

Implications for practice of cross-cutting disadvantage

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This section contains materials relating to multiculturalism at the individual and organisational levels, together with an exploration of the concept of intercultural understanding.

[Increasing multicultural competence at the individual level](#)

Practical strategies and techniques to enhance diversity awareness. This includes support materials that can be used by practitioners, managers, researchers, trainers and others - who wish to develop their multicultural competencies in a proactive way.

[Multicultural organisational development](#)

A model for moving organisations towards multiculturalism, it analyses the functional focus, the competence needed by the organisation and the barriers to multiculturalism.

[Inter-cultural understanding](#)

Understanding a culture, even one's own, is not to be taken for granted. In this section the differences between 'surface culture' (spoken and written language, symbolic aspects such as religion, art and law) and 'deep culture' (a shared sub-consciousness) are explored through the ideas of Johan Galtung.

[Research findings on vocational guidance for the disadvantaged](#)

This section contains a series of research papers on vocational guidance for the disadvantaged.

Section 1: Increasing multicultural competence at the individual level

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1.1 STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE

Pedersen (1994) proposes a broad definition of multicultural counselling which includes 'ethnographic variables such as ethnicity, nationality, religion and language; demographic variables such as age, gender and place of residence; status variables such as social, educational and economic; and affiliations including both formal affiliations to family or organizations and informal affiliations to ideas and a lifestyle' (p229). In this broad definition, each person has many different cultures or identities with each identity becoming relevant at different times and places. He argues that multiculturalism emphasises both the way we are different from and similar to other people. It challenges those who have presumed that differences don't matter as well as those who have over emphasized differences (often perpetuating stereotypes). Pedersen (1994) goes on to argue that when counselling someone from a different culture (defined broadly) one of the biggest barriers we face is that 'we are unable to make accurate attributions' (p221). We need to examine our own biases as well as the biases that are inherent to counselling as a field of study. He suggests various strategies for increasing multicultural competence, including the following:

Informal settings: Multicultural counselling frequently takes place outside a formal setting. Define the 'function' of counselling and identify as many informal methods and settings as possible where you facilitated counselling even though you and/or the other person may not have previously viewed that exchange as having anything to do with counselling.

Volunteer: for work in an agency dealing with persons culturally (broadly defined) different from yourself. Select an agency or organisation with which you are unfamiliar. Keep a journal on your observations.

Resource person: Invite people from populations generally unfamiliar to you (and your group) to join you as a 'resource person'. There should be one 'resource person' for about every five participants. Meet with this person in small groups to discuss the meaning and function of 'counselling' as seen in that person's setting.

Review: issues of counselling journals and examine the description of research samples in empirical articles. Record the extent to which the sample's culture has been reported and what difference it might make to the research's conclusions if 'difference' had been accounted for more comprehensively.

Daily journal: keep a written daily journal identifying insights regarding your own cultural identity, assumptions, and culturally influenced behaviours. Look for patterns in your own behaviour that related to culturally learned expectations and values. Try to identify where you learned those cultural expectations and values.

1.2. DEVELOPING MULTICULTURAL SKILLS: NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Ivey (1994), Ivey et al (1997) and Singelis and Pedersen (1997) suggest that culturally appropriate nonverbal behaviour is crucial to successful counselling outcomes. Ivey advocates that all practising

counsellors 'begin a lifetime of study of nonverbal communication patterns and their variations' (1994:75). Singelis adopts the definition of nonverbal communication as 'communication without words' (1994:274). He cites research which suggests that up to 93% of the social meaning of a message is carried via nonverbal channels. This includes how we look, how we move, how we sound and how we smell. Touching, eye contact and the use of space and time are also facets of nonverbal communication. Although words themselves are not a part of nonverbal communication, the other aspects of speaking such as tone, loudness and speed are an important part. Even doing nothing can carry meaning when interpreted by another person. The wide range of behaviours that can carry meaning and the fact that these behaviours can be interpreted by another without our intention to communicate make nonverbal communication especially tricky. Multicultural competence implies that successful communication across cultural lines will involve not only language but also the social skills embodied in nonverbal behaviour. Social skills in this context refers to the ability to produce and receive nonverbal messages correctly.

1.2.1 Differences in Nonverbal Communications

Three additional factors contribute to the difficulties in interpreting nonverbal messages successfully:

Individual differences: Individuals differ in the expressiveness of their nonverbal communication. Introversion and extroversion is one way of conceptualising this difference. We need to judge any given message against the normal level of expressiveness and style for that person.

Context differences: Context can alter the meaning of nonverbal messages (e.g. compare a whisper at a formal gathering with a whisper between two lovers). We cannot consider the meaning of nonverbal communications without considering the context that surrounds the message.

Cultural differences: There are different views on whether nonverbal behaviour is learned during socialization according to cultural guidelines or whether it is biologically determined and therefore the same across all cultures.

Culture general aspects of nonverbal behaviour: Research into facial expression indicates that six emotions are recognizable in all cultures: anger, fear, happiness, sadness, surprise and disgust. Despite such evidence, emotions can be difficult to recognize, even within cultures because emotions can be controlled (e.g. to present ourselves in a certain light or to follow norms that govern what emotions are proper to display at that time).

Culture specific nonverbal behaviour: Cultures differ in the specific rules governing the display of emotions (e.g. consider what is acceptable for males compared with females). It is also true that cultures assign the same nonverbal behaviour to carry different meaning. For example, moving the head from side to side means agreement in North American and many Western European cultures whilst it in Russia and Sri Lanka it means the opposite. Eye contact is another example of nonverbal behaviour that carries with it different meanings in different cultures.

1.2.2 Common problems with nonverbal communication across cultures

Misattribution: there is a real danger of incorrect assigning of meaning to nonverbal behaviour.

Sending the wrong signal: a second problem is sending the wrong signal - the other side of misattribution.

Context confusion: this can arise when interacting with the culturally different across a range of settings (e.g. behaviour appropriate with certain individuals when interacting in an informal setting such as a party or public bar may not be appropriate in a more formal setting with the same individuals).

Missing signals: sometimes, signals are unfamiliar or too subtle to be recognized by a person from a different culture. Slight differences in tone or emphasis may go unrecognized.

1.2.3 Examples of multicultural issues in nonverbal communication

Ivey (1994, 1997) provides the following examples of significant differences in nonverbal behaviour:

Body language: Europeans & North Americans lean forward slightly and face the person. Handshakes are generally a sign of welcome. In other cultures, people sit side by side when working on personal issues and a male giving a female a firm handshake may represent a sexual invitation.

Physical space and touching: A study was made of the average number of times friends of different cultural groups touch each other in an hour while talking in a coffee shop. It was found that English friends did not touch each other at all; French friends touched 110 times, while Puerto Rican friends touched 180 times (Asbell and Wynn, 1991). In European & North American cultures, conversational distance is ordinarily at arm's length or more for comfort. Common in Arab and Middle-Eastern cultures is a six-to-twelve inch distance, a point at which the European-American usually becomes uncomfortable.

Time: Europeans and North Americans have a highly structured, linear view of time. Generally 'on time' for appointments. Several South American and African countries operate on a more casual view of time and do not plan that specified, previously agreed-upon times for meetings will necessarily hold.

Eye contact: For Europeans and North Americans, direct eye contact is appropriate when listening to a person. When talking, eye contact is less frequent. Some African-Americans may have patterns directly opposite and demonstrate more eye contact when talking and less when listening.

Vocal tone and speech rate: A varied vocal tone is favoured, with some emotion shown in European and North American cultures. Speech rate is moderated. Many Latina/o groups have more extensive and expressive vocal tones.

1.2.4 Suggestions for successful nonverbal communication:

Knowledge and understanding of others' nonverbal communication is the key to successful nonverbal communication across cultures. In addition:

be aware and delay attributions: often, we're not aware of the source of our impressions about others. Subtle cues may affect us strongly. Other nonverbal behaviours may be very noticeable, even striking, and affect us at an emotional level (e.g. a Hindu may have a negative reaction to seeing another person eating with their left hand because tradition reserves that hand for the toilet. Body

odour is another example of an aspect of nonverbal behaviour which is acceptable, even desirable, in some cultures and repugnant in others). Overcoming conditioning is difficult, but we at least need to be aware of behaviours which may be different and affect us.

be aware of one's own nonverbal communication: an awareness of our own behaviour will allow us to determine the differences between those behaviours and the ones used by one's cultural counterpart.

match your communication behaviours to different cultures: this may be difficult for a variety of reasons, but if managed, will be extremely worthwhile.

1.2.5 Multicultural awareness exercise

In a role-play session, select various combinations of the dimensions of non-verbal communication outlined above. The objective is to demonstrate effective listening without using the nonverbal communication you would 'normally' use in your counselling. For example, conduct a brief session in which you listen to a client without eye contact or in which you sit either closer or farther away from a client than is your custom. Or do both.

- Note your own feelings during the session.
- Ask the other person for feedback.
- Can you surmount the differences in style and still listen effectively?

References:

Asbell, B. & Wynn, K. (1991) Touching. New York: Random House

Practical strategies and techniques to enhance diversity awareness. This includes support materials that can be used by practitioners, managers, researchers, trainers and others - who wish to develop their multicultural competencies in a proactive way.

Ivey, A.E. (1994) (3rd edition) Intentional Interviewing and Counseling: Facilitating client development in a multicultural society, California, Brooks Cole Publishing

Practical strategies and techniques to enhance diversity awareness. This includes support materials that can be used by practitioners, managers, researchers, trainers and others - who wish to develop their multicultural competencies in a proactive way.

Ivey, A.E., Ivey, M.B. & Simek-Morgan, L. (1997) (4th) Counseling and Psychotherapy: A multicultural perspective. USA, Allyn and Bacon

Practical strategies and techniques to enhance diversity awareness. This includes support materials that can be used by practitioners, managers, researchers, trainers and others - who wish to develop their multicultural competencies in a proactive way.

Pedersen, P. (1994) Multicultural Counseling in Brislin, R.W. & Yoshida, T. (eds) Improving Intercultural Interactions: modules for cross-cultural training programs, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage

Practical strategies and techniques to enhance diversity awareness. This includes support materials that can be used by practitioners, managers, researchers, trainers and others - who wish to develop their multicultural competencies in a proactive way.

Singelis, T. (1994) Nonverbal Communication in Intercultural Interactions in Brislin, R.W. & Yoshida, T. (eds) Improving Intercultural Interactions: modules for cross-cultural training programs, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage

Practical strategies and techniques to enhance diversity awareness. This includes support materials that can be used by practitioners, managers, researchers, trainers and others - who wish to develop their multicultural competencies in a proactive way.

Singelis, T.M. & Pedersen, P. (1997) Conflict and Mediation Across Cultures in Cushner, K. and Brislin, R.W. (eds) Improving Intercultural Interactions: modules for cross-cultural training programs, Volume 2, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

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Section 2: Multi-cultural organisational development

This section outlines a model for moving organisations towards multiculturalism, it analyses the functional focus, the competence needed by the organisation and the barriers to multiculturalism.

2.1 MODEL OF MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sue (1995) emphasises the importance of developing knowledge and skills for organisations wishing to adopt a multicultural approach to service delivery. He argues that multicultural organisational development (MOD) should:

- take a social justice perspective;
- believe that any organisational inequities arise from monopolies of power; and
- accept that conflict is inevitable and not necessarily unhealthy.

MOD is based on the premise that organisations vary in their awareness of how racial, cultural ethnic and gender issues affect their employees and the workplace, and that becoming a multicultural organisation improves services and productivity. Businesses vary in their commitment to multiculturalism, and ascertaining what the organisational culture is like is a necessary prerequisite to implementing change. Sue proposes the following organisational model for assessing the developmental stage of organisations.

2.1.1 MONOCULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS:

At the one extreme are organizations that are primarily Eurocentric and ethnocentric. They are characterized by the following premises and practices:

- There is an implicit or explicit exclusion of racial minorities, women and other oppressed groups.
- Many organizations are rigged to the advantage of the dominant majority. In this case, Whites are privileged.
- There is only one best way to manage, teach, or administrate.
- Culture does not affect management, mental health, or education.
- Workers or students should assimilate.
- Culture-specific ways of doing things are neither recognized nor valued. Everyone should be treated the same.
- There is a strong belief in the melting pot concept.

2.1.2 NON-DISCRIMINATORY ORGANIZATIONS.

As organizations become more culturally aware and enlightened, they enter another stage often referred to as "non-discriminatory". These organizations are characterized by the following premises and practices:

- The organization has inconsistent policies and practices regarding multicultural issues. Certain departments or managers/teachers/counsellors are becoming sensitive to minority issues, but it is not an organizational priority.
- Leadership may recognize need for some action, but it lacks a systematic programme or policy addressing the issue of prejudice and bias.
- There is an attempt to make the climate of an organization less hostile or different, but these changes are superficial and often without conviction. They are more for public relations or perception.
- EO, affirmative action, and numerical symmetry of minorities and women are implemented grudgingly.

2.1.3 MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS.

As organizations become progressively more multicultural, they begin to value diversity and evidence continuing attempts to accommodate on-going cultural change. Their basic premises and practices reflect these values:

- They are in the process of working on a vision that reflects multiculturalism.
- They reflect the contributions of diverse cultural and social groups in their mission, operations, products, or services.
- They value diversity and view it as an asset.
- They actively engage in envisioning, planning, and problem-solving activities that allow for equal access and opportunities.
- They realise that equal access and opportunities are not equal treatment.
- They value diversity (rather than just tolerating it) and work to diversify the environment.

Sue has also developed a model for moving organisations towards multiculturalism. This model is based on a 3 X 3 X 3 matrix that analyzes the functional focus (where the intervention should take place), the barriers to multiculturalism and the competencies needed by the organisation.

FUNCTIONAL FOCUS	BARRIERS	COMPETENCIES
1. Recruitment	1. Differences	1. Beliefs/Attitudes
2. Retention	2. Discrimination	2. Knowledge
3. Promotion	3. Systemic	3. Skills

Reference:

Sue, D.W. (1995), Multicultural Organisational Development: implications for the counseling profession, in Handbook of Multicultural Counseling, Ponterotto, J.G., Casas, J.M., Suzuki, L.A. and Alexander, C. M., Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

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Section 3: Inter-cultural understanding

Understanding a culture, even one's own, is not to be taken for granted. In this section the differences between 'surface culture' (spoken and written language, symbolic aspects such as religion, art and law) and 'deep culture' (a shared sub-consciousness) are explored through the ideas of Johan Galtung.

3.1 Inter-cultural understanding

The central point of Johan Galtung's keynote speech is that understanding a culture, even one's own, is not to be taken for granted. He differentiates between **surface culture** – spoken and written language, symbolic aspects such as religion, art and law, and **deep culture** a shared sub-consciousness understood with the **gut brain** rather than the **head brain**.

This is illustrated in three point summaries which contrast American, Russian and Chinese deep culture. Because an individual's knowledge of their own culture is subjective they are often unable to stand back far enough to see it. These difficulties are magnified when attempting to understand other cultures.

Galtung identifies four stages of intercultural relations:

- Intolerance of the other culture – often expressed through violence
- Tolerance / passive multiculturalism – equal rights but little contact or understanding
- Active multiculturalism - curiosity and desire to learn about other cultures
- Transculturalism - dialogue and active learning.

3.2 Extracts from the Keynote Presentation by Johan Galtung at the UNESCO 2003 Conference on Intercultural Education: Teaching and Learning for Intercultural Understanding, Human Rights and a Culture of Peace Jyväskylä, 16 June 2003 are presented here.

Contribution by Alan Brown (2003): I have extracted some points that I thought might be of interest regarding the development of inter-cultural understanding. I wonder what people feel would be the basic stands of deep English, British or other cultures?

TEACHING AND LEARNING INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING: FINE, BUT HOW?

Extracts from Keynote by Johan Galtung at the UNESCO 2003 Conference on Intercultural Education: Teaching and Learning for Intercultural Understanding, Human Rights and a Culture of Peace Jyväskylä, 16 June 2003

Johan Galtung,
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Primary socialisation involves a child learning their parental language and absorbing aspects of culture. However, they may not even know their own culture; cultural skills not being the same as cultural knowledge. And, not knowing their own, how can they know other cultures?

Of course, living in another culture helps. Marrying into one even more so. Being a multicultural child can be a formula for multiple skills, enabling the child to use one culture to understand the others. But this may also become a source of multiple problems. The child may feel caught, trapped and comparisons may become invidious--which is the better language, culture?--rather than enjoying the privilege of being multi-cultural in a very multicultural world.

Being a student of deep culture and its implications for the culture of peace, I was once asked to characterise the basic strands in deep Russian culture, the Russian Leitmotif. I identified three such themes:

- Dualism, there are only two possibilities, one right, one wrong;
- Verticality, which one to choose will be decided high up;
- Pessimism, it is not going to work anyhow.

The Russians had no difficulty identifying with this somewhat short summary of Russian history, and asked about the USA. My answers:

- Dualism, philosophically equally unsophisticated;
- Horizontality, a cult of equality, sharing risks, costs, gains;
- Optimism, a sense of being blessed, this will work out!

Needless to say, comparing the two sets of triple themes the USA will easily come out as more dynamic, trapped by their optimism to make grave mistakes, but also inspired to try again, and again.

And China? they asked, the enigma with which they share 10,000 kilometres border. My answers:

- Ying/yang, good and bad, bad in the good and good in the bad;
- Verticality, when to change course will be decided high up;
- Pragmatism, let us see how it works and change course if needed.

Others will answer such exercises differently. The point I am making is that we shall never take it for granted that we understand any culture, that there is more than one deep reading of them, and when it comes to our own culture the price paid for perfect practice is highly imperfect, even absent, theory. This is particularly important because we are approaching taboo zones because culture is so important in our identity and our identity so important in our ego. This is also for a lack of reflection, sustained by a lack of solid knowledge.

I define the deep culture of a gender, a generation, a class, a nation, a state, a civilisation, a region as the collective, meaning shared, subconscious - the rules that do not pass through the head brain, but are well anchored in the gut brain.

The role is basic: Culture informs us what is right and wrong. Culture legitimises and delegitimises, action, including verbal action, speech - maybe also thought!? -- states of affairs, things, artefacts,

anything. Culture is found in the symbolic aspect of our existence, in language and religion, art and law, science and technology. And culture can take the form of surface culture known to all of us, like spoken and written language; and deep culture we have to struggle to get to know, like the deep structure of language, of this or that language, of any language.

Sun Tzu's famous dictum that the key to victory is to know not only Other but also Self, points to the value of intercultural and intra-cultural understanding. Other cultures can be a mirror to help us understand our own cultures better. Thus, some cultures celebrate the individual and others the collectivity, I-cultures and we-cultures. Both see themselves as normal and natural. An I-culture Westerner will be deeply struck by how different we-culture Japan is, and vice versa. They may stop at that point, but also use that insight to see deeper into their own Self.

Such processes underlie the four stages in intercultural relations: intolerance; tolerance or passive multiculturalism; dialogue or active multiculturalism; trans-culturalism.

- The first stage can include direct violence, hurting/harming, even exterminating with culture as the criterion - often engaged in by people high on CGT; or be based on the typical nation-state structural violence of dominant/majority over minority cultures.
- The second stage gives other cultures (at least close to) equal rights. But there is little contact, dialogue, mutual learning.
- That comes in the third stage, based on curiosity.
- The fourth stage, with cultures coexisting in dialogue and active learning inside the same person, is the most interesting. We refer to this as trans-culturalism, which has the same relation to multi- and intercultural as trans-disciplinarity has to multi-and inter-disciplinarity.

Section 4: Research findings on vocational guidance for the disadvantaged

This section contains a series of research papers on vocational guidance for the disadvantaged. In addition to the papers given below, you may also wish to explore these related links:

4.1 Social exclusion, vocational guidance and access

[Opening Doors: Social exclusion, vocational guidance and access](#) (a course in access issues)

See also: Pamela M Clayton, Silvana Greco, Eija Mäkelä and Mary Ward (1999) The provision of vocational guidance and counselling for disadvantaged adults in four European countries: A critical review, Widening participation and lifelong learning, volume 1, part 3.

4.2 Literature Review: IAG for disadvantaged adults.

Considering research into a range of inequalities and disadvantage, one obvious point is that a problem facing much target-group specific research is the danger of stereotyping individuals with any one particular disadvantage.

In a literature review on research on IAG for disadvantaged adults ('disadvantage' itself being a problematic word), Hawthorn et al. (2002) covered research on 13 different kinds of difficulty faced by people 'no one single strategy is going to help older people, who can differ from each other by education, or skill and experience level, or by physical and mental health, by ethnicity/culture, gender, or social class, and by just how old they are (there's a big difference between 45 and 70, and 90) and whether they consider themselves retired or still seeking work (which can be completely independent of age). Any provision based on the assumption that older people conform to a single stereotype is likely to fail to help most of them' (p 21).

And the same is true for research into their needs: 'in the case of all these groups, research on need, and of the effectiveness of different interventions, is scarce. From some studies, we can conclude that outreach, on-going support, a holistic approach, and involving the clients themselves in planning provision, are key elements in successful practice, but little work exists that quantifies this or offers a theoretical analysis. Research is needed that takes this forward' (Hawthorn et al. 2002).

The conclusions of the study emphasised:

- the need to encourage people to publish the very local 'domestic' research carried out as part of evaluations, local mapping exercises, small action research projects and so on. Because it is usually done for a sponsor people don't tend to think of the possible wider readership. There may sometimes be very real issues of confidentiality or market sensitive information, but this is not always true.
- the potential of evaluation budgets often attached to project funding to construct a piece of research that would be self-standing.

The target groups covered by the review were:

- those with learning difficulties
- those with disabilities

- those with basic skills difficulties, including people with English language needs
- those with low or outdated skills
- older people
- labour market returners
- offenders and ex-offenders
- those living in areas of high unemployment and social deprivation
- people living in remote rural areas, or other areas with poor public transport links
- people experiencing disadvantage deriving from race
- people experiencing disadvantage deriving from gender
- people recovering from mental illness
- refugees and asylum-seekers.

Key issues emerging from the review:

- awareness of IAG services among adults is often lacking;
- the term 'guidance' appears to have little meaning for those who are regarded as potential clients. This is important, especially where 'hard to reach' groups are being targeted, as it points up the significance of using more 'meaningful' language when seeking to encourage access;
- for most the main reason for seeking guidance provision is the belief that it may help them to enhance their job prospects. This refers both to those who are seeking work, and those in employment who are seeking a better job;
- employers were found to play a key role in the current provision of IAG;
- perceptions of the effectiveness of the guidance intervention appear to be more positive for those in employment, than for those not in work;
- there are concerns over the tendency for funding mechanisms, with in-built outcome targets, to be the overriding factor in driving practice, sometimes to the detriment of effective collaborative working;
- the distribution of funding is seen to be patchy and insufficient.

Overall, the review has shown that in terms of disadvantaged adults, while there is a considerable literature, much of which is research-based, that focuses on educational provision and the propensity of the target groups to participate in learning, little attention is paid to the IAG component of that process. This is despite the fact that help may constitute the first and most significant step in initiating participation. Thus, further research is needed that concentrates on the role and effectiveness of guidance.

Models of practice

Among the individual models of practice mentioned in the literature, the following areas may warrant further consideration:

- Models of the role of IAG Partnerships in co-ordinating the support activities of a range of agencies.
- The value of working with the members of specific target groups to identify what they want, rather than making assumptions on their behalf
- The identification of issues, criteria and agreements which are conducive to effective collaborative working.
- The recognition of the need for adopting a holistic approach to supporting disadvantaged adults.
- The potential for IAG Partnerships, Local Learning and Skills Councils and Local Learning Partnerships to foster training and quality improvement.
- The development of a model of working with client groups, whose members will have varying degrees of need, whereby individuals are filtered through a system that offers them appropriate help ranging from the basic provision at one end of the scale, to the allocation of intensive specialist support at the other.

Reference

- Hawthorn, R, Maguire, M and Haughton, L (2002), Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults in Key Target Groups: a Literature Review. Winchester: The Guidance Council.