

## Career Counseling in secondary education: a comparative approach of guidance services between Greece and France

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- Today's young people are living in an exciting time, with an increasingly diverse and mobile society, new technologies, and expanding opportunities. To ensure, that, they are prepared to become the next generation of parents, workers, leaders, and citizens", every student needs support, guidance, and opportunities during adolescence, a time of rapid growth and change. Adolescents face unique and diverse challenges, both personally and developmentally, that impact academic achievement. During adolescence, the future seems -- theoretically at least -- to be more open.
- Most psychologists (e.g., Erikson, 1959, 1968) consider adolescence to be a determinant period in self-construction. It is at this time that adolescents develop many possible "selves" and are particularly sensitive to ideas concerning not only the future of society but also what they dream of becoming. To paraphrase Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma (1951), adolescence is the time of tentative choices. But at the same time, this period is one of seeking personal consistency based on certain values or personal projects.
- Hence, at this time, family, social, and academic pressures explicitly or implicitly influence adolescents to identify certain goals rather than others. (Guichard J., 2003).
- Adolescents define themselves through adults and imitate them. Parents influence their children consciously or unconsciously by what they say, they do, they invoke. More specifically, they can influence, directly or indirectly, their children`s career decisions through promoting specific professions, specific lifestyles, social roles related to the social environment in which a young person grows up. In this decision making, adolescent carries the influences of his family environment as well as of the school.
- At school, students acquire basic knowledge of professions, their hierarchy and get to know the access/entrance way based on their performance at school. During this period, adolescent is asked to make a choice that signifies up to a point his/her career decision making. For many young people, this decision is made at the end of compulsory education meaning at the age of 15 -16 years old, while the rest at the end of high - school.



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- They must deal with academic pressures, the challenges of universities admissions, the scholarship and entrance into a competitive job market.
- This demonstrates that adolescents are forced by the educational system to make early in their life a decision that might define their career decision making very often for the rest of their life. (Soumeli L.1997)
- High – school is considered the final transition into adulthood and the world of work as students begin «separating from parents», exploring and defining their independence.
- Adolescence is also a period of life during which individuals are reminded, sometimes brutally, of social and community standards, as well as, of the standards of peer groups to which they belong. They are called on to determine, how they will relate to these standards. (Guichard J.,2003) They are searching for a place to belong and rely on peer group acceptance and feedback. They face increased pressures regarding risk behaviors involving sex, alcohol and drugs while exploring the boundaries of more acceptable behavior and mature, meaningful relationships.
- Based on the above, a dialectic is developed between family, school, and peer groups in order to influence the adolescent. Student's needs counselor's guidance in making concrete and compounded in personal career decisions.



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## Career counseling

- Counseling is part of a broad sector of applied psychology, which has been developed in the frames of career counseling as well as of guidance and support of the individuals during their effort to pursue a career according to their dexterities and abilities, or their effort to resolve psychological problems associating with the academic and professional life. (Kantas A., 1998)
- Studies and career decision making is crucial for every individual. Especially, nowadays, in an era, characterised mainly by the rapid change and internationalization of labor, deciding and managing a career becomes complicated and it is often frustrated. The person is required to handle knowledge, to recognize the aspirations, values, needs and roles involved. With these new data we are talking about a new model for Professional Development which is the model of Personal Career Management. As far this model is concerned, the individual is required to have the possibility to reconsider the relation between the acquired education, the job and the personal dexterities/abilities, to be prepared through a lifelong learning process to be redirected successfully along with the rapid changes of labor.
- Consequently, the Professional Choice is not a unique final decision but it is the result of a whole series of progressive decisions, a process by which a person finds every time, what is important in life and what are his/her main priorities.



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- Through the development of the above model, we approach the modern and pragmatic dimension of the individual Career as a gradual and complex process that involves the counseling, the psychological and educational dimension and last but not least also requires the active participation of the student/graduate. The model of Personal Career Management is approached as a gradual and complex process that involves the counseling, the psychological and educational dimension and similarly also requires the active participation of the student/graduate. The student has already made an initial educational choice. After that, he has to make a professional choice which can either be, further education professional training/seminars, master degree, PhD etc.
- At this stage the individual realizes more consciously his gradual transition in the market. Last but not least, the third stage is the application/adjustment in the workplace. He becomes active in workplaces that reflect the qualitative characteristics of his personality. (Soumeli L., 2006)
- In the Guidance Services, counselling should be a dynamic process within which the Counselor works together with a group or an individual to examine issues of concern and to facilitate the task of finding alternative solutions. The aim is not to issue guidelines, i.e. to tell people what they should do – it is, rather, a question of initiating a process which makes it easier for individuals to make the best personal choices in keeping with the circumstances which exist. In effect, the counselling service helps people to define the nature of the difficulty they are facing, to appraise the possible solutions and to select the most appropriate for themselves. The Counselor does not commit him/herself to one particular solution, respecting instead the choice of the person who has sought counselling. (Soumeli L., 2006)



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- In order to fulfill the above aims in the Secondary school, Counselors do not work in isolation; they should be integral to the total educational program. They provide proactive leadership that engages all stakeholders in the delivery of programs and services to help the student achieve success in school. Professional school counselors align and work with the school's mission to support the academic achievement of all students as they prepare for the ever-changing world of the 21st century. This mission is accomplished through the design, development, implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive, developmental and systematic school-counseling program.



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According to that, the individual should develop abilities such as the following:

- Self knowledge
- Ability for opportunity pursuit
- Action planning
- Interests, personality and action combination
- Negotiation ability
- Acceptance and confrontation of social/economic uncertainty (NOTHING IS PERMANENT)
- Flexibility
- Developmental view of life, education and action
- Political awareness (Krivas S., 1998).



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### 3. Guidance System in Greece

- Educational and Career Counseling in Greece aims to provide help to students at their several growth phases in order to realize their interests, to develop their capabilities and to support their participation in society.
- More specifically, the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Career Guidance (EOPPEP) serve the need for a strong pillar for the actions under the national policy in the areas of counseling and guidance certification, qualification and structures for lifelong learning.
- The aim of the project Guidance Service of EOPPEP is to provide:

Counseling and vocational guidance practitioners in education, training and employment in public and private sectors.

Public and private stakeholders providing counseling and vocational guidance services in the areas of education, training and employment.

Interested citizens (school and university students, parents, the unemployed, professionals etc.) that seek information about counseling and vocational guidance career services and learning and mobility opportunities.



### 3.2. Guidance Services in Secondary Education

- Counseling to all over the country, KE.SY.P and GRASEP are founded at the seats of nomes, one at the Secondary Education Administration of the Ministry of Lifelong learning and Religious Affairs.
- Counseling and Guidance Center (KE.SY.P)
- 200 KE.SY.P are found at schools in Secondary in Greece.
- KE.SY.P are founded in central locations and provide their services to everyone interested, offering:
- Counseling support to students in order to take the best decisions for their future.
- Information about studies, occupations and the labor market.
- Support other teachers applying guidance in their schools.

KE.SY.P organize:

- Informative concentrations for parents and students on issues related to their studies and professions.
- seminars and workshops for teachers applying SEP their schools.



- KE.SY.P provide their services to handicapped people but very few can be reached by them due to lack of equipment.
- The "Nestor" net is a PanHellenic Intranet. The access is allowed to the specialized members of KE.SY.P and GRASEP have access to the net "Nestor" about subjects such as:
- Educational information
- Occupational information
- General subjects about Career Counseling
- Seminars, assemblies and more activities

#### The school guidance office (GRASEP)

- Support the implementation of guidance in the school.
- Are staffed by undergoing teachers.
- have a books library and information material about the educational and career choices of students.
- Are equipped with computers that connect to the internet, for better and faster information to students and parents.
- Organize events in collaboration with KESYP on issues School Vocational Guidance.



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- Implementation of the Educational Guidance Institution in the Classroom
- The institution of Vocational Guidance has been incorporated to the Greek national education in the sense that is an additional item in the curriculum involving specific activities for which the students are not marked.
- Specifically, Vocational Guidance is “taught” at High-school level (Grade C’: 1 hour per week) and at Unified Lyceum (Grade A’: 1 hour per week, 2nd semester), teaching by teachers in secondary.
- Other bodies, also, offer vocational guidance and advice:

Presently, there are only six good private schools in secondary education operating their own counseling with career counselors – psychologists or school psychologists.

Private career guidance services offer information for secondary school, university students, professionals, unemployed etc. The reliable services provide integrated programs of career guidance.



### 3.3. Difficulties in the Implementation and Practice of Career Counseling in Greece

- Nowadays, the biggest problem concerning Career Counseling in Greece is the lack of certification for the practice of Career Counseling. The National Centre of Career Counseling (E.K.E.P.) was responsible for the certification, but the procedure has not been completed yet. Today, EKEP is merged by the National Organization for the Certification and Career Guidance (EOPPEP) which has taken an active role in the implementation process of certification.
- The second problem, in Greek education, is on one hand, the Career Counselors' and other people who work in KE.SY.P and GRASEP poor training, and on the other hand the inadequate ratio of counselors to students.
- Guidance is taught in schools as a cognitive subject and even by teachers without any skills or training in career counseling. Orientation is primarily a psychological developmental process that involves the active participation of the individual.



#### 4. Guidance System in France

- What is characteristic of the French system is a great variety of the services providing information and guidance. The advantages of this situation are a wide range of techniques, of practices, and of practitioners and a large number of guidance providers all over the French territory.
- This wide range of information, guidance and counseling services has been shaped by differences in respect of the groups targeted (school pupils, young people, adults, the unemployed, women, the disabled), the types of service offered (individual counseling, skill audit, group or individual services, training, information), practitioners' qualifications (counselors, psychologists, teachers, information providers, social workers), the status of facilities (public, private, voluntary, commercial, professional) and financing (state, local authority, joint organizations, enterprises, users).
- The main guidance providers are run by two Ministries, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment, even if other ministries are involved as well: Ministry of Higher Education and Research and to a lesser extend Ministries of Youth and Agriculture.



#### 4.2. Guidance Services in Secondary Education

- Guidance services depending on the Ministry of Education are targeting in Secondary education, CIO (Information and Guidance Center), roughly 600 guidance services (CIO) and in Higher and further education institutions, in each university there is a guidance service called SCUIO (Common Service University Information and Guidance) with a national information provider ONISEP (National Office for Information on Education and the Professions).
- The Counseling - is carried out by very well trained practitioners such as Guidance Counselors - Psychologists called "Conseillers d'Orientation -Psychologues". They should have accomplished studies in psychology and 2 years of training for the qualification of career advice counselor (after national competition). These counselors are working both in the educational institutions and in the guidance centers.
- There is also what we call MGI (General Mission Insertion) which is a structure focusing on school leavers without any qualification and dropouts as well.
- Local offices (Missions Locales or ML) and Enquiry, Information, Guidance Points (PAIOs) have been established since 1982, as local authorities and the Government have sought to coordinate grassroots efforts to help young people in the 16-25 age bands overcome barriers to social and vocational integration. Most of those who need help are unqualified or their qualifications are out of date. Private guidance centers and private press agencies such as "The Student" called "L'Etudiant" offer information for secondary school and university students.



#### 4.3. Effective Career Guidance eRA - 7: The SynErgy Forum, 27 – 30 September 2012

- Generally speaking, the French approach to school and career guidance is twofold. On the one hand, guidance is construed from an economic perspective and is intended to serve the country's economic needs. On the other hand, guidance entails educational aspects. This educational dimension is focused on enhancing any skill which might contribute to personal development and enable everyone to adapt to social and economic change.
- In the French educational system, the first step for career decision takes place at lower secondary school. The orientation education begins at 11-12 years old, during the adaptation cycle. The orientation to general or vocational upper secondary school takes place in lower secondary school (at 14-15 years old).

As regards providing young people with career guidance in the strict sense, three major methods are in use in France:

One-to-one interviews: Interview is the most frequently used technique for career guidance provision. Guidance interviews are semi-directive. They aim to contribute to personal development and to help students and young job seekers making career decision. Most often, interviews are conducted in three stages, i.e. problem setting, analysis, and designing objectives for problem solving.

Assessment techniques: Such techniques as skills assessments, psychological tests and questionnaires are also used to assess vocational interests and competencies. Increasing use is made of self – help tools, and especially of web – based tools.



#### Career education within the curriculum

- The grounding assumption of career education in France is that career decision making is a personal process. This means that individuals have to decide their own way, and are responsible for their choice. As a consequence, it is necessary that they have some broad knowledge and understanding of curricula and career matters, as well as self – awareness of their own personality. Therefore, the role of career education consists of providing pupils with labor market information and of developing their information gathering skills, self - assessment abilities, self – knowledge and self – esteem.
- Counselors usually aid by teachers devote in career education some hours within the school curriculum with the form of discussions, visits and practice to workplaces, universities, professionals and technical schools.



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## Conclusion

- We should bear in mind that human development and growth is taking place in a world filled with unrest, where the global market is overwhelmed by social, political and technological changes and diversifications - the effects of economic globalization. Information about anything or knowledge and skills that are presently considered current may change overnight. Consequently, such concepts as life-long learning, development of basic skills, mobility, multiculturalism, career & vocational development were adopted in an effort to help individuals adapt to the changing demands of the global market.
- Until the latter part of the twentieth century, education and training were confined mainly to the first phase of a person's life. Young people progressed on a straight line from school to work or to vocational education and training or to higher education, with little opportunity to change direction. Once they had left the educational system they were unlikely to return.



## Conclusion

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- But, nowadays, in all developed countries, the structure of people's lives is undergoing radical change in the distribution of activities by age, leading to a shift to older age groups undertaking functions previously reserved for an earlier time in life.
- These tendencies are linked to changes in the labor market structure, and are accompanied by readjustments in the social arrangements that regulate 'who does what, when'. Vocational guidance services are implicated in these processes, especially in their role as an educational selection and allocation mechanism. But, as a source of information, vocational guidance can promote learning. Accreditation of work experience as a part of the larger recognition of a right to lifelong learning and another conception of competence building, also can increase access to further education. (Gendron B., 2001) In addition to that point, there is the appreciation of the fact that guidance helps to identify and re-motivate underachieving students, can significantly lower drop-out rates and can cater for those at risk of disengaging by supporting their move back into education and training, thus improving their chances of labor market integration.



## Conclusion

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- The various reviews of career guidance in Europe show that most countries value career guidance as a public service that is freely available inside and outside schools. The modern trends of 21st century in Counseling and career guidance require in Greece the necessity for legislating in a right frame basis for the existence and role of certified Counselors – Psychologists inside and outside public secondary education, has become a priority.
- The individuals need reliable, objective, continuous guidance for the career management. In the face of globalization, individuals are required to develop new skills to catch up with the flow of changes taking place worldwide. They should have a different scientific approach from counseling sources so far from family or school. To avoid the ritual Greek phenomenon, ex. “the Lawyer being born Lawyer”.
- Finally, as pointed out, above that the professional and personal development is a process of life in today's world we need not just information but essential knowledge and critical thinking that will help us deal with uncertainty, and we are ready to study the course. Order to have flexible strategy navigation on our journey to 'a world constantly changes because the information we aged.



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