

Sławomir Szymczak

Institute for Educational Research (IBE)

New trends in career counselling – challenges, stages, methods. Report from the Polish National Online Conference, 6–8 October 2020

On October 6th-8th, 2020 the National Online Conference titled “New trends in career counselling – challenges, stages, methods” was held. The conference was organized by the Institute for Educational Research (IBE) in Warsaw in collaboration with the partners of the event: Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan (UAM), The Association of School and Vocational Counsellors of the Republic of Poland, and five Centres for Supporting Crafts, Dual and Vocational Education in Kalisz, Konin, Leszno, Piła and Poznan. The conference was devoted to new trends in vocational counselling (as well as guidance service), mainly in the context of school vocational counselling and counselling provided by labour market institutions. This three-day event was carried out on the ClickMeeting platform, and each day of the conference was focused on three different issues: challenges faced by career counsellors, career counselling at various stages of education, and methods used in counselling. Contemporary issues of career counselling were also presented in the connection with the resources of the Integrated Qualifications System (IQS).

The first day of the conference was opened with a speech delivered by Dr Marcin Żółtak (WSB University in Poznan), entitled *Certain profession in times of uncertainty*. Based on the VUCA concept, he introduced the participants to the problems of the labour market shaping and its relationship to professional competences in a world of high volatility. The second speech was delivered by Sławomir Szymczak, who presented a sample of the results of the research on the competency profile of a career counsellor (carried out by a team consisting of Prof. Małgorzata Rosalska, Dr Jakub Wierzbicki [Collegium Da Vinci, Poznan], and Sławomir Szymczak [IBE]). The needs of career counsellors in terms of strengthening their methodological and diagnostic competences as well as data on selected areas of professional knowledge were analysed. Further, the speech by Tomasz Magnowski (Association of School and Vocational Counsellors of the Republic of Poland) *Consulting on steroids – how to combine artificial with intelligent* showed the possibilities

of using technology in career counselling and illustrated the problem of counsellors consisting in – as the author himself noted – digital exclusion from “augmented” reality. Dr Dominika Walczak (IBE) and Dr Monika Staszewicz (IBE) discussed the goals and assumptions formulated in the Integrated Skills Strategy 2030 for career counselling, including topics and directions of activities related to the functioning of effective career counselling for children, adolescents and adults. Dr Helena Anna Jędrzejczak (IBE), in her speech entitled *Confirming learning outcomes obtained outside formal education in universities – a challenge and opportunity for counselling*, introduced the possibilities of confirming learning outcomes (RPL) which has been required from universities since 2015, as well as the results of a study carried out at universities and discussed the conclusions from these results for career counselling. The area of challenges in career counselling was summarized in an expert panel led by Dr Anna Wawrzonek (UAM), Wojciech Stęchły (SGH, Warsaw) and Krzysztof Świerk (Central Examination Board / Sector Council for Automotive and Electromobility Competences), who broadened the issues presented by the former speakers, including the opportunities resulting from the implementation of the Integrated Qualifications System.

On October 7th the issues related to educational and vocational counselling at various stages of education were presented. Witold Jakubek (Masovian Local Governmental Teacher Training Center in Radom) discussed the subject of counselling in primary schools with a lecture entitled *Teaching technique in primary school and choices of further vocational education*. The next speakers, Anna Koziarska (CWRK-DiZ in Konin) and Marzena Szymańska-Grzegorzek (CWRKDiZ in Leszno), tackled the dilemma regarding the optimal approach to career counselling in high schools (developing decision-making versus profiling). Jan Ireneusz Palacz (the Józef Noje School Complex in Czarneków) focused on combining career counselling in vocational schools with the opportunities arising from the IQS, emphasising the schools’ autonomy in developing counselling programs. The academic consulting was discussed by Prof. Małgorzata Rosalska (UAM) on the basis of a presentation *Academic counselling as a form of supporting students’ educational and professional careers*. The last lecture concerned the role of educational and vocational counselling in improving the basic skills of adults; Karolina Rożalska (Foundation for the Development of the Education System) analysed the main assumptions of the project *Opportunity – new prospects for adults*. The culmination of the second day was an expert panel with Jerzy Bielecki (IBE), Joanna Maria Odzeniak (Education Office of the City of Warsaw) and Dr Mateusz Wiliński (University of Logistics).

The last day of the conference was devoted to the area of professional methods and tools used in educational and vocational counselling (also in a different approach, i.e. guidance service). In the first speech Dr Joanna Minta (DSW, Wrocław) presented the issue of “the most basic tool that every counsellor uses in their practice”, that is a counselling conversation (lecture entitled *Counselling conversation in the modern world – goals, contexts and strategies*). The differences between

professional psychological tests (supporting the advisory diagnosis) and questionnaires that do not meet the criteria of correctness of psychological tests were reviewed by Dr Jakub Wierzbicki. In the following speech, Ewa Frołow (IBE) and Joanna Biskup (IBE) shared their experiences in disseminating the IQS in the school environment, especially during lessons. The subject of balancing competences in the perspective of IQS was took up by Dr Marian Piekarski (Cracow University of Technology), mainly in terms of balancing competences process as a market qualification. The lecture closing the third and last day of the conference was an original perspective on counselling evaluation presented by Dr Anna Bilon (DSW, Wrocław) (*In search of the golden mean, or a few words on career counselling evaluation*). The closing of the topics discussed that day was a conversation about the methods and tools used in counselling with Ewa Bodzińska-Guzik (Information and Career Planning Centre Cracow), Iwona Gmaj (IBE) and Beata Grzelak (Centre for the Development of Vocational Advice at the Warsaw Centre for Educational and Social Innovation and Training).

The event was addressed to career counsellors, school career counsellors, career advisors, teachers, educators, education staff and all others interested in the subject of educational and career counselling. The conference met with great interest from the participants (almost 2,000 people registered for the conference), who actively participated in the chat by commenting, asking questions, and also sharing information or links to publications and websites devoted to the issues raised during the speeches. A rich post-conference material, including recordings of speeches and expert panels, multimedia presentations, as well as visual notes (flips) prepared for this occasion, illustrating individual speeches, is available at <https://kwalifikacje.edu.pl/nowe-trendy-w-doradztwie-zawodowym/materialy-pokonferencyjne/>.

*Translated by Sławomir Szymczak
Proofreading by Joanna Minta and Agnieszka Cłapka*