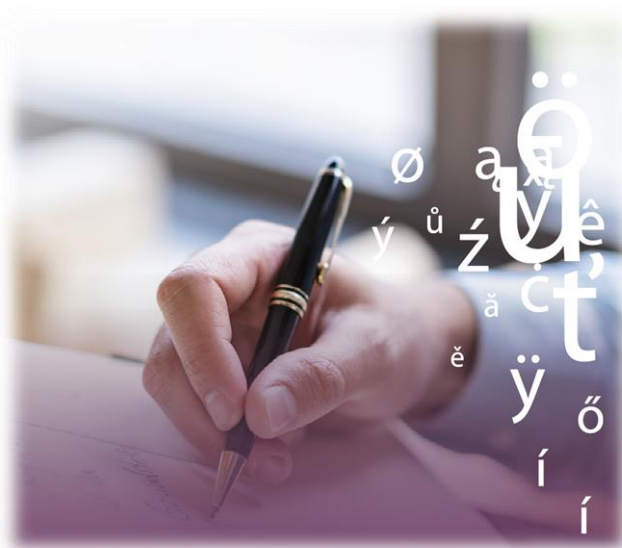


# ACADEMIA BOOKLET OF PRACTICES

## Academia Slovenia 2023 Lifelong guidance in Slovenia

8 - 11 May 2023

Employment Service of Slovenia, Euroguidance Slovenia



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the European Union



The booklet includes practices from participating guidance counsellors from Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Spain and Sweden:

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## Introduction

Academia is a network that offers training opportunities for guidance practitioners in European countries. Academia offers the participants a chance to get to know the guidance system and guidance practices in another European country.

The Academia booklet aims to present guidance counsellors' methods from different European countries that participate in Academia Slovenia. These are examples of good practice the participants use in their daily work.

The focus of Academia Slovenia 2023 will be on the on lifelong guidance in Slovenia to provide guidance practitioners a learning mobility experience and international networking opportunities.

The program will introduce Slovenian education and guidance system, Slovenian labour market and Employment Service of Slovenia as well as guidance in different settings. The participants will have possibilities for discussions about various guidance related issues among guidance practitioners to exchange guidance practices among themselves and other experts. The participants will learn about lifelong guidance in Slovenia in different settings and exchange national practices from participating countries.

Agenda will include:

- Exchange of good practices and discussions from participating guidance counsellors from Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Spain and Sweden
- The Employment Service of Slovenia and Slovenian labour market,
- National Vocational Information and Counselling Centre/Euroguidance Slovenia and online guidance program Where and how,
- Lifelong guidance tools and services at the Employment Service of Slovenia,
- St. Stanislav's Institution,
- Biotechnical Educational Centre Ljubljana, KULT 316 learning environment,
- Biotechnical Center Naklo,
- College of Hospitality and Tourism Management Bled and school hotel Astoria of the Inter-Entrepreneurial Education Center MIC,
- Career centre of The University of Ljubljana
- Career counselling and activities of KROJ network, Nefiks,
- Evaluation, discussion and certificates.

## Host organisation

Host organisation is **Employment Service of Slovenia, National Vocational Information and Counselling Centre (Euroguidance Slovenia)**, that has been hosting Academia study visits as well as sending Slovenian guidance practitioners to participate in Academia in other European countries since 2008.

Euroguidance Slovenia will be contributing to implementation of Euroguidance's main objective that is **competence development of the guidance community on the European dimension of lifelong guidance**.

Euroguidance Slovenia:

- promotes the awareness of European instruments on skills and qualifications at national level to guidance practitioners and relevant staff in learning institutions, employment services and other relevant organisations with our communication and dissemination activities.
- provides training to guidance practitioners on the new Europass Platform (in close cooperation with the Slovenian Europass Centre) to ensure its use by guidance practitioners and individuals and advice to guidance centres on European opportunities for education, training and work.
- supports of competence development of guidance practitioners and raise their knowledge and awareness of recent developments in lifelong guidance through trainings, Euroguidance webinars, Euroguidance cross border seminars and other learning opportunities such as Academia professional exchanges and Euroguidance study visits.
- updates specialised information and support tools for guidance practitioners and review handbooks as important information resource tools.
- supports cooperation, coordination and mutual learning at European and national level, across the different contexts of lifelong guidance, as active member in Euroguidance network level working groups, Academia network national coordinator and Euroguidance Cross border seminar national coordinator since 2008.
- cooperates closely with Europass Slovenia and EQF NCP Slovenia, that are hosted by Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training.

Euroguidance Slovenia's primary target group are **guidance practitioners in education and employment**, and we will be addressing their needs to support international dimension of lifelong learning and guidance and provide them with guidance resources. Euroguidance Slovenia gives priority to our primary target group but will also reach out to our secondary target groups (the unemployed, job seekers, students and other) through our communication activities and by promoting our specialised support and information tools, that they ultimately use (occupations descriptions and Where and how online guidance tool).

# Good practice from Sweden: Self-reflective diary

Katarina Johansson, Adult Education Centre Västerås, Sweden

## Aim

To explore, question and reflect on own attitudes and values that we all carry that may affect the way we see/treat other people and therefore also the outcome of our career counselling sessions. When self-reflecting we give ourselves a chance to become more unbiased and more professional in our meetings with clients. There is always a risk of running on auto-pilot at work and especially when carrying out daily tasks. This is where self-reflection is highly beneficial.



## Target Group

Career counsellors

## Equipment needed

Diary, pen, a bit of time after each career counselling session (sound recorder or notes app on phone could also be used).

## Process description

To change an attitude is more profound than just changing a view of someone/something. It means that you need to change a bit of who you are. This seldom feels like a walk in the park. It requires both determination and curiosity and above all, it requires bravery. You must dare to venture out there - to question attitudes and beliefs you may not even be aware that you have. When you work as a career counsellor and you meet new people every day, you have a job that consists of meeting people and where the outcome of your meetings is of most importance, you may benefit from thinking a bit more at depth about what was said at the meeting but also reflect on what feelings and thoughts that arose.

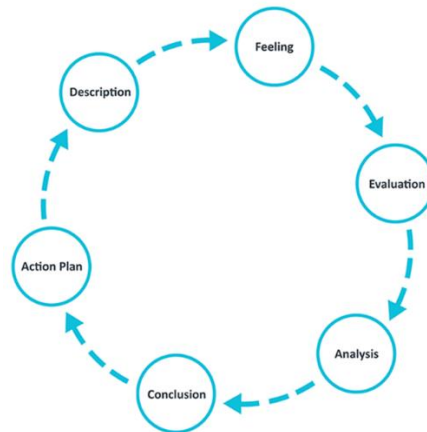
To do this I write a self-reflection diary most days at work. It enables me to catch my thoughts/feelings after a meeting, become aware of them and to put them into words. I am then able to reflect on them, see patterns and sometimes question them.

To help me do this I use Gibbs' reflective cycle since I find that it asks relevant questions that enables me to go through the reflective process in a constructive way. There are a lot of reflective templates out there. Find one that works for you.

It may not always be possible to find the time to reflect in depth straight after a meeting. When I haven't got the time I write a few notes straight after the meeting and then return to it at the end of the workday or at home at the end of the day.

Gibbs' reflective cycle consists of 6 part/questions:

- Description of the experience - What Happened?
- Feelings and thoughts about the experience - What were you thinking and feeling?
- Evaluation of the experience - What was good and bad about the experience?
- Analysis to make sense of the situation - What sense can you make of the situation?
- Conclusion about what you learned and what you could have done differently - What else could you have done?
- Action plan for how you would deal with similar situations in the future, or general changes you might find appropriate - If it arose again what would I do?



More information about Gibbs' reflective cycle is available at:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/gibbs-reflective-cycle#:~:text=One%20of%20the%20most%20famous,analysis%2C%20conclusion%20and%20action%20plan.>



## Good practice from Germany: JUGENDBERUFSAGENTUR.KOELN (Youth and Career Agency Cologne)

Marcel Lehmann, Agentur für Arbeit Köln, Germany



### Expected outcomes

- **Integrated approach:** A Jugendberufsagentur (JBA) brings together different services and organizations that support young people in their transition from school to work or vocational training. By integrating these services, the JBA can provide a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to youth employment support.
- **One-stop-government:** The JBA serves as a one-stop-shop for young people, making it easier for them to access the services and support they need in one place. This can reduce the time and effort required for young people to navigate the complex system of employment services in Germany.
- **Personalized support:** The JBA provides personalized support to young people based on their individual needs and circumstances. This can help young people to identify their strengths, interests, and goals, and to develop a plan for achieving them.
- **No one is left behind:** The JBA is designed to supply comprehensive and coordinated support to young people as they transition from school to work or vocational training or to those who have failed to do so. The JBA aims to increase the number of young people who successfully transition to vocational training or further education and reintegrate young people to the labour market, to the social welfare system and to provide them the help they need.
- **Improved outcomes:** The JBA aims to improve outcomes for young people by increasing their employability and helping them to secure meaningful and sustainable employment or vocational training opportunities. This can have a positive impact on their economic, social, and personal well-being.
- **Collaboration:** The JBA promotes collaboration between different organizations and services (federal and municipal) involved in supporting youth employment. This can help to improve communication and coordination, and to ensure that young people receive the best possible support and services.

### Target group

Everyone from 15 to 27 years in transition from school to labour market and occupation and especially everyone not reached by conventional counseling/help offers. The JBA in Cologne is an approach to focus on the increasing number of drop-outs and NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

## Description of the method, practice or initiative

**Jugendberufsagentur** is a concept in Germany that refers to an integrated youth employment agency and represents an innovative and effective approach to supporting youth employment. It was established as a joint initiative of the Federal Employment Agency, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, and the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The Foundation of Youth and Career Agencies was enacted by the government in 2010.

The main goal of the Jugendberufsagentur is to provide comprehensive and coordinated support for young people as they transition from school to work or vocational training. This includes offering guidance on career and educational choices, job search assistance, and support for young people who are facing social or economic challenges that may hinder their employment prospects.

The JBA brings together different services and organizations that are involved in supporting young people, such as schools, vocational training institutions, social services, and employment agencies. By coordinating these services and providing a one-stop-shop for young people, the JBA aims to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of youth employment services in Germany.

The Jugendberufsagentur is currently being implemented in several German cities and districts, and it has received positive feedback from young people, educators, and employment professionals for its innovative and comprehensive approach to supporting youth employment. However, the organisation and implementation is transferred to responsibility of the city/district itself.

The JBA in Cologne (JUGENDBERUFSAGENTUR.KOELN) was established in 2020 as a collaboration between the Federal Employment Agency (career counselling), the City of Cologne (youth welfare service) and the Jobcenter Cologne (social benefits).

The JBA in Cologne provides a range of services and support for young people in Cologne and the surrounding area. This includes:

- **Guidance and counseling:** The JBA in Cologne offers guidance and counseling to young people on education, training, and employment options. This includes information on apprenticeships, vocational training, and job opportunities. Not the professionals, in fact the young people are dictating speed, direction and topic of the counseling.
- **Job search assistance:** The JBA in Cologne helps young people to find suitable job opportunities by providing job search support, connecting them with employers, and assisting with applications and interviews.
- **Skill development:** The JBA in Cologne provides training and skills development opportunities to help young people develop the skills and competencies needed to succeed in the workplace.
- **Network:** The JBA in Cologne works closely with local schools, vocational training institutions, employers, information centres and many more network partners to ensure that young people receive the best possible support and opportunities.
- **Free and easy access:** During the daily opening hours there is a free access to guidance and counseling. Everyone who visits the JBA will get at least one consultation, no one is rejected. If required, the JBA provides anonymous counseling. The JBA has their own office facilities (former retail store) in the inner city of Cologne and is convenient to reach via public transport. Beside the

face-to-face contact the JBA supplies other communication channels such as e-mail, hotline, homepage and video consultation.

- **Social support:** The JBA in Cologne offers social support to young people who may be facing social or economic challenges, such as financial difficulties or family problems. This includes access to social services and other forms of support.



Links for further information

<https://www.jugendberufsagentur.koeln/>

<https://www.bmas.de/DE/Arbeit/Aus-und-Weiterbildung/Ausbildungsfoerderung/Jugendberufsagenturen/jugendberufsagenturen.html>

## Good practice from Cyprus: Vocational guidance and counselling in Cyprus, The role of public employment service (PES)

Maria Christou, Employment Counsellor, Department of Labour, Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, PES, Cyprus

### Main actors

The main public authorities for guidance and counselling in Cyprus are:

- The Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance,
- The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth,
- Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA),
- The Cyprus Productivity Center (CPC).

Other important providers of guidance in Cyprus includes:

- The Cyprus Youth Board,
- Trade Unions and Municipalities,
- Career Centres of Universities in Cyprus.

### Services and practice

**The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth** provides academic and vocational guidance to the students of Secondary Education through the Counselling and Career Education Services (CCES). The services are provided by qualified guidance counsellors who are placed in each secondary school and at the central offices of the Ministry.

**The Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA)** is the national agency for vocational training. It provides planned and systematic training and development of Cyprus human resources at all levels and sectors, for meeting the economy's and labour market needs within the overall national socio-economic policies.

**The Cyprus Productivity Center (CPC)** is active in the areas of management development, training and productivity aiming at the best possible utilisation of human and capital resources. In this context it promotes the conduct of research, the provision of consulting services and the organisation of training programmes. At the same time CPS operates as the National Europass Center of Cyprus.

**The Cyprus Youth Board (ONEK)** provides guidance and counselling through a number of "Youth Information Centres" across Cyprus. Working in close cooperation with local Youth Organisations offers information and counselling services targeting young people under the age of 30.

### Ministry of labour, welfare and social insurance - the department of labour

The Department of Labour belongs to the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance of the Republic of Cyprus. The Department is responsible for the promotion and implementation of Government policy in the fields of employment and training of human resources, as well as for the care of persons with disabilities. The Government's main policy aim is to maintain conditions of full and productive employment and promote conditions for the rational utilization of the labour force, including vulnerable groups.

## **The Public Employment Service of Cyprus (PES)**

The Vocational Guidance Service of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance is delivered through the Public Employment Service (PES). PES is a Division of the Department of Labour.

PES is a powerful instrument of the labor market, as it promotes full, productive and quality employment by encouraging more participation in employment, and by providing placement services and vocational guidance. Today its staff numbers 123 employees of which 47 are specialized employment counsellors. The PES organises its career guidance services through a network of 12 offices at the central, district and local level.

### **PES mission**

The provision of free services to jobseekers and employers requesting personnel with the aim of contributing to and ensuring the smooth functioning of the labor market. These services include among others the provision of job placement services, the filling of vacancies, the provision of vocational guidance and the reference of job seekers to available training programmes and employment opportunities and schemes.

### **PES services**

#### **Central Level (Coordination Unit at the Department of Labour)**

- Monitoring, analysing and evaluating trends in the labor market.
- Coordination and evaluation of employment policy.
- Design and implementation of subsidized employment schemes/programs.
- Monitoring of activities at district level.

#### **Local Level**

- Assistance and support to registered jobseekers.
- Assistance and support to employers looking for staff.
- Personalised support and vocational guidance to vulnerable groups.
- Information and guidance on employment and training opportunities.
- Online Platform with open vacancies.
- Cooperation with the social partners for the effective implementation of policy measures.
- Information and guidance about available employment opportunities in Europe and Cyprus through the EURES network.

### **Services to employers**

PES also provides a number of high-quality services to employers seeking to employ suitable staff. These services include among others:

- Personal Contact and on the spot visits.
- Online Platform with jobseekers' profiles.
- Analysis of staff needs.
- Matching suitable candidates with jobs.
- Monitoring of group interviews.
- Information on available subsidized Programs/Schemes for staff employment and support for the employer in submitting the relevant applications.

- Follow up of job placements.

### **Individualized counselling approach**

The Public Employment Service is staffed with qualified employment counsellors with relevant professional qualifications in sociology, psychology and human resources. The employment counsellors receive frequent specialized training in order to provide high quality services in the fields of vocational and life-long career guidance.

The main role of an employment counsellor is to provide vocational guidance to jobseekers and especially those falling within certain categories considered as vulnerable groups (e.g. youth, people with disabilities, single parents, long term unemployed, welfare recipients, etc), with the aim to integrate or reintegrate into the labour market.

This approach is a collaborative problem-solving process between a counsellor and a job seeker which mainly focuses on the Implementation of an **Individual Action Plan** aiming at overcoming existing or anticipating forthcoming labour market barriers.

Through a number of counselling meetings, the counsellor begins to gather data, through a structured interview, regarding the job seeker's career objectives, professional goals, current employability barriers, difficulties or challenges, strengths and weaknesses. These data will allow the counselor to develop an individualized action plan, which will guide the counselor's practice throughout the counseling course. Having an adequate picture of the jobseekers' skills, capabilities and deficiencies, will help the counselor employ an individualized approach toward the job seeker.

After the development of the jobseeker's professional profile, the counselor needs to assess the level of job-readiness of the counselee. Depending on the situation, the counselor can either start the job search or recommend vocational training as a more beneficial option, with regards to the jobseeker's goals.

Depending on each case, the Individual Action Plan usually contains counselling (forming a CV, preparing for a job interview, improving self-esteem, empowerment, informing the job seeker on the available training opportunities or open vacancies, etc), vocational guidance, obtaining skills training, referring the job seeker to an open vacancy or to a subsidy scheme.

Usually, the counselling is concluded when a job seeker finds a job by own initiative or through a job placement after matching to a vacancy by the counsellor. In any case the objective of the Individualised Counselling Approach is to empower and assist the job seeker enter the labour market and achieve a sustainable, satisfying and meaningful employment. The counselling approach provides for frequent follow ups on counselees up to one year after securing employment.

### **Links for further information**

Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance: <https://www.mlsi.gov.cy>

Department of Labour: [https://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/dl.nsf/index\\_gr/index\\_gr?opendocument](https://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/dl.nsf/index_gr/index_gr?opendocument)

Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth: <http://www.moec.gov.cy>

The Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA): <https://www.anad.org.cy>

The Cyprus Productivity Center (CPC): [www.mlsi.gov.cy/kepa](http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/kepa)

The Cyprus Youth Board (ONEK): <https://onek.org.cy>

# Good practice from Germany: Card-Sorting

Carolyn-Felicia Knauth, career counsellor for high school graduates and students, Agentur für Arbeit  
Darmstadt, Germany

## Expected outcomes

Card-Sorting is a lightly structured procedure that is scientific well-founded in the context of professional counselling.

For the client, the reflective sorting of job-related terms offers the opportunity to express their own reflections and sensitivities and to become more aware of their own professional interests, skills, values and needs. For the consultant, who supports this process by critically asking questions, systematizing and recording results, this process is informative in several respects: He gets to know the client's decision-making criteria and learns how the client approaches work tasks, how he makes employment-related decisions or what possibly prevents him from taking goal-oriented next steps. In the best case, this becomes clear to the customer through the sorting process itself, but in any case, the consultant reports his observations back to the customer in the final joint evaluation.

In the variant of employment-oriented card sorting described in detail here and adapted to German conditions, work fields are used as a starting point. With the help of the card sorting method, the customer is supposed to concretize his occupational preferences by filtering out the most interesting fields of work from those existing on the German labour market and sorting them according to personal priorities. During the various sorting processes, no specific occupations or training courses are to be named and checked for their immediate feasibility; the initial aim is to link occupational preferences with real existing fields of work.

Working with this method presupposes that the client is willing to engage in this methodical procedure, has sufficient capacity for abstraction and reflection, and has an appropriate time frame. The composition of a card assortment should be oriented thereby absolutely at the target group, with which an advisor predominantly works. When creating one's own set of cards, care must be taken to ensure a complete representation of the professional world and a sufficient number of cards must be available to allow for more than one sorting step as well as clustering. The same sorting steps are also possible with a card set tailored to occupational interests.

## Target group

All people who would like to (re)orient themselves professionally.

## Methodical implementation

In the following, a procedure is outlined that is essentially based on the related basic literature. The method must be adequately modified with regard to the respective target group. For this purpose, some hints can be found in the section "Practical tips for application".

### Step I: Set priorities

The client is given a set of cards with the names of different fields of work - for example, marketing, medicine, music, energy, construction, law, management; two blank cards can be labelled by the client if necessary. The consultant asks the customer to quickly sort the cards into four piles according to the

following criteria: "very interesting", "possibly interesting", "rather uninteresting", "absolutely uninteresting".

## Step 2: Clustering

For further processing, only the first two piles are considered. They are clustered into sub-stacks according to similar topics to be defined later by the customer. The consultant can provide specific thought-provoking impulses by asking questions.

*Examples:*

- "What do you think, which of the terms you described as "interesting" somehow go together?"
- "What is particularly important to you?"
- "What should these professions, fields of work necessarily fulfil, what not?"
- "Is that right - or do you want to change something else, try a different division?"

The sorting of the cards will not take place thereby after exclusively rational, but also after intuitive and emotional aspects. The customer can set his own priorities. During the sorting process, the customer should verbalize his thoughts and justify why he has grouped which cards together and what he appreciates about each work designation. It will not be enough in every case for the consultant to listen carefully.

Many clients will need prodding beyond the cards to articulate their thoughts aloud:

- "Tell me, what exactly do 'music' and 'photography' have to do with each other for you?"
- "Never mind, if you can't get anywhere with this card at the moment. Then just put it aside and focus on the next one."

## Step 3: Find generic terms

When the client has sorted "his" cards in this way, he is asked to find a generic term to the resulting piles.

*Example:*

- "What do you think: under which topics could the stacks you have laid be grouped?"
- "Surely a "theme" cannot be found for every card. We can file the ones left at the end under 'other' so we don't lose the content."

Possible headings for customer-owned themes to which the preferred work areas are assigned could include: achievement, opportunities for advancement, autonomy, challenge, creativity, variety, structure, authenticity, lifestyle, pay, pace of work, safety, work environment.

Overall, the cluster process should be relatively dynamic and open. Clusters can be broken up several times and re-sorted until the client is satisfied with the categorization and the work and career-related



thought patterns they possess have sufficiently crystallized. In this process, the client is very active; the consultant supports this process in narrowing down the topics, through summaries, addressing contradictions, in-depth questions, and examples.

#### **Step 4: Save results**

Finally, the results are visualized: the fields of work assigned to a cluster are listed among themselves and (at the latest now) given headings that reflect the respective theme common to them. To help the client summarize their thoughts, their meaning, and state possible consequences, the consultant can or will support this process with goal-oriented questions.

*Examples:*

- "Have you been able to gain new information about your own professional interests and skills from working with the cards? What are they?"
- "What confirming information do you take from your arrangement of the cards?"
- "What changes have occurred regarding your career ideas that you were considering prior to our interview?"
- "How do you feel about these results and what is their significance to you?"
- "Are you clearer now about what - career-wise - you should hold on to or invest in, where you could start over, or what ideas you should move away from?"
- "What are the next steps you want to take now regarding your professional future?"

The result of this determination and assignment process can be recorded on an appropriate list, serve the customer as a basis for the subsequent professional (re)orientation and in the next counselling session for linking or re-entry.

#### **Step 5: Targeted information**

After the card-sorting method has been carried out, a targeted information phase is necessary in which the customer finds out for himself whether the topics he has discovered to be significant for himself can also be realized via employment opportunities in the relevant work environments. As a rule, this self-information must be prepared in the counselling interview by introducing available research options (e.g. print and online media), and the result must be used in the next counselling interview as a basis for further work.

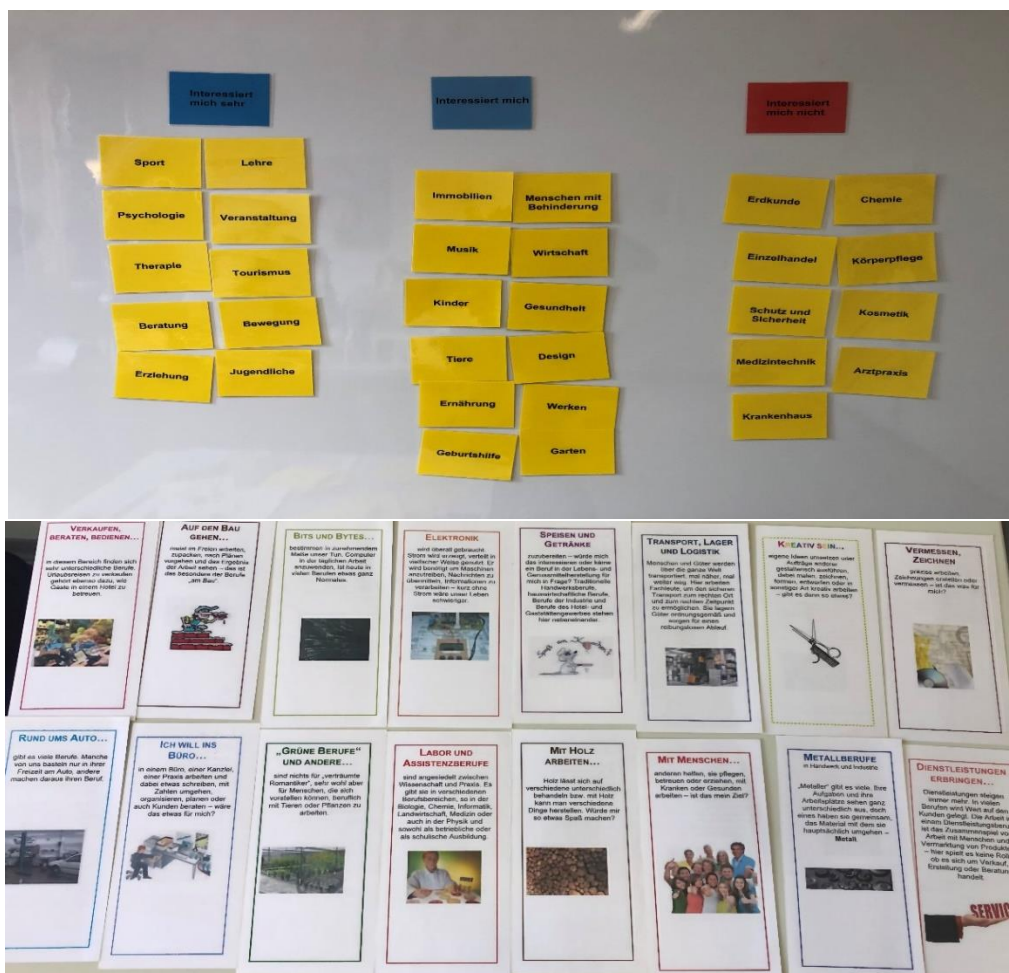
#### **Practical tips and variations of card sets**

The method can be carried out well in the context of vocational guidance, but should be individually adapted with regard to the group of people, for example, for (young) adults without vocational orientation. The number of cards can be reduced somewhat, so that the method is feasible within the counselling time. However, their number must also not be too low, otherwise the various sorting processes are no longer possible (minimum 40-50 cards).

The classic set of cards is oriented towards the most complete possible mapping of work fields. Another possibility is to use a card set that focuses on professional interests. Starting from one's own interests

is a familiar approach to the world of occupations, especially for young occupational selectors. Interest-based card sorting is particularly useful if the client has difficulty in addressing or excluding a sufficient number of interest areas without structuring help. The steps described above also apply to this variant. For the transfer of interest clusters to possible occupational fields, which is initiated in steps 4 and 5, the counsellor can give the customer concrete information or guide him or her to find corresponding occupational fields.

Finally, a card set is printed which can be used when there is a need to reduce the complexity of the classic card sorting in relation to the group of people. This card set is designed to combine steps 1-3, i.e., generic terms have already been formed, which the customer can sort according to his preferences. For this variant, 3 piles are also sufficient (very interesting, interesting, not interesting). The counsellor will accompany this sorting process by answering the customer's comprehension questions or providing assistance with the selection as well as guiding the process of securing the results. On the back of the cards, there are training occupations about which the advisor can provide specific information to his client, if necessary. An important advantage of this card set, in addition to its orientation to a specific group of people, is that it can be used ad hoc in the course of counselling and can be implemented with a comparatively small investment of time.



Links for further information

<https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/unsere-projekte/aufstieg-durch-kompetenzen/projektthemen/kompetenz-und-berufekarten-neu#detail-content-grid-179886>

## Good practice from Estonia: »Finding a preferred type of work environment«

Piret Palusoo, career counsellor, Estonian Unemployment Insurance Foundation, Estonia

My first method, practice or initiative I would like to introduce, brings us to the world of Matching personalities and environments - John Holland's theory of career choice. The title of the method can be called »Finding a preferred type of work environment«. I am using this particular method often as a basic tool for the self-analysis of a client. It gives a simple but quite effective combination to help clients in learning about themselves and exploring their suitability for a certain work environment.

### Expected outcome

Clarification of client's preferences and wishes. A solid addition to self analysis of the client.

### Target group

- Students
- Job seekers
- Career changers

### Description of the method, practice or initiative

As a prerequisite to use this method, we have agreed with a client that there is a need to give a support in finding possible areas and suitable fields of work. Within the usual guidance session when it seems suitable and convenient I kick off an interview with questions like: What type of work do you desire? Which is your preferred field of work or occupancy?

Meeting the usual vagueness as a reply, I am then proposing to use a certain exercise with activity cards. The client accepts this proposal in majority of cases. These activity cards »Discover yourself« consist of 60 cards where the cards manifest personality and environments types such as Realistic, Investigative (exploratory), Artistic (creative), Social, Enterprising (Entrepreneurial), Conventional (Systemic) altogether a well-known RIASEC types combination all divided per 6 types.

A client is kindly asked to select among these given 60 activity cards only ten cards where he/she finds the activities with what he/she really likes to spend time. Each card is marked with small italic letters the respective type (Social, artistic etc). Once the selection is made, the selected cards should be organised according to the disposition (RIASEC). Usually the selection of cards show uneven distribution per one-two-three RIASEC dispositions. For example - the client's selection has 4 cards belonging to social disposition, 3 cards in systemic 2 in creative and 1 in realistic.

I shall focus on the type gaining the most of matches with the cards. In this case I am describing to the client what does the social disposition mean in broader terms. I am asking the client if he finds the resemblance with characteristics with social dispositions - general empathy, compassion, helpfulness etc. I am also asking the client to describe per selected card how this particular activity is manifested in his everyday life which helps the client to find additional concurrences with the certain type. Based on that I can build up a conversation, where I am also explaining which are the usual professions selected by the people who tend to prefer social disposition.

### **Outcome of the method and value**

Client learns some means how to describe and assess his own activities and the connections between the performance and preferences.

### **Links for further information**

Card game »Discover yourself« is going to be introduced to the participants of the study visit during presentation.

An Occupational Interests Inventory AASK ( developed by Tripod Grupp OU, [www.tripod.ee](http://www.tripod.ee)).

## Good practice from Estonia: »Circle of strengths«

Piret Palusoo, career counsellor, Estonian Unemployment Insurance Foundation, Estonia

The second method I am planning to introduce can be called the »Circle of strengths« It is meant to support the clients in defining their skills and competences which help to make desired changes and finding connections between their competences and results.

### Target group

- Job seekers
- Career changers

### Description of the method, practice or initiative

Client has already a goal. He/she has resources for reaching the goal. He/she has a wish to reach the goal but the question is how to use the resources?

The method can be used in individual and group counselling session. It goes especially well with the career changing group sessions as it allows personal involvement in group support and dedication.

In the beginning I ask client or all the participants to think about their successful case in their life. I am giving 3-5 minutes to think and ask them to make notes if they wish. Then I am asking a volunteer who is willing to share his case with the other participants of the group. The others will be given pens and post-it papers to make notes. They are asked to listen carefully the story of the volunteer and write down any important note they spot and find relevant about the achievement and the actions of the story teller.

Then I am starting the interview. Strategic example questions for interview with a client or a volunteer from the group:

- Describe the situation you wanted to reach?
- What was the problem you wanted to solve with your activities?
- How did you feel when the problem existed?
- How did you behave when the problem existed?
- When and in what have you succeeded?
- What did you do specifically for success?
- Was there anyone who supported you?
- What circumstances did support you then?
- How do you feel now when you describe this story of yours?

Then I am wrapping the interview and thank the storyteller for sharing this personal information. Next step: I am asking the participants to approach to the whiteboard (usually is placed during the group counselling in the room) and place the post-its with their notes they made during the story listening, as a circle. There might be everything on the notes included the characteristics, skills, values, interests. The elements that constitute the Strengths circle.

### **Outcome and value of this method**

The participants feel strong involvement in the exercise in giving feedback and importance of support to each other. They are encouraged also to tell the appreciations to the storyteller if feeling necessary. Learned moments allow to expand the group work and carry on the same method in smaller groups by the participants on their own. Storyteller feels appreciation and accepts the group feedback even more.

### **Links for further information**

Amundson, Norman E. Active engagement: the »being«and »doing« of career counselling. 2009.

# Good practice from Germany: The Life-Design approach to professional guidance

Thorsten Nieberg, Federal Employment Agency Frankfurt-Oder, Germany

## Expected outcomes

As a contribution to a more abstract reflection of why certain methods should be applied to professional guidance, I hope that my review of the Life-Design approach will stimulate exchange amongst the Forum's practitioners and their views on questions, such as:

- Is the idea of Life-Design a useful and convincing approach to professional guidance?
- Is the idea of Life-Design shaping the daily work of practitioners participating in the Forum? What are their experiences with a view to best practice methods and prospective initiatives?

In addition, my contribution is also linked to the aim of raising the level of practitioners' knowledge about how lifelong guidance is organised in my German home-country more generally. I will seek to achieve this by two means. Firstly, through a brief introduction into key elements and structures of the German counselling-system that precedes my Life-Design discussion. And, secondly, through some personal reflections in the end on how this German professional guidance system itself can be considered to be shaped by ideas of Life-Design counselling.

I would like to mention here that it is my finding of a strong inter-European connotation of Life-Design idea development that has motivated me to bring that notion forth for this Forum's discussion. It is my personal belief that exchange amongst practitioners can positively contribute to rather theoretical considerations in the realm of scholarly research, which in return, can provide an enhanced source for advice that can be used for improving daily counselling work.

## Target group

Practitioners and colleagues at the Ljubljana Forum are the main target groups to be envisaged – maybe even as multipliers beyond this programme both, at home-countries' levels as well as in continuing EU and international exchange contexts.

## Description of the method, practice or initiative

In Germany, Lifelong Professional Guidance (*Lebensbegleitende Berufsberatung*, or LBB) is divided into two main pillars, namely Pre-employment Career Counselling (*Berufsberatung vor dem Erwerbsleben*, BBvE) and On-the-Job Career Counselling (*Berufsberatung im Erwerbsleben*, BBiE). These are basically centered around the question whether advice-seeking persons have obtained a vocational training occupation (including jobs that require a university degree), or not. There are currently 324 of such vocational training occupations (excluding university programmes) according to the Register of Recognised Training Occupations (*Verzeichnis der anerkannten Ausbildungsberufe*).

On a theoretical level, this internal organisation seems to be straightforward. However, in practice, situations can be identified that arguably pose a challenge to this overriding structure. For example, it can become a challenge for practitioners of both, BBvE and BBiE-pillars, if an advice-seeking person has obtained their educational and/or vocational training outside Germany. In these cases, assessment

whether these qualifications meet the afore-mentioned Register's underlying criteria often tends to be rather difficult; and, as a result, can lead to questions of responsibility amongst BBvE and BBiE-counsellors.

While this brief introduction to the organisational logic of German LBB could already serve as a basis for discussion in its own right, the main focus of attention now shall shift to the idea of Life-Design in vocational guidance that can be related to both pillars of career counselling mentioned above, BBvE as well as BBiE.

The notion of Life-Design draws on the so-called Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (or, SFBT), a therapeutic model associated with systemic perspectives in the field of psychology. Its development is commonly associated with the work of American psychotherapist Steve de Shazer and has been gaining relevance from the early 1980s on. SFBT draws on a number of principles and practices aimed at assisting advice-seeking persons by developing solutions, rather than focussing on a quest for causes behind of what is considered to be problematic – an endeavour that advocates of SFBT-theory view as a never-ending attempt and, therefore, meaningless.

SFBT, and the systemic perspective more generally, is seen in strong contrast to the conglomeration of psychological theories cantered around psycho-diagnostic approaches. These approaches – in their extremes – can be considered to focus on mere problems in determining appropriate counter measures, commonly associated with medication treatment. SFBT, on the other hand, assumes that every person has the ability of overcoming challenges and obstacles. It is aimed at identifying such challenging situations in the advice-seekers' lives in order to adopt relevant solution strategies to the current case. In the Life-Design context, of which job counselling is one field application, these strategies are adopted to specific vocational-related issues that prompted the advice-seeking person to contact the counsellor in the first place.

The Life-Design concept involves a number of questioning techniques, the most relevant of which seems to be the so-called Miracle Question. It assists in shifting the focus of a conversation to the future when the issues and challenges of the advice-seeking person are gone. It asks from the advice-seeking person not only to imagine that whatever is conceived problematic has vanished over night; but also, and more importantly, to elaborate on how they perceive that their problem is gone. These perceptions and elaborations, in turn (and according to theory), shed light on the development of aims, necessary steps to be taken and milestones to achieve them.

My current state of review indicates that the American Adjunct Professor of Counsellor Education and Supervision, Mark Savickas, plays an important role in pushing the Life-Design idea forward. He has been part of the transatlantic "Life Design International Research Group", connecting the United States with Europe and Vrije University in Brussels/Belgium in particular, which served as the Group's main research hub at the end of the last decade.

Savickas argues that the main reason for the application of the Life-Design concept derives from transformative developments in society and their work-related implications since the beginning of the new millennium. In a thoughtful piece of work, Savickas elaborates on three specific precursors of the Life-Design idea, each of them capable of meeting the demands of advice-seeking persons in specific historic era but also limited to this period in time. These three areas and their respective counselling approaches include the following: 1) Mentoring in Agricultural Communities (1850-1899), 2) Vocational Guidance in Industrial Cities (1900-1949) and 3) Career Counselling in Corporate Societies (1950-1999).

Without going into the details of each of these eras and models, Savickas main argument for the Life-Design approach (in the words of his afore-mentioned work: *Self-Construction since 2000*) results from



the destabilisation of work-related and structuring principles – notably "*the career metaphor of climbing the corporate ladder*" – through enhanced adaptation-requirements of multi-local-operating firms to meet the ends of globalisation and digitalisation. According to Savickas, this involves downsizing and restructuring, which produces uncertainty for employees. Therefore, the consequences in his words read: "*Workers must now actively plan and implement self-management behaviours in a lifelong quest to construct their best possible future*".

My attention to Savickas and the overall idea of Life-Design was raised by a compulsory research-based training programme that practitioners of both pillars, BBvE as well as BBiE, have to complete in order to become work-active in the long-term. Anchored at the state-recognised University of Applied Labour Studies (*Hochschule der Bundesagentur für Arbeit*, or HdBA), the training programme is aimed at stimulating practitioners' abilities to reflect on their daily work methods and deepen their understanding of the theoretical foundations that accompany them. The Programme therefore particularly seeks professional improvement on the side of the practitioners; but ideally it will benefit advice-seeking persons by extension. In my view, the mere existence of this Programme already serves as an indication for the idea of Life-Design being applied to professional guidance in Germany.

Codes of consultation conduct can be cited as another form of Life-Design ideas' representation in Germany's lifelong professional guidance system of LBB. For example, one of the three standard sequences according to which any consultation should be conducted is specifically designated to the development of solution strategies. And, it is the introduction to these sequences as part of Matthias Rübner's and Barbara Sprengard's German practitioner handbook that defines counselling "*more than before*" as a practice that offers nothing but solution-oriented guidance to improve the self-helping capabilities of advice-seeking persons.

### Links for further information

Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (2022): *Verzeichnis der anerkannten Ausbildungsberufe 2022* [Register of Recognised Training Occupations 2022], Bonn. [Available at <https://www.bibb.de/dienst/publikationen/de/17944>, accessed on 27 April 2023].

Rübner, M. & Sprengard, B. (2010): *Beratungskonzeption der Bundesagentur für Arbeit*, Band 1 [Consultation Concept of the Federal Employment Agency, Volume 1], Nuremberg.

Savickas, M. L. et. al. (2009): Life designing: A paradigm for career construction in the 21st century, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, no. 75, pp. 239-250.

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Shazer, S. de & Dolan, Y. (2015): *Mehr als ein Wunder. Lösungsfokussierte Kurzzeittherapie heute*, 4. Auflage [More than a miracle. Solution-focused brief therapy today, 4th ed.], Heidelberg.

## Good practices from Spain: Initiatives for VET students

María Hernando de Marco, CPIFP Pirámide Vocational Education and Training School, Huesca, Spain

I am a Training and Career Counselling teacher working for a Vocational Education and Training School. As well as Training and Career Guidance, I carry out the teaching of Training in Labour Law and Training in Business administration. Teaching practice is further complemented with participation in the Guidance Service and the Department of Information, Educational and Professional Guidance, whose main function is to inform and support our students to be able to work for a company, either as to create their own “start-up”.

### Title of the method, practice or initiative

1. **Entering the labour market and join the labour force.** This initiative consists of two sections:
  - Development of personal brand and professional project.
  - Choosing the most suitable company to work for, building a proper resume and facing a selection interview.
2. **Promoting job creation and enterprise development as young entrepreneurs.**
3. **Talk about emotional intelligence by a specialised coach.**
4. **Organization of a Job Market fair.**

### Expected outcomes

As a Training and career counselling teacher, I expect to fulfil the outcome of preparing my students for life as active citizens, allowing for the acquisition of the skills to meet their obligations and exercise the rights in different social facets, all of this with a critical spirit. In addition, as a priority objective, my activity is focused on training them to be able to enter the labour market as employees, and as entrepreneurs of their own business.

### Target group

CPIFP Pirámide Offers a range of different specialities or cycles:

- Trading/comercial activities.
- Chemistry.
- Renewable energies.
- Electrical installations
- Teaching and Social Sport Animation.
- Ftness.
- Building project.
- Web Application Development.
- Soccer Coach Technician.
- Electromechanical Maintenance.

As a Training and career counselling professor, I teach two subjects that all students must take, regardless of the professional sector in which they are being instructed: Training in Labor Law during the first year and Training in Business administration during the second year. Specifically, during the academic year 2022-23, I teach in the cycles of Chemistry, Electromechanical Maintenance and Web Application Development.

## Description of the method, practice or initiative

### 1. Entering the labour market and join the labour force.

The aim of this section is to bring students the opportunity to acquire the skills for the most suitable position, taking into account their own interests and personal characteristics. This initiative has two sections:

- **Development of personal brand and professional project:** In order for students to reflect on what they want and can do from a professional point of view and, above all, on what differentiates them from others, as future workers. It consists of the following: Reflection on qualities, abilities and skills. Hobbies and passions. Education, training and experience. Reference professions. Companies and organisations of reference.
- **Resume and selection interview.** Through a Case Study, students search for information about companies which operate in their environment and sector, choose the most suitable, and present their candidacy for a position.

### 2. Promoting job creation and enterprise development as young entrepreneurs.

Throughout their second year, students carry out a “Start-up project”, which begins when they formulate an innovative proposition, and finishes when they calculate profits and decide whether that idea can lead to an economically viable company.

### 3. Talk about emotional intelligence by a specialised coach.

Focused on helping students to acquire managing emotions skills and social competences.

### 4. Job market fair.

In May, we organise an event that brings together the main companies which operate in the nearby area of the productive sectors related to our teachings, so that students can get in touch with them, with a view to their entering in the labour market. For this purpose, Training and career guidance teachers prepare students to face the selection process for the company that each of them consider to be the most suitable, and we make sure that they elaborate a proper CV and they are ready to face a selection interview.

#### Links for further information

<https://www.cpipppiramide.com/>

Web page of CPIFP Pirámide.

