

## News from Around Europe

**Austrian Journal erwachsenenbildung.at Publishes Article about European Competence Standards of NICE.**



**Monika Petermandl,**  
Danube University Krems,  
Austria

The article is the first to present and critically appraise the ECS in Austria. A space is also provided for describing the development process and the guiding assumptions and thoughts. The article concludes with the example of a related study programme at Danube University Krems and reflects on a first attempt to implement the competence standards. The full paper in German and its abstract in English can be found at: <http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at/magazin>

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**Empirical Study on Guidance Counselling at Secondary Schools in Ireland**



**Lucy Hearne,**  
University of Limerick,  
Ireland

The Course Directors of professional Guidance Programmes in the University of Limerick and Dublin City University, Ireland, collaborated on an empirical research project between November 2014 and May 2016 that investigated the provision of guidance counselling in the Irish secondary education system.



The study was funded by an Irish Research Council (IRC) Starter Research Grant (2014-2016). The research was conducted in the context of national and international policy, practice and research in the area of whole school guidance counselling to young people during a turbulent period of policy funding restrictions and resource re-allocations. In particular, the phenomenon

of a whole-school approach to guidance counselling (personal and social, educational and career) in one Irish voluntary post primary school since the re-allocation of guidance counselling provision in Budget 2012 was examined through an in-depth explanatory single case study methodology.

The outcome of the research project has been a published Case Study Report (December 2016) entitled A Case Study Analysis of a Whole School Approach to Guidance Counselling in a Voluntary School in the Irish Post Primary Sector, see link: <http://hdl.handle.net/10344/5389>

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**IAEVG Conference in Madrid: "Promoting Equity through Guidance: Reflection, Action and Impact"**



**Luis Sobrado,**  
University of Santiago de  
Compostela, Spain

Organized by the Spanish University of Distance Education (UNED), the most important annual event of the IAEVG was celebrated in Madrid from November 15-18, 2016. Many NICE members participated with symposia, papers, workshops and posters, etc. Also, there were presentations of diverse themes, linked with the topics of the NICE network. <http://iaevgconf2016.es>

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**European training curriculum and standard for integration agents working with low-skilled people through career counselling, coaching and guidance**



**Jan Woldendorp,**  
Saxion Hogeschool Deventer,  
The Netherlands

In the summer of 2016, the final conference of the IGMA2 project took place in Oslo. The IGMA methodology is a holistic (re-) integration approach that focusses on client needs through coaching and guidance. The IGMA2 project is co-funded by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission. The main objective of the project was to improve the quality culture in adult education and counselling for low-skilled learners, paying special attention to the professional development of staff, as well as delivery by different providers. Moreover, the project aims were to improve

the accessibility to adult education for the low-skilled, in order to help them enter the labour market and become more active members of society.

The method is evidence-based for target groups with over-average barriers towards becoming an active citizen (regular work or self-employment, participation in education, activity in the voluntary sector). The methodological approaches are based on the IGMA1 project experiences and rely on case-management expertise of Revalento and Saxion University of Applied Science in The Netherlands. The main outcomes of the IGMA2 project were:

- ◆ The development of a common European professional standard "EU Integration Agent" for professionals in the area of career counselling / coaching / guidance of the low-skilled through adult education.
- ◆ The development of a training curriculum "EU Integration Agent" for the professionalization of staff working on integration of the low-skilled in different types of stakeholder organizations.

For the curriculum design and for the professional standard, Saxion used the NICE competence model and the NICE professional roles. Training in the usage of the IGMA methodology and the NICE professional roles and competences is offered to participants who are currently working with low-skilled unemployed either for organizations like labour offices or the social department of a local government (among others). The training is also offered to NGO organisations that have special responsibilities in activation, coaching and guidance for low-skilled people in the areas of adult education, voluntary work or the labour market.

The training course takes a period of 8 months and consists of 9 sessions offering theoretical and practical introductions, tasks to be completed and supporting literature as well as practical tools. In the final assessment, participants are required to demonstrate their new knowledge and skills, thus making a major step toward actual implementation of the methodology.

The training is offered in collaboration with Saxion University in Deventer, the Netherlands. Further information can be found on: [www.igma2.eu](http://www.igma2.eu). If you are interested in the training offer you can contact [j.woldendorp@saxion.nl](mailto:j.woldendorp@saxion.nl).