related skills can be enhanced by student counselling in HE, and this significantly raises the probability that students will be able to overcome obstacles.



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## THE INTERFACE BETWEEN STUDENT COUNSELLING AND ACADEMIC DEVE- LOPMENT

Johannes Wildt

Centre for Academic Development, Technical University of  
Dortmund

Dortmund/Germany

johannes.wildt@tu-dortmund.de

### ABSTRACT

This paper focused on the interface between student counselling and Hochschuldidaktik – the German term for teaching and learning at universities, or academic development. It develops the thesis that both student counselling and academic development base their thoughts and activities on student experience, and focus on student learning. During the last decade – in Germany later than in the English-speaking world – the role of university teachers has undergone a growing shift from teaching to learning: a change from a teacher-centred to a student-centred view on HE that challenges university teachers to broaden their competencies to include the role of adviser on student learning – a task traditionally ascribed to professional student counsellors. Nevertheless, in spite of this convergence of roles, there is an evident lack of cooperation between the institutions of student counselling and academic development, which are separate organisations within the universities. The paper elaborates on a promising perspective of cooperation between the two fields of activity and proposes possible synergies.

Keywords - Hochschuldidaktik; Academic Development; Student Counselling; Teaching and Learning

## 1 ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT MEETS STUDENT COUNSELLING

It is a great honour for me to contribute to Gerhart Rott's symposium on the occasion of his retirement. Gerhart Rott surely is one of the grand old men of student counselling who has had a deep influence on theory and practice in this field. So this occasion gives me the chance to reflect on the relation between this field and my own experience as a professional academic developer engaged in research and development on teaching and learning in HE.

Most universities traditionally have institutions for student counselling at their disposal. Even if there are sometimes arguments about the specific tasks of these institutions, it is indisputable that student counselling is an indispensable facility at every university.

For academic development this is really not true. By now, nearly all German universities have established units, centres or regional networks of excellence in learning and teaching (so-called CELTS), but most of them are very small and views on their duties differ widely. Often they suffer from a considerable lack of acceptance. Nevertheless, it will be informative to take a look at the relationship between student counselling and teaching and learning from the perspective of an academic developer. Student counselling and units or networks for academic development are usually separate institutions within universities. A closer look, however, reveals important interfaces between them.

## 2 THE SHIFT FROM TEACHING TO LEARNING AS A COMMON POINT OF REFERENCE

These interfaces are the result of different perspectives on student learning as a common object. Student counselling focuses on how students become fit for their subject, whereas learning in the perspective of academic developers refers to becoming fit in one's subject. Both tasks involve learning: the first with respect to the prerequisites of participation in a program of study, such as orientation within the range of study choices, reflecting the reasons for one's decisions, managing anxiety etc.; the second with respect to successfully coping with the aims and requirements of the program one selects.

Roughly speaking, and perhaps over-simplifying, there was in the past a division of labour between student counselling and teaching.

The task of the counsellor was to enable students to learn, whereas teaching provided the content to be learnt. Few teachers worried about the learning process of their students. They delivered academic content and expected students to accept responsibility for their own learning. The content-oriented role of professors (lat. *profitiri* = to declare, to make accessible) was opposed by the role of students as self-determined actors (lat. *studere* = to learn by intrinsic motivation without guidance) (cf. Wildt, 2002).

This view of the relationship between university teachers and students has changed slightly over the last few decades. HE has been looked at more in terms of education – or, in its German version “didactics” – as a combination of aims, content and methods of both teaching and learning (cf. Blankerts, 1969). The transfer of this concept to the university in the form of *Hochschuldidaktik* has focused attention on the student learning process.

In 1995 Barr and Tagg summarised this development as “the shift from teaching to learning” and in 1998 Berendt was the first in Germany to ask how to introduce such a shift into the German university scene. Implied in that question was that teaching obtained its value not simply by delivering knowledge, it made sense only through its effect on learning. The perspective of HE was turned and teaching had to be reflected visibly in learning. This change of perspective was induced and accompanied by an admirable volume of research and development on what was then called the student-centred approach (cf. McKeachie, 1967).

### 3 THE CHALLENGE OF BOLOGNA

To talk about HE today is impossible without looking at the Bologna Process. Since the Bologna Declaration of 1999 an overwhelming process of change in teaching and learning at universities has started. Without a doubt, the growth of academic development in Germany over the last ten years, following a long period of stagnation in the 1980s and 1990s, depends on it, too. Yet, one really can argue about the results of this change. Often one hears totally contradictory stories: on the one hand stories about a magnificent success, on the other hand about the greatest disaster imaginable (cf. Wildt, 2009). Without a doubt the degree programs in nearly all fields of study (95% at universities of applied science; 75% at full universities except for medicine, law and to some extent teacher education) have been completely restructured and reorganised. This means that they are divided into modules, fixed

by workload, measured by ETCS, completed with a continuous examination system and described by diploma supplements. All new programs have to be approved by an accreditation procedure and every course in every program has to be precisely described in a special handbook.

In spite of these results, a lot of people within and outside universities feel very unhappy. They see a highly bureaucratic and strictly regulated system of teaching and learning which does not allow for self-organisation in a student's learning process. Sometimes, universities seem to have been reduced to a kind of third level of secondary school. So the recent student protests against the excesses of the Bologna Process is not very surprising. By now most of the people politically responsible for HE agree that a second wave of reform (first: AHD, 2005; cf. HRK, 2008) will be necessary.

In this situation, student counselling as well as academic development are challenged. This challenge refers to the need for a deep change in the teaching and learning culture (cf. Schneider et al., 2009). As I already pointed out in 2003, from the perspective of academic staff development the crucial point of the Bologna Process means introducing the "shift from teaching to learning" in the sense of realising a culture of student-centred teaching and learning (cf. Wildt, 2003).

In principle, the Bologna Process opens up some opportunities to foster such a change. The regulated bureaucratic administration of this ongoing change mentioned above misses the fundamental goal of the Bologna Process, which is to foster competences as learning outcomes.

With regard to this, a few remarks must suffice here. In the context of Bologna competences as learning outcomes usually refer to "employability" and "citizenship" (cf. Tuning Project, 2008). In an academically demanding interpretation such competences signify the ability to cope with complex and dynamic requests in vocational and societal situations by deploying knowledge, skills and attitudes in an adequate and responsible manner. These tasks imply a high level of reflexivity and self-organisation (cf. van der Blij et al., 2002; Weinert 1999; referring to the new challenge of Bologna, Wildt, 2010). Fostering the development of competencies has profound consequences for university teaching. Thus, the second wave of reform is leading to a remarkable change in the role of university teachers. Student counselling and academic development must support this change.

#### 4 THE CHANGING ROLE OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

The challenge to change the role of university teachers is not a normative option but an evidence-based construct. On the basis of a broad empirical research about belief, ways of thinking and attitudes of university teachers, Kember (1997), using meta-analysis, showed that concepts of teaching could be differentiated into five categories on a scale from the teacher-centred or content-oriented to the student-centred or learning-oriented pole.

### Different Concepts of Teaching

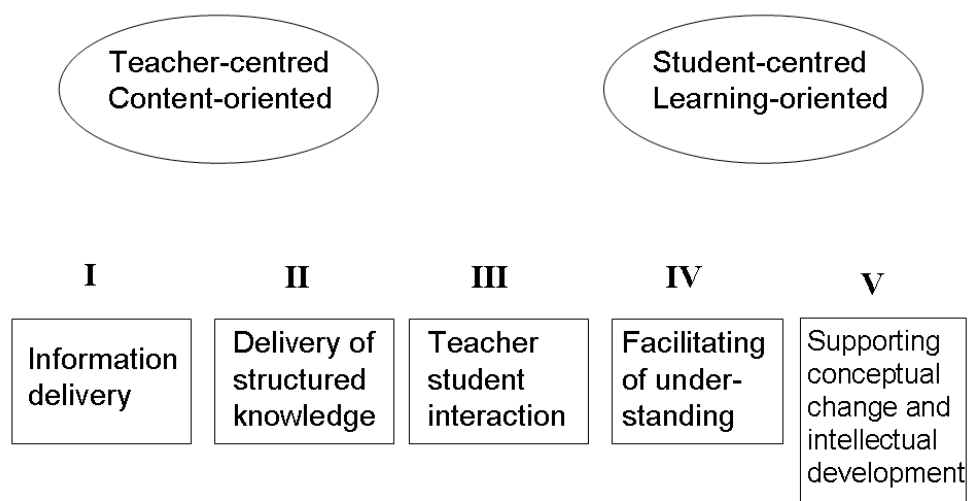


Fig. 1. Different Concepts of Teaching

- Teachers who are representatives of category I understand their role as information delivery. This information delivery refers to the theoretical and empirical knowledge of the discipline taught. The quality criterion is scientific rationality of the specific domain of knowledge.



- Teachers of category II aim at structuring the knowledge delivery in a way that is suitable for the cognitive capacity of the students. Organising a proper structure for communication of this knowledge is the teacher's task.

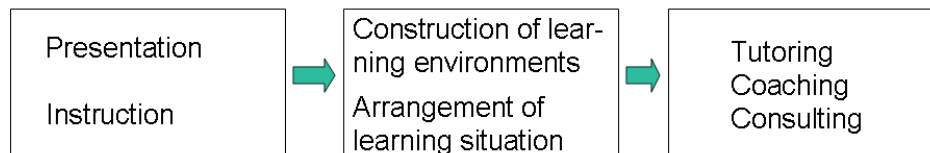
- In comparison, teachers of category III try to interact with the students. They are convinced that they need feedback from the students about their learning experience in order to be able to adapt teaching to the existing learning conditions. So they seek opportunities to communicate with their target group.

- The main purpose of other groups of teachers, who lean more towards the pole of student-centred learning, is to facilitate their students' understanding. Teaching according to category IV can include the delivery of structured knowledge, but teaching activities are characterised rather by helping with problem solving, counselling in cases of learning difficulties or providing feedback regarding the increase of competences.

- The main characteristic of category V is the support of conceptual change and intellectual development. It is easy to see that this teaching concept, which represents the student-centred or learning-oriented pole, accords closely with the traditional understanding of Bildung in the Humboldtian sense. Therefore, I think a consistent realisation of the shift from teaching to learning is in line with an academic understanding of the central purpose of the university. The strong critics of the Bologna Process may be justified, but this criticism shows mainly that it misses the core purpose of the academic endeavour.

To avoid misunderstanding about the changing role of teachers, it seems important to point out that the aim of academic development – I suppose in agreement with student counselling – is to enlarge and not to replace the traditional competencies of university teachers. The following figure may provide a short overview.

## Changing Role of Teachers



**Teachers role? Expert or instructor or facilitator or mentor or critical friend? Clarify your role in different settings.**

Fig. 2. Changing Role of Teachers

The figure shows, naturally, that teachers often have to present more or less complex knowledge, to give an overview about a knowledge domain, or to give an introduction to new areas or tasks. If, in addition, they want to offer their students the opportunity to develop competencies to cope with complex and demanding situations calling for reflected and self-organised action, they must be able to construct proper learning environments, not only in the digital but also in the real world of interaction. In such learning contexts, teaching competences, which can be described as tutoring, coaching and consulting, become increasingly important.

Those competencies are the domain both of student counselling and academic development. There are, therefore, many reasons for fostering cooperation between these two institutions. Some hints for further cooperation will conclude my considerations.

### 5 POSSIBLE JOINT VENTURES BETWEEN STUDENT COUNSELLING AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Periodical meetings to exchange experience and expertise in order to communicate and make public opportunities for supporting the development in HE by both actors.
- Exchange of experience by both sides regarding student learning, including cooperation in research on that field.
- Coordination of student support within individual universities, for instance offering training for exams and reducing anxiety, writing laboratories, training for learning strategies or study skills.
- Support of the fostering of teaching competencies such as coaching, consulting or running learner groups.

- Projects together with faculties to enrich learning environments or structures.

I hope that this symposium will be a step on the way towards such cooperation.

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## EXECUTIVE HIGHER EDUCATION IS A CHALLENGE FOR UNIVERSITIES

Norbert Koubek  
Schumpeter School of Business and Economics,  
University of Wuppertal  
Wuppertal/Germany  
E-mail: Koubek@wiwi.uni-wuppertal.de

### ABSTRACT

Lifelong learning has arisen in response to great and powerful changes in our societies, particularly in the fields of science, business, economy and technology. The universities are increasingly becoming partners in this process, developing new curricula for students with professional experience, high motivation and part-time availability.

For these programs executive students accept rather high fees, which they pay individually or with financial support from their companies. These revenues are becoming a relevant factor in the income planning of successful universities and a significant indicator of good governance and the transfer of knowledge. In terms of my own faculty, the Schumpeter School of Business and Economics, these are important entrepreneurial innovations in the growing worldwide market of academic education services.

Keywords - Lifelong Learning; Executive Program; Entrepreneurial University; Innovation

### 1 INTRODUCTION

There is a strong connection between change and progress in all fields of scientific, social, economic and technological activity on the one hand and human capabilities, skills, knowledge and level of education on the other. At the beginning of the 21st century change is being driven by two fundamental forces. First we can see that the globalisation and the growth of some very important emerging countries are new elements in every field of international politics, economics and education. Secondly, the so-called Kondratieff cycle explains long-term technological and economic change: in these terms information technology has been the most important factor in the development of new industries, companies, products, workplaces and skills during the last few decades. In both respects new types of information and knowledge are constantly being offered in economically and politically advanced

and advancing societies. One of the consequences of this process is that HE, which as a rule takes place before embarking on a professional career, is now seen as ineffective and insufficient as the sole period of learning in life. We have begun to realise the importance of lifelong learning activities in all professions and organisations.

Universities have therefore started to set up supplementary education programs that run in combination with professional activities. This combination is called executive education and is offered at different pre-academic and academic levels. Universities will increasingly become partners in this process, which entails the development of new curricula for students with professional experience, high motivation, and part-time availability.

For these programs executive students accept rather high fees, which they pay individually or which are paid by their employers or companies. The revenues are becoming a relevant factor in the income planning of successful universities and a significant indicator of good governance and the transfer of knowledge.

## 2 FLEXIBILITY AND INTENSITY IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The executive programs are part of a long-term movement to change the character of universities and will bring a lot of new challenges in the areas of

- curricula
- qualification for staff members and lecturers
- organisational capacities,
- technical equipment, especially on the IT-level, and
- networks between internal and external organisations.

Is it possible to analyse these influences and challenges with a more theoretical model? I have looked into the box of instruments from my own academic field of business administration and have adapted the concept of the production portfolio to the subject of this conference: the field of HE in universities.

In operational terms we can build a portfolio chart with two axes. One axis describes the flexibility of university programs and structures and the other is oriented towards intensity of cooperation. We can separate each dimension into two levels (low and high) and will thus have a 4-field matrix describing organisational types of universities and their educational programs.

In field 1 we find the hierarchical organisation of a university with standardised services, programs and examinations. These elements belong to an environment with stable conditions in which academic education is focused on a full-time degree program of between four and five years prior to professional activity. The intensity of cooperation with other academic or practical partners

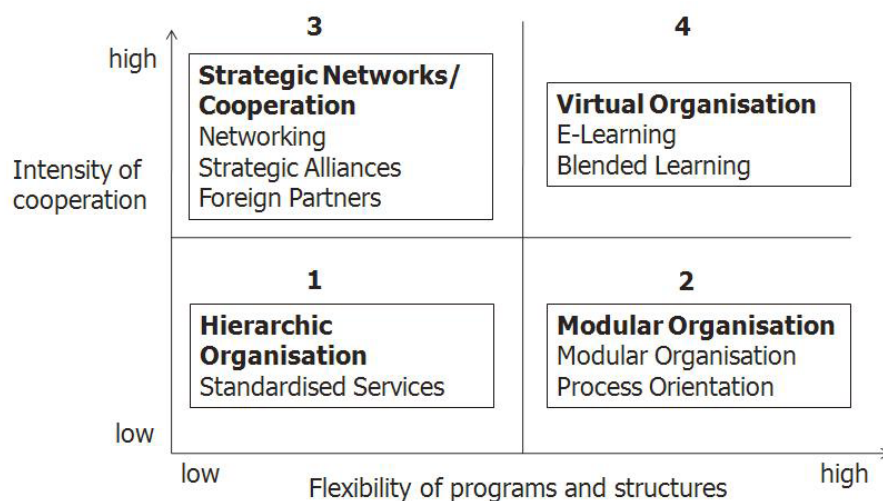


Chart: Organisational Types of Universities and their Educational Programs<sup>1</sup>

is low, and executive programs are not involved. For economists these are bureaucratic or Tayloristic organisations.

Adaptating to the new scientific and professional challenges the academic programs can be opened to create a more flexible model. Thus in field 2 we find a modular type of organisation with process orientation, which means that the curricula must be developed, evaluated and certified anew. The Bologna Process in general and the combination of courses into modular units are current movements in this field. Executive programs with external partners are not involved.

In field 3 the universities expand their contacts into national, international and even global strategic networks. Firstly, this means cooperation between academic institutions in full-time programs. On a more advanced level the cooperation will include external organisations in politics, business, research etc. But in this field one also finds executive programs in which universities are directly involved in cooperation with external partners. The Executive Master's Programs in Business Administration or in Business Administration and Engineering belong to this type, as well as the twin-track programs that combine a university degree with professional training.

The most complex and, simultaneously, most flexible level is seen in field 4. Here we find a combination of modular organisation in university programs and strategic cooperation with inside and outside partners. In terms of executive programs, everything is

<sup>1</sup> Source: Similar to portfolio of production strategies, see: Picot, A., Reichwald, R. & Wigand, R. T. (2001). Die grenzenlose Unternehmung, 4th Edition ( p. 273). Wiesbaden: Gabler.



possible at any place and at any time worldwide. It is understandable that the challenge of good governance is very high in this field, and that a lot of qualified and intensive support from university departments and outsourced organisations is required.

### 3 CONCLUSION

Universities operating in fields 3 and 4 must be very innovative if they seek to fulfil the ambitious conditions they themselves impose and the new type of student demands. In some respects these universities are equivalent to entrepreneurial organisations and are therefore often called "entrepreneurial universities".

To realise such a strategic orientation, including the field of executive programs, universities need a high level of management capacities to organise the requisite functions and processes, which are for the most part individual-oriented. In the reality of 2009 we find a wide field of experience and many specialised academic institutions in Germany – a field in which some institutions will win and others lose, while some will not survive at all because they cannot compete. In addition to the divergent structural elements in organisations there will be a separation within the student group into different types based on diverging interests, conditions of life and opportunities.

Whatever the outcome, the relevance of information, guidance and counselling will be undiminished, in order to bring together supply and demand in the field of HE both inside and outside the universities.

## CONCEPTS AND PRACTICE OF STUDENT MOBILITY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Peter A. J. Englert  
University of Hawaii, HIGP, Center for Chinese Studies  
Honolulu, United States of America  
penglert@hawaii.edu

### ABSTRACT

Higher education is undergoing change in many regions of the world. Major factors of this change include aspects of internationalisation of higher education and as part thereof international student mobility. Mobility is supported by various regional course credit systems and mechanisms to recognise credit thus obtained for accumulation towards a degree. A comparison of course credit systems of the United States of America, the People's Republic of China, and Bologna Europe is provided from a historical and functional perspective. Their influence on practice of horizontal student mobility is evaluated.

Keywords - Mobility; Credit Systems; Higher Education; Internationalisation

### 1 INTRODUCTION

In HE practice student exposure to different educational environments during the attainment of academic degrees is under some circumstances considered a highly valuable educational experience. Much emphasis is often placed on international mobility. Student mobility has a vertical and horizontal component. A vertical component, from entrance at the lowest cycle of HE through a degree ladder towards achieving highest degrees, is progression. A horizontal component is frequently considered the main dimension of student mobility between HE institutions including – within the course of a degree program or 'cycle' – the opportunity to study for credit towards the completion of a cycle or degree at several institutions within a HE system and – in the case of international mobility – beyond HE system boundaries.

Horizontal mobility provisions require systems of assessing student attainment below that of a completed qualification, at the course or module level. Examples for this are the American course

credit system and the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Other options are agreements between HE institutions within a national or international framework. In line with the complexity and flexibility of transfer recognition for such systems, the potential complexity of student pathways to cycle or degree completion may require increasingly complex systems of student advising. For example, within the American course credit system more than 60% of students completing their bachelor's degree have obtained the necessary credits from or have attended more than one HE institution and more than 35% from more than two, indicating increasingly complex pathways towards degree completion, accompanied by an extensive provision on official advising. Such extensive horizontal mobility is not likely to be expected within the European framework, and may not be intended within the European Higher Education Area or the Chinese HE system, where mobility opportunities are increasing but are still comparatively limited. Increasing mobility provisions also ask for a change in quantity and quality of student advising.

A comparison of structure and practice between the traditional American course credit system, the European Credit Transfer System, and the Chinese credit system will provide insights into benefits, advantages and disadvantages of opportunities for student mobility. The scope of this paper is limited to exploring frameworks for student mobility within regions of coherent HE systems such as the United States, China, and Bologna Europe. This study will also be focused on undergraduate education only.

## 2 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### 2.1 HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS

The American course credit system has a long history (Geiger, 2005). In contrast to contemporary developments in many countries and in particular to Bologna Europe, generally accepted degree structures are established but competency-based degree frameworks have not been developed in US HE (Adelman, 2009). However, there are generally accepted standards on course credit assignment and sometimes also on course content that underpin the US standard levels of the Associate, Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degree.

The credit system of the United States began its development in the late 18th century with the introduction of electives in HE and the need to regulate access to HE for the growing body of students electing at that time post-compulsory high school education as preparation (Bastedo, 2006; Shedd, 2003).

While Carnegie Unit credit formulas were formalised first for secondary schools in 1906-9, credit units were independently developed for HE's elective system, yet strongly influenced by Carnegie Unit theory and practice. Credits are attached to courses

with set subject boundaries, a second nature of the US system (Shedd, 2003). The direct relation to faculty teaching time is a result of several streams of historical development, which included standardisation of faculty workload, operational effectiveness and 'return on investment' considerations. The United States course credit system as we know it today evolved out of diverse historical origins and practical policy measures.

A comprehensive description of the present status of the United States course credit system is provided by the "United States Network on Education Information" (USNEI) web page (2009). One of the characteristics of US HE is the multiple credit transfer option between its institutions and the achievement of degrees through accumulation of credits.

Credit accumulation is regulated within individual institutions through graduation requirements established through mechanisms of joint governance, with faculty in the leading role (Mortimer & Sathre, 2007). Transfer of credits between institutions through recognition of credits is also a faculty prerogative. The processes in place by faculty at the majority of HE institutions are generous.

Under these circumstances, what makes a degree one from the institution that provides the certificate is predominantly achieved/regulated through residency requirements or through the definition of a specific number of credits to be obtained through the awarding institution.

## 2.2 MOBILITY, ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Horizontal mobility of students became a major characteristic of US HE in the 20th century, especially after WWII with the growth of the public community college sector (Rudolph, 1977). The establishment of two-year community colleges as convenient and inexpensive entry points into HE required a form of horizontal transfer within postsecondary undergraduate education (first cycle) through the transfer of credit accumulated there, or a form of vertical transfer if the terminal community college degree of "Associate" was accepted for entry into the third year of university education.

For a long time the mechanism of establishing course recognition between institutions were system wide academic agreement (on standards), or between individual institutions (within and outside of systems) through articulation agreements. In the late 20th century some states began to regulate/facilitate such horizontal/vertical transfers for general education credits, such as California through the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) (Hagedorn, Moon, Cypers, Maxwell & Lester, 2009).

Generally the options for students to accumulate courses and credits towards a degree are manifold. Some of those options, by necessity, involve diverse – and different types of – provider ins-

tutions. Characteristics of the majority of the credit acquisition/transfer options are described in detail by Adelman (1999, 2000). We can then also distinguish two distinct patterns (pathways) of credit accumulation (Adelman, 1999):

- a. formal, sequential transfer from one institution to another, recognised by institutional rules, and
- b. multi-institutional attendance, which can take many forms including parallel enrolment, or 'swirling', i.e. several changes between types of HE institutions.

As a result of these developments and options US students increasingly accumulate course credit towards a degree from several institutions, through multiple transfers, distance and other delivery modes, and timelines tailored to personal needs or interests.

The first advantage of the system is what may be called "transparency." Wherever a student enters HE (unless he or she directly is accepted at a top level institution), the system provides for formal and informal transfer of credits, i.e. horizontal and vertical mobility options that can lead to the attainment of a bachelor's degree. Model trajectories of students starting at a local community college, formally transferring to a local/regional university or an elite university to obtain a bachelor's degree are abundant, so are histories of students starting at a community college with their post-graduate degrees obtained at elite institutions.

It could be considered a further advantage that there is the opportunity for multi-institutional attendance and adjustment of completion times to personal and cultural needs.

However there are several disadvantages of the US elective and course credit system as it presents itself today. The foremost disadvantage is the inadequacy of the credit-hour measure. In its historical development and current applications it does not reflect student learning. Being based on faculty contact hours it has not (yet) reflected student work (time, volume and intellectual demand), other than through general assumptions (Shedd, 2003). A second disadvantage, also a heritage of its implementation a century ago, is the "time-and location-based method for recording learning" (Shedd, 2003). If learning work (of whatever quality) has not been completed within a real (as opposed to virtual) place of accredited higher learning, i.e. if there is no professor giving a lecture (in a real classroom or per video link/tape/web) our system cannot easily evaluate the learning that a student has accomplished, at least not formally. These problems would not occur in a qualifications framework and student workload and learning outcome driven environment.

### 2.3 INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS

The apparent flexibility provided through historical developments in the US elective and course credit system and the recent deve-

lopments of student postsecondary attendance patterns shows that this freedom of mobility can be advantageous but not necessarily under all circumstances.

A report by C. Adelman (2006), based on National Center for Education Statistics data, shows that not all forms of mobility are correlated with success in degree completion. It turns out however that, when considering other factors in modelling student attendance patterns and degree success, the multi-institutional attendance domain formal transfer is more effective in degree success than other patterns.

Furthermore, the classical higher educational attendance pattern of early entry, enrolment into the highest level of institution possible, with some exception for the classic formal community college transfer, full time formal status with additional summer courses or concurrent course work in community colleges, provides the highest level of degree success.

### 3 CREDIT SYSTEMS AND CURRICULAR PRINCIPLES: PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

#### 3.1 HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS

China's modern HE history followed a very complex yet exciting trajectory from the arrival of Western missionaries beginning in the mid 17th century, through the Westernisation movement of the mid 18th century to the contemporary development over the past sixty and in particular the past thirty years of the People's Republic (Zhou, 2006).

The character of HE after the revolution of 1912 was based on learning and assimilation of British and American models to the Chinese environment, while after 1949 the experience of the Soviet Union was also considered in designing HE. The policy reform of 1978 started a new phase in HE development which has led to reorientation, expansion and development over the past thirty years (Zhou, 2006, Hayhoe, 1996).

The engagement with a course credit system in China goes back to 1917 when Cai Yuanpei became president of Peking University and later president of the Academia Sinica. By 1927, the credit system was established at the university and by 1929 the state education department required all universities to accept such a system. The credit system was supposed to ensure that students were exposed to different areas of knowledge, particularly in their first year of study. When the Soviet model of specialisation was introduced in the 1950s, the credit system was abandoned. It was replaced by a system of formalised courses of study over a given academic year (Hayhoe, 1996). After 1978 individual top level HE institutions began readopting their versions of a course credit system (Agelasto, 1995). Following the principles of the significant reform efforts in China, by 1986 some 200 institutions of HE and

by 1990 practically all institutions of HE had implemented some form of the course credit system, frequently also experimenting with it in adapting it to institutional needs (Pepper, 1990).

From a historical perspective the credit systems of the 1980s were superimposed on fixed teaching plans already in existence. The ratio of compulsory courses to electives from a limited offering was approaching 7:3, partially also influenced by the degree of relations between curricula, enrolment and job assignment plans still in existence. This situation began to change when these relations were abandoned.

During the 1990s and with the advancement of reform and development of the Educational Administration System in China (Li, 2008), the "Education Law" (1999), and the "Regulation on Academic Degrees" (1981), studies on curricula and syllabi for 21st century HE were undertaken. A result of this was the "New-Century Project for Teaching Reform" in 2000 followed by other initiatives. As a result, leading universities in China changed their curricula and their course credit systems in a way that allowed for more student choice (Zhou, 2006).

When considering the history and re-developments of course credit systems in China under the umbrella of the "Regulations on Academic Degrees" (1981), there seems to be a significant level of experimentation and autonomy at the institutional level. The trend seems to be to provide a student learning and accounting system for individual institutions rather than an outcome-oriented instrument for broader application. Also, student flexibility within an institution rather than mobility between institutions seems to be the larger driving force for development in many HE institutions except for leading universities.

### 3.2 COURSE CREDIT SYSTEM

In Chinese diction a credit system is generally a flexible educational system which uses credits as the unit to measure and calculate the amount of a student's progress. Different universities have a different understanding of a credit system and practice it differently.

Peking University may be a good example for the state of existing parameters of the Chinese course credit system and its development into the future. Information available in Chinese to students at Peking University is selectively summarised for consideration (Anonymous, 2005):

The core of the credit system is the freedom of selection given to students. It provides students with a schema to manage and monitor their study progress and allows them to choose what they want to learn. It has the following 4 characteristics:

1. flexible duration of study
2. selection of learning content
3. flexible evaluation
4. guidance through study.

Peking University started using the credit system in 1981. In 1988, the University started to offer general elective classes across campus. Students could take classes offered by another department. In 2001, Peking University started the "Yuanpei" experimental program. The 'Yuanpei program' is a pilot for reforms in admission practice: students are admitted with no defined major.

It is also a relatively new development that Peking University and other leading universities encourage students to choose classes from other universities and recognise the credits they earn. The mode of recognition seems to follow a regional articulation model. For example, in 1994, five universities including Wuhan University in Hubei province started an inter-universities course selection initiative. Students from these five universities can select classes offered by the other four schools, and use the credits they earn towards degree completion. In 2003, thirteen universities in Shanghai established a similar program.

All the classes, including required classes and elective classes, can be accumulated towards the bachelor's degree of Peking University. In contrast with many other universities, Peking University provides a cumulative record of grades obtained according to Chinese standards officially translated into one according to US standards.

### 3.3 MOBILITY

Although course credit systems are established at all HE institutions they are, with the exceptions we have considered previously, not intended to significantly increase inter-institutional mobility. Formal transfer between institutions is regulated and does not yet seem to be a common characteristic of general HE in China. The "Regulations on Administration of Students in Regular Higher Education Institutions" (2005), issued by the Ministry of Education, set the framework for formal transfer or horizontal mobility. Chapter three of the regulations pertains to transfer between institutions and changes of major within an institution.

The process for a change of major within an institution and for formal transfer between institutions of higher learning is relatively complex and may involve several parties or stakeholders. Both internal institution transfers of major and transfers of students between HE institutions are limited by quota.

Recent developments of course credit systems in China have the potential to change many characteristics of the average HE environment. Leading universities are developing their credit systems into tools that allow more flexibility and student choice within the institutions boundaries, and some (articulated or regulated) options for transfer of credit between institutions. The average function of these credit systems, however, is student course and progress management. From the point of view of horizontal mobility, innovative approaches taken by leading universities point towards



significantly increasing student educational options through choice and change of major, formal transfer between institutions, articulated or otherwise encouraged recognition and choice of courses from other institutions, and therefore a trend towards increasing mobility opportunities for students in pursuit of their first cycle degree. On average, however, entry into HE and advancement to degree completion is still more regulated than in many other HE environments.

#### 4 CREDIT SYSTEMS AND CURRICULAR PRINCIPLES: BOLOGNA EUROPE

The third major HE environment to be considered with respect to its credit system is Europe. Europe and China have in common that their course credit systems are in the process of development and implementation in contrast to the United States of America, where the credit system has been in existence for almost a century and its basic features are not presently considered for change. The difference between Europe and China is that China can refer to a longer history in its credit system while in Europe, although national credit systems may have existed in several countries, the establishment of the European Credit Transfer System was a result of the development of the ERAMUS program in 1987 (European Commission, 2006) and the goal to establish a European Higher Education Area through the Bologna Process, initiated only a decade ago (Marcal-Grilo, 2003).

##### 4.1 HISTORY AND PRINCIPLES

The adoption in Bologna Europe of a standard degree structure of three cycles may have been new to some European HE cultures, but has been historically present in the US and Chinese HE systems. While there is room for diversity in Europe by country or by subject, the standard three year first cycle, the bachelor's degree, contrasts the standard duration of four years in the US and in China for the same cycle (Marcal-Grilo, 2003).

In contrast with the US and China, where there are no National Qualifications Frameworks in place, the Bologna Process delivered a high level transnational Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. Under this framework there are also processes in place for the establishment of National Qualification Frameworks and Disciplinary/Field Qualification Frameworks, in line with the European one.

Adelman (2009) states:

"A qualifications framework is a statement of learning outcomes and competencies a student must demonstrate in order for a degree at a specific level to be awarded [...] A second key characteristic of a qualifications framework is that the description of learning outcomes for a degree clearly indicates how that degree differs from the degree level below it and the degree level above it."

Such qualification frameworks provide learning outcome constructs in a well tuned hierarchical structure.

However, high level outcome descriptions become meaningful only through actual curricula that provide these outcomes. If properly constructed, a credit system can be used as a measure to construct curricula based on learning outcomes established under a qualifications framework. In the European context, support for curricular reform was provided through the expansion of the function of the ECTS from a credit transfer to a credit transfer and accumulation system (Kettunen & Kantola, 2006, Kehm & Teichler, 2007). In its inception, the ECTS system was developed with different principles in mind than either the Chinese or the US system. Early development was targeted at improving horizontal mobility of students between countries and HE institutions in Europe under the ERASMUS program. Hence its origin was clearly related to horizontal student mobility. The ERASMUS horizontal mobility was (and is) 'formal' and included incentives for the establishment of credit recognition provisions of HE institutions (going beyond bi-institutional articulation agreements that already existed in some instances). At that point in time ECTS was neither used nor intended as a credit accumulation measure. However, the Bologna Process has provided the ECTS with this new dimension. In its function as a credit accumulation system ECTS is now able to support curricular reform, and if implemented uniformly and correctly, can become a tool for the design of flexible learning paths etc., with the opportunity of enhancing its traditional mobility function.

The inclusion of the ECTS credit accumulation system into the Bologna Process inventory is very different in its intention in both origin and practice from the US and Chinese approaches to course credit systems. To recall, the US system used the faculty contact hour as a basic measure to account for credit, and so does the Chinese credit system with some modifications. In the ECTS the student workload in achieving the learning outcomes of a course module, which by its very nature has many more components than just faculty contact time, is used to assign credit. In principle, then, the learning outcome should be assessed for each module – for ECTS to be awarded – and therefore, again in principle, ECTS accumulation should be sufficient in awarding degrees (completion of cycles). However, traditional methods such as end-of year examinations are still widely used to assess student knowledge (Crosier, Pursers & Smidt, 2007).

In general, however, ECTS in its function as a credit transfer and credit accumulation system has by now developed into "the" credit system for the European Higher Education Area. Acceptance of both functions is very high at HE institutions across Bologna Europe (Crosier, Pursers & Smidt, 2007).

## 4.2 MOBILITY

While the details and consequences of a new credit transfer and accumulation system affect many dimensions of HE activity in Europe, we will only briefly look at student mobility within the first cycle bachelor's program.

ECTS has retained its original function as a horizontal mobility tool. The new combined function as a transfer and accumulation system, and its construction principle based on student learning outcomes, should in general provide for improved mobility between HE institutions in Europe within one class or also between different classes of such institutions. The community college to university transfer characteristic of the US system should be easier or less problematic for mobility between first cycle provider institutions in the Bologna and/or ECTS context. Important is that institutional recognition procedures reflect the learning content and outcome base of ECTS credit obtained by a student.

Although there are problems with recognition of ECTS credit between institutions for students under the ERASMUS program, participation in ERASMUS has continued to increase to about 4%. However the redesign of many pre-Bologna courses of study, especially the conversion of most first cycle degrees into three year programs may have a negative effect (Crosier, Pursers & Smidt, 2007; Kehm & Teichler, 2007; Tokova, 2008).

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

In order to understand aspects of student horizontal mobility within or between HE regions, systems of evaluating student attainment within a degree cycle were compared. The study shows that the HE regions of America, China, and Bologna Europe have different histories, conceptual heritage, and capacities to evaluate student attainment. These are expressed through course credit systems which look similar but are very different in concept and practice. These differences must be understood when credit transfer and recognition provisions are to provide a basis for regional, national, or international horizontal student mobility within a degree cycle.

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## EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AT A TIME OF CRISIS: SOME REFLECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

David Crosier  
Eurydice  
Brussels /Belgium  
David.crosier@ec.europa.eu

### ABSTRACT

This short article considers the impact of the Bologna Process on European HE over the past decade, and the challenges ahead. The economic downturn is set to have a major impact, and while public funding for HE will continue to be further restricted in most parts of the Europe, care should be taken that investment in essential services is not neglected. In particular, guidance and counselling services, that have a vital role to play if mass HE is to be successful, need to be properly funded.

Keywords - Bologna Process; Economic Crisis; Guidance and Counselling

Just when Europeans appeared to be getting used to a new reality for HE, brought about through a decade of reforms and a fast-changing landscape of permanent innovation, we have to face up to the aftershock of a financial crisis that has sent the world into a global recession. While HE has generally not been a priority topic of public debate, at this time of severe economic crisis our HE systems, institutions, and thus our lives, will be affected dramatically. As the repercussions are likely to be considerable and long-lasting, it would be wise for those working in the HE sector to develop their own analyses and responses to the situation. This short paper suggests just a few of the issues worth considering. We should first acknowledge that, even before the economic crisis, HE systems found themselves facing extraordinary challenges and under severe and increasing pressure. Indeed, while the

last decade has seen major debate on the structural adaptations that have been brought about through the Bologna Process, some other features of change in the HE landscape appear to have taken place with less fuss and comment. Yet the scale of change in HE over the last decade has been dramatic. For example, the European Union countries saw a historically unprecedented rise of 25% in student participation between 1996 and 2005 (see Key Data on Education, Eurydice, 2009), and this trend continues apace with demand for places expanding as societies become more knowledge-based and interconnected.

Adapting to this process of massification would be a major challenge at the best of times, but the most incredible feature about expansion over the last decade is not its scale alone but the fact that effectively it has not been funded. Indeed GDP expenditure on HE has remained practically static with only minor changes in major European countries – an increase of .2% in Italy and the UK, .1% in Spain, a decrease of .1% in France and no change in Germany. And in this context, it is striking that many governments still claim to be seeking further "efficiency gains" in the sector. Yet what other sector of public responsibility could have expanded at such speed with static funding, and would tolerate the implication that it still "lacks efficiency"? Rather than efficiency, what HE appears to lack at the moment is the capacity to explain its developing role and new reality to the wider society.

How is it possible that we appear to have accommodated such major change with relatively little disturbance? Perhaps part of the answer is that our experience in Europe is far from unique. The Bologna Process has given a sense of direction and common purpose to developments, but similar changes and processes of massification have been taking place in nearly all other regions of the world. Indeed the rise in participation in Europe may be dramatic, but it has been far out-stripped in many Asian countries where, as we have seen, the excess of demand over supply of places has led to the creation of a new "market" for international students. While in many European countries we are proud to have moved to levels of participation of an age cohort in HE above 30%, in other countries and regions it has become commonplace to see these levels rise beyond 50% and even extending to 80% in countries such as South Korea. Meanwhile other regions have also been inspired by some aspects of Bologna reforms. In Australia and the south Pacific region a similar process of harmonisation

of degree structures has been set in motion, while in the Maghreb countries and other neighbouring regions to Europe, HE reform has followed many of the Bologna action lines. The Tuning project, devised by academics in Europe to provide a learning outcomes-based methodology for Bologna curriculum reform, has now gone global – with branches in the USA, Latin America, Russia and elsewhere. Meanwhile, across Africa, the emphasis in the Bologna Process on public responsibility has been a significant feature of discussions on reform and development.

It is therefore a striking aspect of today's HE reality that challenges cannot be contained within geographic boundaries. And although too little acknowledged, it has been of enormous benefit to European countries that they have started to address HE challenges together. In a sense, the Bologna process has given Europe a head start on other world regions. It will be important to capitalise on this in facing the new challenges brought about by economic turmoil.

Yet Bologna has also become the focus of scepticism and criticism – much of which is misplaced. Instead of recognising the underlying phenomena of societal change that should really be at the heart of discussion, many have found it easier to attack Bologna. Thus, the Bologna Process is often portrayed – by some students and academics alike – as a front for economic liberalisation and the release of market forces in HE, when in reality those trends were already in motion independently of Bologna. Indeed, if anything the Bologna Process, through its rhetorical emphasis on public responsibility, has provided some means of resistance to such trends.

As 2010 arrives, it is clear that the process has proved to be an extraordinary success. Never before has a project as ambitious as the harmonisation of significant features of HE systems across a major world region been attempted, let alone achieved.

Today, not only do governments across 46 European countries embrace a common agenda for HE development, but institutions and student organisations are also generally committed. Part of the explanation for this consensus is the voluntary nature of the process – with no international treaty or European legislation.

No government feels threatened by a voluntary agreement to implement actions that are essentially common sense responses to a changing environment. And even the most traditional and conservative universities recognise they cannot hold back the waves



of today's fast-evolving society. Students also see that HE systems could and should do more to support them, and therefore have acted with consistent intelligence to influence the Bologna agenda.

We will need to build on these successes and our increasing habit in HE of working together across borders to be alive to the impact of the times in which we live, as there is still much more to be done if a European Higher Education Area is to become a meaningful reality. In reality Bologna implies a profound shift in education philosophy and practice – and it is here that attention needs to focus on the future.

Indeed, the most significant purpose of Bologna is to respond to societal needs by moving from a system of teacher-driven provision towards a student-centred concept. No longer can HE be essentially a matter of transmitting knowledge; instead the reforms are laying the foundations for a system that responds to a growing variety of student needs within a framework of lifelong education. The impact of the economic crisis is also likely to focus attention on to this agenda of lifelong learning in a far more meaningful way than before – but with the risk that the needs of the labour market rather than the needs of individuals to be fulfilled through the development of their skills and talents become the main focus.

With ageing populations and shrinking younger generations, significant development of lifelong provision will become a necessity for societies. Large numbers of immigrants, including skilled workers and talented students, will also be needed to underpin and sustain Europe's future. HE institutions therefore need to take the opportunity of today's reforms to respond to these challenges for tomorrow.

These changes provide an agenda of enormous potential for those working in all aspects of guidance and counselling. While there will always be a section of the student population that requires little professional guidance and support, it is simply far too risky for society to ignore the development of appropriate guidance and counselling provision for the mass systems that are emerging. The risk is that far too many may fail to develop their talents, creativity and potential unless they are properly supported and guided through increasingly complex systems. So far, the official Bologna discussions have done little more than pay lip service to the significance of these issues. Meanwhile many of the existing and developing guidance and counselling services find themselves

overwhelmed by the demands they face. If we do not collectively foresee the needs for guidance and counselling, the next decade may be painful and costly for many.

At this time of economic aftershock, it is also absolutely vital to examine the funding of guidance and counselling services as an integral investment for the future. We cannot afford to sit back and hope for the best at a time when many governments are signalling that institutions should no longer expect increased public investment to ensure their core needs are met. Nor can we always rely on our HE institutions to recognise guidance and counselling services as a core need for their own sustainability, when they are required by governments to make further "efficiency savings". It is therefore time for all who are alive to the importance of these issues to step up lobbying activities for guidance and counselling throughout our education systems. Just as the HE sector needs to find its voice in societal debate, so too do guidance and counselling professionals need to be heard in HE debates. One of the most important arenas for the voice of guidance and counselling will be in future Bologna meetings and negotiations.





## APPENDIX

Programme, List of Participants

## PROGRAMME



BERGISCHE  
UNIVERSITÄT  
WUPPERTAL

**„Beratung und die Wirksamkeit der Hochschulbildung - Guidance and  
Counselling and the Efficacy of Higher Education“**

## **Symposium**

24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> September 2009

Bergische Universität Wuppertal  
Campus Griffenberg  
Building B, Floor 06, Room 01/02  
Gaußstraße 20  
42119 Wuppertal

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## Programme

**Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009**

**13:00 – 13:30      Address of Welcome**

Acad. Dir. Dr. Gerhart Rott  
Director of the Central Student Advisory and Counselling Service, University of Wuppertal

### Personal Development and Psychological Counselling in Higher Education

**13:30 – 13:45      Identity Balance as a Frame for Describing the Interplay between Guidance and Counselling and the Efficacy of Higher Education**

Dr. Michael Katzensteiner  
Head of Psychological Student Counselling Centre Linz/Austria

**13:45 – 14:00      The Student Counselling Service as a Container**

Ann Heyno  
Independent consultant/student counsellor/trainer, Birkbeck College, University of London

**14:00 – 14:30      Discussion**

**14:30 – 14:45      Is it Crazy to Imagine that I Could Succeed?**

Elsa Bell  
Director of Student Welfare and Counselling, University of Oxford

**14:45 – 15:00      Addicted to Procrastination? Striking Similarities between Procrastination and Addiction.**

Prof. Eric Depreeuw  
Centre for School Psychology, University of Leuven

**15:00 – 15:15      Efficacy and Counselling: "As You Like it"? Comments on an Unsteady Relationship.**

Dr. Peter Figge  
Academic Director, Counselling and Psychotherapy Center for Students, University of Hamburg

**15:15 – 15:45      Discussion**

**15:45 – 16:15      Coffee Break**



## Higher Education as a Step towards Career Development

16:15 – 16:30	<b>Promoting Career Networks for Students</b>  Prof. Dr. Heinke Röbbken Professor of Educational Management, University of Wuppertal
16:30 – 16:45	<b>What is the Role of Career Guidance in the 21st Century?</b>  Margaret Dane Chief Executive of Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services - AGCAS
16:45 – 17:15	<b>Discussion</b>
17:15 – 17:30	<b>Quality Development in Career Guidance – Joint Efforts for Sustainable Implementation of Standards and Guidelines</b>  Karen Schober President of German National Guidance Forum - nfb
17:30 – 17:45	<b>Discussion</b>
17:45 – 18:00	<b>Conclusion of the meeting</b>
18:00	Shuttle bus to the hotels
19:10	Shuttle bus from the hotels to the campus
19:30 - 22:30	Dinner at the Guest House of the University (Campus Freudenberg, Rainer-Gruenter-Str. 21) with the participants of the symposium and invited guests

**Friday, 25th September 2009**

08:30 Shuttle bus from the hotels to the campus

9:00 – 9:30 **Address of Welcome and Summary**  
 Acad. Dir. Dr. Gerhart Rott  
 Director of the Central Student Advisory and Counselling Service, University of Wuppertal

The Link between Teaching and Learning and Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education

9:30 – 9:45 **Life competence. Perceived Self-Efficacy Pattern Analysis on a Sample of Students Participating in Student Supporting Services in Higher Education**

Istvan Kiss  
 Counselling Psychologist, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest

9:45 – 10:00 **Interface between Student Consulting and Hochschuldidaktik (Teaching & Learning)**

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Johannes Wildt  
 Centre for Research in Higher Education and Faculty Development

10:00 – 10:30 **Discussion**

10:30 – 11:00 **Coffee Break**

Challenges in the Context of the European Higher Education Area

11:00 – 11:15 **Executive Higher Education as a Challenge for Universities**

Prof. Dr. Norbert Koubek  
 Schumpeter School of Business and Economics, Chair of Business Administration particularly Innovation and Production, University of Wuppertal

11:15 – 11:30 **Discussion**

11:30 – 11:45 **Concepts and Practice of Student Mobility: A Comparative Study**

Prof. Peter Englert  
 University of Hawaii

11:45 – 12:00 **Discussion**

12:00 – 12:30 **Conclusion**

12:30	Lunch
13:30	Shuttle bus to Campus Freudenberg
14:00	Official farewell festivity (Campus Freudenberg, Hörsaal FZH1, Rainer-Gruenter-Str. 21)
17:30	Shuttle bus to the hotels

### Contact Information

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Bergische Universität Wuppertal  
Zentrale Studienberatung  
Gaußstr. 20  
42119 Wuppertal  
Gebäude B, Ebene 06, Raum 01/02

Dr. Gerhart Rott: +49(0)202-439 32 81  
Secretariat: +49(0)202-439 3890  
Ms Henssen, Ms Schultz: +49(0)202-439 3802

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Function	Institution
Andersen, Per	Registrar/Director of Student Services	University of Southern Denmark
Bauhus, Andrea	Student Counsellor	Central Student Advisory and Counselling Service, Careers Service, University of Wuppertal
Bell, Elsa	Director of Student Welfare and Counselling	University of Oxford
Bilobrk, Andrija	Consultant	PricewaterhouseCoopers AG
Dane, Margaret	Chief Executive	Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services - AGCAS
Depreeuw, Eric	Professor	Centre for School Psychology, University of Leuven
Englert, Peter	Professor	University of Hawaii
Esser, Diana	Student Advisor	Central Student Advisory Service, Duesseldorf University of Applied Sciences
Figge, Peter	Academic Director	Counselling and Psychotherapy Center for Students, University of Hamburg
Gavin-Kramer, Karin	Journalist, Author	
Heyno, Ann	Independent Consultant/Student Counsellor/Trainer	Birkbeck College, University of London
Katzensteiner, Michael	Head	Psychological Student Counselling Centre Linz
Kiss, Istvan	Counselling Psychologist	Eötvös Loránd University Budapest
Koubek, Norbert	Professor of Business Administration	Schumpeter School of Business and Economics, University of Wuppertal
Leonhardt, Ulrike	Student Counsellor	Central Student Advisory and Counselling Service, University of Wuppertal

Muschol, Franz	Head	Student Advisory and Counselling Service, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich
Röbken, Heinke	Professor of Educational Management	University of Wuppertal
Rott, Gerhart	Academic Director	Central Student Advisory and Counselling Service, University of Wuppertal
Schober, Karen	President	German National Guidance Forum - nfb
Scholle, Klaus	Student Counsellor	Koordinationsbüro "Studieren in Berlin und Brandenburg"; Freie Universität Berlin
Schott, Peter	Head	Student Advisory and Counselling Centre (ZBS), University of Münster
Strey, Bernd	Psychologist, Counsellor	Diakonie Wuppertal
Swann, Joseph	Lecturer in English (retired)	University of Wuppertal
van Veen, Abraham	Director of Student Affairs	Dortmund University of Technology
Wildt, Johannes	Professor	Centre for Research in Higher Education and Faculty Development, Dortmund University of Technology
Zavhorodnya, Iryna	Student Counsellor	Central Student Advisory and Counselling Service, University of Wuppertal