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Career Research & Development

The NICEC Journal

making practice thoughtful and theory practical

Cover photos (top to bottom)

Participants at the NICEC Cutting Edge II conference in Coventry, April 2003:

Cathy Bereznicki (Guidance Council) & Geoff Ford (NICEC)

Lynn Barham (NICEC) and Malcolm Maguire (NICEC)

Alan Vincent (NACGT) and Sylvia Thomson (NACGT)

John Killeen (NICEC)

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VT Careers Management

Career Research and Development: the NICEC Journal is published on behalf of NICEC by VT Careers Management. VT Careers Management is a major provider of career guidance to young people in the south-east as well as a publisher of careers materials and software products.

Aims and scope

Career Research and Development 'the NICEC Journal' is published for:

- Career practitioners working in schools, colleges, connexions partnerships, higher education careers services, adult guidance agencies, companies, community organisations, etc.
- Trainers, lecturers, advisers and consultants working with career practitioners.
- Individuals working towards qualifications in career education, career guidance and career management.
- Government departments and business and community organisations with an interest in the work of career practitioners.

It sets out to:

- Promote evidence-based practice by making theory, policy and the results of research and development more accessible to career practitioners in their day-to-day work.
- Encourage discussion and debate of current issues in career research and development.
- Disseminate good practice.
- Support continuing professional development for career practitioners.
- Help practitioners to develop and manage career education and guidance provision in the organisations in which they work.

EDITORIAL

A Celebration of the Work of John Killeen

Tony Watts and Ruth Hawthorn

This issue of the NICEC journal is devoted to a celebration of the work of John Killeen, who so sadly died in December 2003. John's contribution to the field of career guidance was considerable, as a Fellow of NICEC, as a teacher at the University of Hertfordshire, and in his work with the Policy Studies Institute. If he had been able to complete his own career, he would undoubtedly have made even more of an impact. This is particularly true at a time when both policy-makers and practitioners are paying increasing attention to the evidence base for their work.

The main article is an extract from a NICEC report prepared in summer 2003 for the Guidance Council. The extract is John's overview of the nature of guidance evaluation and how it should be done: it reflects his strong views on the subject, and the commitment to clarity and rigour that we will so sorely miss. It is John's last completed work. It is salutary to realise that no-one else in the UK could have written an article on this topic with such authority, based on such a wide range of experience and knowledge.

There follow an account of John's career, and a series of articles by people who worked with him. These include research collaborators (Jenny Kidd, Michael White), research students (Malcolm Hunt, Gudbjörg Vilhjálmsdóttir), a research contractor (Gareth Dent) and NICEC colleagues (Ruth Hawthorn, Bill Law). A list of John's publications is added: this is used as the reference list for the other articles. Finally, with permission from John's family, we have included the moving eulogy delivered at his funeral by his son Joe.

When John died, many other people wrote to express what they felt about John and his work. Three representative ones will have to suffice here. Allister McGowan (Chief Executive of VT Careers Management Ltd. and a NICEC Associate) wrote:

> 'I will remember John as a rigorously stringent researcher with meticulous standards and attention to detail, all combined with warmth and a real understanding of the issues as they impacted upon the "sharp" (practitioner) end. As a profession we will miss him.'

Lynne Bezanson (Executive Director of the Canadian Career Development Foundation, and a NICEC Overseas Fellow) wrote:

> 'I have loved everything I have read by him.'

Professor Ed Herr (Pennsylvania State University, USA, and a NICEC Overseas Fellow) wrote:

> 'Although I did not know John personally – our relationship was primarily one of periodic correspondence about areas of mutual interest and my reading of his excellent scholarship – I had great respect for him and his work. Even in our correspondence, he seemed to be a very cordial, kind and interesting companion.... He is irreplaceable.'

We too think John is irreplaceable, as a researcher, writer, teacher and colleague. We hope that this collection demonstrates why.

Evaluation: Principles and Starting Points

John Killeen, Senior Fellow, National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling

In summer 2003, the Guidance Council (with funding from the Department for Education and Skills) commissioned a report from NICEC to inform the early work of the new National Guidance Research Forum. The aim was to 'map' what research had already been done and who were the main players, and also what could be learned from existing research so that new work could build on what was known. With only two months to produce a report that could have taken a year or two, the editors addressed the challenge by suggesting a structure which the Forum might want to sustain, showing active research and funding agencies as well as identifying existing knowledge and good practice in individual areas of interest. NICEC members with expertise in particular fields were invited to provide statements on relevant work, within a common framework. John Killeen provided two of these sections (as well as other parts of the full report), and the first is reprinted here. His contributions to the report (Hawthorn, Killeen, Kidd & Watts, 2003) represented his last published work. This section in particular reflects many of the qualities which his colleagues and readers so valued. It is reprinted here with permission from the DfES and the Guidance Council.

I. What is it?

An extremely high proportion of all of the research done into guidance is 'evaluation', in the sense that it attempts to answer questions bearing upon effectiveness. But although there are quite a few guidance evaluators, their activities are so disparate that they do not form a coherent group with a common approach or shared literature. Moreover, many of them do not think of themselves in this way, despite the fact that at least part of the research they do is classifiable as evaluation.

Part of the reason for diversity is that guidance evaluation is conducted by people with very different kinds of expertise. In the UK, some of it is by *guidance practitioners* who are more or less consciously 'reflective practitioners', but not counselling psychologists. Some is by *expert ex-practitioners* whose style owes more than a little to the tradition of inspection in the public services. Quality standards are likely to have been written by similar kinds of people and tend to harmonise their criteria of judgement. In each case the fundamental working assumption is likely to be that guidance is a good thing (just as an OFSTED inspector might assume the value of education), but that it can be done more or less well, appropriately, and so on. These evaluators may use data collection techniques characteristic of social research, such as the 'semi-structured interview' and 'structured questionnaire', but few would claim to be expert in research methodology.

Ignoring the middle ground, one may characterise many others as having *research* expertise at the centre of what they do, to which may be added a research-based, rather than a practice-based, understanding of the world of employment, education, training, and guidance. Some claim expertise in 'qualitative'[1] techniques, and others in 'quantitative'[2] ones, whereas most research organisations of any size are able to combine both approaches in particular studies. The most difficult aspect of evaluation methodology is, however, the application of causal and statistical inference to the task of testing and quantifying effectiveness. People steeped in these methods take it as axiomatic that guidance is only a good thing if we can convincingly reject the null hypothesis that it is not. It is, therefore, difficult to understate the differences in mentality and the possibilities for mutual misunderstanding which exist amongst 'evaluators'.

In addition, various schisms occur, particularly in academia, so that, for example, 'top-down' evaluation, or the application of causal and statistical inference, are rejected, or through the insistence that evaluation should really be a place to do critical sociology, constructivist psychology, or whatever else it is that the person in question would rather do. However, the influence of such currents of thought on evaluation is not great.

[1] The term 'qualitative' is often used simply to mean 'non-statistical', although counts or other indications of magnitude (e.g. 'most', 'about half', 'few') may be reported. In routine social research practice, 'qualitative research' tends to mean case studies and the study of small samples. In this context, 'qualitative data' usually consists of the text of collected documents, records of observations and transcripts of 'open' questioning. Analysis consists of extracting meaning from text. Computer programs exist to aid this, but often go unused. The analytical process must usually be taken on trust. Not to be confused with what statisticians call 'qualitative data' (see note 2).

[2] In the social sciences, 'quantitative research' is that which involves measuring variables, usually in sizeable samples, for the purpose of subsequent statistical analysis. This can be in the context of an experiment, survey, etc. The variables can include what statisticians call 'qualitative data' (e.g. attributes such as male/female or experimental/control subject; or ordered attributes such as job satisfaction).

In this section we shall consider research associated with 'summative' evaluation, which examines the success of an intervention, initiative or organisation in achieving its goals, and any unintended benefits or dis-benefits it brings about.

Future reviews could focus in more depth on:

- Formative evaluation, or, evaluation intended to provide feedback whilst an intervention or initiative is under development or an organisation finds ways to achieve its goals.
- Evaluation of quality through the use of 'standards', which is to say assessment of the extent to which an intervention, practitioner, initiative or organisation meets good practice criteria.

Summative evaluation examines the success of an intervention or organisation in achieving its goals, whereas formative evaluation provides feedback whilst the means of doing so are developed. In practice, evaluation can involve a little of each.

At the heart of summative evaluation in guidance lies the intention to measure the *effects* or *impact* of interventions, or of the funding programmes through which they are delivered. There are two broad approaches to this task.

The first may be called 'interpretative'. Characteristically, it:

- is conducted and reported in relatively short time-scales;
- may be wholly 'qualitative' in character (e.g. reliant on small-sample, semi-structured interview and focus group data) or may gather 'quantitative' data from participants (e.g. from structured questionnaires completed by sizeable samples of service users);
- often occurs at the pilot stage of a new programme or as a small study for local accountability purposes;
- may also include a formative element;
- often gives at least as much attention to processes as outcomes;
- reports participant judgements about impact and makes more or less forensic use of participants' perceptions in order to form its own judgements about impact.

Thus, satisfaction ratings may be elicited and guidance clients may be asked to *attribute* effects to their guidance. Other participants and stakeholders, including practitioners, may also be asked to make these judgements, and evaluators may use information taken, ultimately, from participants' perceptions to construct critical judgements of their own.

EXAMPLE: 'INTERPRETATIVE' EVALUATION (ROLFE, 2000)

In 1997/98, DfEE funded 23 pilot projects intended to help young people in school to use labour market information (LMI). This was an evaluation of four pilot projects which were developing means to make customised LMI more accessible to young people, their advisers, teachers and parents. It was, therefore, partially formative in intent, consisting both of 'process' and 'impact' evaluation.

Impact was assessed in three localities, by holding group discussions and conducting depth interviews with Year 10 and Year 11 pupils, and by holding meetings and conducting interviews with participant teachers, careers advisers and others. These obtained self-report and opinion data, and looked for other evidence of impact.

It was reported, *inter alia*, that teachers and advisers had become more aware of LMI, that teachers needed LMI training and that a shortage of materials for special needs pupils had been made good. However, assessment of a key criterion, 'improved decision making', proved problematic. This was, in part, because young people learned how to access LMI, but made limited use of it outside classes.

Evaluation of this sort can provide useful management information and help practitioners reflect on their work. It can tell us whether clients and other participants believed they were helped by an intervention, and offer a *prima facie* case that it had particular effects. It can even provide evidence of how guidance helped particular people towards particular goals, as surely as one might establish in a court of law that the 9.30 from Euston took the defendant to Glasgow. But claims to identify impact in this way are insufficient, judged against the criterion of *additionality*, since there are other ways to reach Glasgow.

The second major form of guidance evaluation reserves the terms 'effect' and 'impact' for *changed probabilities of outcomes* or *changed probabilities of outcomes of given magnitudes*. This is often called 'quantitative' evaluation, in the sense that it seeks to quantify effects or impact defined in this way.

In order to measure effects or impact in this sense, it is necessary to compare the outcome for people exposed to guidance, or to a particular form of guidance, or to delivery under a particular funding programme ('treated'[3] subjects) to what the outcome *would have been*, if they had either remained untreated, or had been treated in another way. These

[3] Although the term 'treatment' comes from medical research, it is now used in a generic manner.

alternative futures clearly cannot be observed and must be estimated. The estimated outcome in the absence of treatment is called the 'counterfactual' ('counter' to what actually happened). Most of us are familiar with this in the form of a *control group outcome*; but, where this is not available, other ways of specifying the counterfactual are needed. The more general position is that we need to avoid doing this in a way that biases the estimate of effectiveness *within* the study.

Sometimes the intention is merely to demonstrate that a guidance intervention or programme *can* work. But we may want to *generalise*, which is to use the effects measured in a study to obtain estimates of effectiveness 'out there in the real world'. In principle, this can be divided into three parts: first, we may estimate the effect on currently treated subjects who are *like those in the study*[4]; second, we may estimate the effect on *all* current users or participants[5]; and third, we may estimate how much currently *eligible, but untreated,* people would benefit, if they were to participate[6]. These can all differ, because the people we study may not be representative of current participants, and current participants may differ from 'eligible but untreated' people.

There are two main branches of summative, quantitative guidance evaluation, which tend to get their counterfactuals in different ways. The first is composed of experimental trials which are methodologically similar to medical trials. In practice, this method is applied as follows:

- it is usually reserved to the study of very tightly defined guidance methods - often innovations;
- samples are usually small;
- outcomes tend to be assessed only over the short term;
- these are commonly learning and psychological outcomes rather than effects on careers.

Random assignment to the treatment and to a control (untreated) group, and/or to a group given an alternative treatment, is the paradigm method. This is because randomly assigned samples from the same pool are free of sample selection bias with respect to one another. Hence, we are on reasonably firm ground when we conclude that there was or was not an effect, or that there was a given size of effect, *within* any given study. However, guidance experimentalists are seldom concerned to generalise and to estimate effects in the world beyond themselves.

WHAT IS A RANDOM SAMPLE?

When every member of the intended study population is given an equal probability of entering a sample, this is called a 'simple random sample'. 'Random ' does not mean 'casual': selection at random generally means that the whole population under consideration must be listed and every sample member selected from it by a specially-devised, lottery-like, 'random' method, so as to give each member of the population an equal probability of being drawn. A random sample is, by definition, unbiased. On the other hand, an 'opportunity sample' is one assembled on the basis of convenience (e.g. when all of the students in a class are treated as a sample of the student population, or when twenty people found in the street are treated as a sample of 'the population'). An opportunity sample is not a random sample and one can never be sure that it is unbiased.

In a randomised controlled trial, two samples are drawn from the same pool, one to be 'treated' (the 'experimental sample') and the other to act as an 'untreated', control sample. People are drawn so that they have an equal probability of entering either sample: they are 'randomly assigned', and 'sample selection bias' is avoided *within* the trial. But what of the pool from which they are taken? Perhaps the pool is a random sample of the relevant population? If so, the experimental and control samples are also random samples of, and unbiased representations of, that population. But perhaps the pool is an 'opportunity' pool (e.g. the students of a single class, when the population of interest is all students of this type)? Neither sample is randomly drawn from the whole, relevant client population. Generalisation of results beyond the experiment, to clients in general, becomes problematic. Most 'randomised controlled trials' of guidance are like this.

[4] Called the 'local average treatment effect' - the effect on the population of which those in the study are an unbiased sample. See Imbens & Angrist (1994).

[5] Called the 'average treatment effect on the treated'.

[6] Called the 'average treatment effect on the untreated'.

EXAMPLE: RANDOM ASSIGNMENT TRIAL (AUSTIN & GRANT, 1981)

The authors looked at the effect of interview skill training on 60 first-generation college students who were intending to seek work. Students were randomly assigned to groups of ten which received:

(a) didactic instruction;

(b) (a) + mock interview;

(c) (a) + professional videotape;

(d) (a) + self-video;

(e) (d) with feedback.

There was also a no-treatment control group.

The outcome measure was a judge-rated simulated job interview score.

All the treatments were found equally effective, yielding significant gains in mean scores relative to the no-treatment controls. Note the very small samples and the way in which everything hinges on just ten control subjects. To be statistically significant, differences have to be quite large when such tiny samples are compared. But also note the absence of an explicit 'placebo' treatment.

Of course, studies designed to be randomised trials may not actually achieve their ends. The most common problem is sample attrition, where individuals drop out, possibly for a reason relevant to the study's parameters. This can lead to *attrition bias*, which is a form of *sample selection bias*. Attrition is very common. For example, Whiston *et al.* (1998) assessed 70% of recent US trials to have 'attrition problems' above the mid-point of their rating scale.

EXAMPLE: NON EQUIVALENT GROUPS DESIGN (LENT, LARKIN & HASEGAWA, 1986)

This evaluation of a focused-interest career course for science and engineering undergraduates involved 54 science and engineering students and ten controls. The controls were students who had withdrawn from the course prior to the first session. The course offered ten sessions, each lasting 1 hour 45 minutes. Students were tested before and after the course, and the outcome measures were:

Decidedness;

Career Development Survey (CDS) scores for Self-Knowledge (interests values, skills) and Knowledge of Information;

Career information-seeking behaviour.

All tested positive; that is, the course was concluded to be effective. But the control group was self-selected, being made up of people who decided not to do the course. So it was not possible to assume that samples started out at the same level. When this is so, 'before-and-after' testing is of special importance. One looks for significantly larger *gains* in the experimental sample than in the control sample.

Studies which *look like* randomised trials are sometimes done by treating one pre-existing group, such as a school class or the clients of a particular agency, and using another pre-existing group as the 'control group'. Taken on their own, studies of this sort *are not an adequate substitute* for randomised trials because they are subject to sample selection bias. But providing that *groups* can be randomly assigned to the treatment and control conditions, and more groups can be added, studies like this can *become* adequate as the sample of *groups* increases in size. Although sufficiently sizeable single studies of this sort are not actually done, all is not lost, since the results of many small studies can be pooled (together with those of randomised trials). This pooling of results is called 'meta-analysis'.

The second main type of quantitative summative research is non-experimental and *ex post facto*. Much UK guidance evaluation which involves comparison to the counterfactual is of this type. In general, these studies:

- are into provision or programmes 'on the ground';
- are performed with negligible control over events, notably over who does and does not get guidance;
- may need to be planned into programmes so that appropriate data can be collected as they go along (e.g. from clients before guidance) and, if necessary, before programmes begin - studies are sometimes undermined by the failure to do so;
- are designed from the outset on the assumption that samples are non-random;
- tend to take a 'black box' approach to the actual character of the guidance given, which may be quite heterogeneous;
- often examine public provision from a public-policy perspective.

EXAMPLE: META-ANALYSIS (SPOKANE & OLIVER), 1983; OLIVER & SPOKANE, 1988; WHISTON, SEXTON & LASOFF, 1998)

Meta-analysis reports the combined results of many studies succinctly. Sometimes, the samples of a few similar studies are simply pooled for re-analysis, but in these meta-analyses the characteristics and results of each study form a 'case' in a new analysis.

Each study outcome is converted to an 'effect size' estimate. 'Effect size' is the treated outcome measured in untreated sample standard deviations. This allows one to compare impacts, irrespective of the nature of the outcome variable. But the *value* of an effect depends on what is measured in this way.

The three most important guidance meta-analyses form a series covering 105 studies over a period of approximately fifty years. Spokane & Oliver (1983) was elaborated with some additions as Oliver & Spokane (1988). Whiston *et al.* (1998) considered studies published in the period 1983-1995, taking up where the earlier analyses left off.

Amongst many other things they show that, per session or per hour, one-to-one interventions out-perform group interventions, which out-perform counsellor-free ones. But note that cost-benefit analysis ranks methods differently, and that the criteria of assessment (and value of what is assessed) and types of client are not held constant in this analysis. And, of course, counsellor-free CAGS have advanced in sophistication since most of the studies included were performed.

Sometimes, 'follow-up' studies are conducted in which the counterfactual is merely the starting position of those given guidance[7]. *Ex post facto* studies which make a more serious attempt to estimate the counterfactual are less common. This is because they demand large samples, are difficult to implement and are expensive. Like controlled trials, they make comparisons between people who get guidance and people who do not, or between people who get differing types or amounts of guidance. But as these people are not randomly assigned, *samples are biased with respect to one another* and this bias must be removed. Studies of this kind are, therefore, as good as our understanding of this bias: which is to say, of the factors other than guidance which influence the outcome and which also lead some people to be exposed to guidance whereas others are not.

Armed with this information, we can measure the relevant factors so as to adjust the comparison of treated and untreated samples, providing that there is an adequate overlap - in terms of these factors - between them. This is not the place to enter into the complications and difficulties associated with statistical approaches to this task. Suffice it that, in the past, this was usually attempted by 'regression adjustment' (e.g. Killeen, 1996), but an alternative, called 'propensity score matching', has recently been implemented in the UK (Killeen & White, 2000). This sort of methodology is commonly applied in the evaluation of programmes or funding regimes which have been implemented on a fairly widespread basis. There is generally some attempt to make the treated sample representative of the existing population of people receiving the treatment under consideration. The estimates of the effect of treatment obtained from them are closer to the world of everyday practice than are those which come from small, experimental, demonstration projects.

EXAMPLE: PROPENSITY SCORE MATCHING (KILLEEN & WHITE, 2000)

Note that the method is described here in very simple fashion. Essentially it involves: (a) building a statistical model which discriminates those who participate in guidance; (b) assigning a probability of using guidance from that model to all who did so (not all users are equally probable users); (c) using the same model to assign probabilities of use to those who did not use it; (d) matching non-users to users by their probability of use; and (e) comparing outcomes. This uses the same variables which conventional methods control by regression.

Occasionally in public-policy evaluation research *the counterfactual is defined for a 'super-unit'*. This means thinking of guidance as if it were injected into an organisation or community in the hope that changes in that organisation or community will result. The essential point is that success is not judged against what happens to the individuals who receive guidance, but to what happens to the organisations or communities into which it is introduced. Of course, if done on a randomised basis with adequately sizeable samples of organisations or communities, studies of this sort would belong in the first of our main categories; but, in practice, they are not. The main problem is that evaluators may choose to study 'hard' effects on *rates,* such as a reduction of the course-switching rate in an educational institution or in the local unemployment rate, when it is already known to be difficult to establish corresponding effects at the *individual* level (see later) and when there is no rationale for effects on rates other than through effects on the individuals to whom guidance is given. So, even well-conducted studies taking variables such as local employment rates as outcome measures are unlikely to make convincing demonstrations of effectiveness.

[7] This is called a 'pre-post-test' design, i.e. outcome variables are measured before and after the intervention, and no untreated sample is available for comparison. This is fine in circumstances where the outcome without 'treatment' is certain, but potentially very misleading where it is not.

To summarise, summative guidance evaluation consists mainly of the following:

i. Interpretative evaluation, frequently reliant on small-sample, 'qualitative' participant opinion data. Often concerned also with process issues. But note that intensive studies of this sort can point to the data which should be gathered by the quantitative evaluator and elucidate quantitative findings. This is why it may be included as a stage or element in quantitative evaluation studies.

ii. Quantitative evaluation, which has the central task of *testing against the counterfactual* in order to produce *estimates of the sizes of guidance effects*. There is no necessary connection between detailed methodological approach and detailed purpose, but empirically they are associated, so that there are two main sub-groups:

- Experimental evaluation, consisting of randomised controlled trials and other deliberately contrived experimental studies which, by design or unintentionally, depart from this paradigm. Characteristic of US counselling psychology. Samples usually small. Commonly used to study tightly-defined guidance methods - often innovations.

- *Ex post facto* evaluation of guidance 'as it is' on the ground, whether in the form of a pilot or not. Usually the study of publicly-financed services from a public-policy perspective. Methods by which the counterfactual is specified vary from the over-simplistic, to the use of advanced statistical methods on large samples to compare treated to untreated outcomes. An implicit or explicit aim is to generalise those estimates.

2. Who does it and who funds it?

Most experimental trials of guidance techniques are conducted as a branch of applied psychology and as academic, university-based research. Most of them take place and are published in the USA, by counselling psychologists who specialise in career counselling and by their postgraduate students. The senior figure is sometimes the originator of the technique under evaluation. Such research is conducted on a similar basis, but in much smaller quantity, in Canada, Australia and the UK (e.g. by university teachers of occupational and organisational psychology, or in education departments, and by postgraduate students who may be practitioners).

The disparity in output between the USA and the UK is much larger than would be expected due to their relative size. This is because guidance institutions and their connection to applied psychology have not evolved in the UK in the same way or to the same extent as in the USA. The cause, or consequence, or both is, in summary, that a 'medical model' of innovations in treatments, mostly made in the graduate teaching institutions, tested in trials and disseminated to colleagues and junior practitioners through channels owned and operated by the profession itself, seems more plausible there than here. UK attempts to stimulate evidence-based practice and practitioner research are unlikely to lead to a US-style outcome whilst large institutional differences remain.

Research of this sort is often not specifically funded. In the UK, studies of this sort have only very seldom been conducted by postgraduates supported by the ESRC. The costs of postgraduate study are generally met by the individuals concerned or by their employers. Beyond this, postgraduate costs and academic time are met through general subventions to higher education (HEFCE etc.).

The forms of summative evaluation most widespread in the UK are 'interpretative' studies and quantitative, but *ex post facto*, non-experimental studies. The former are somewhat more associated with 'local' and 'pilot' evaluation, and the latter with 'pilots', 'national pilots' and 'national' evaluation. On occasion, government initiatives have been delivered by local bodies which, contractually, have both undertaken local evaluations and forwarded statistical information to be concerted by a national contractor into a national evaluation, with the intention that the latter should be the basis of impact assessment. Experiences of this model have not been entirely happy.

The contractors which undertake evaluations of each kind include units in universities and colleges (e.g. in the University of London Institute of Education or the Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby) and national research institutes such as the Tavistock Institute, the Policy Studies Institute, the Institute for Employment Studies, the Institute for Employment Research, and the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling, which may be connected, in some way, to a university, whilst having an independent legal status. These organisations specialise in knowledge of substantive topics and aspects of policy, and in research design and analysis. They commonly conduct qualitative research fieldwork and postal surveys themselves, but do not seek to be providers of mass telephone or personal interviews.

Sub-contracting of fieldwork is therefore common in studies of large samples. This is to market and opinion research organisations such as NFO System Three (formerly PAS), BMRB and MORI, which maintain national 'field forces' of interviewers. Some, like MORI, compete directly for 'social' and hence, upon occasion, guidance survey research contracts[8] of a sort which might otherwise go to organisations like the National Centre for Social Research (formerly SCPR). City consultancy companies (e.g. Coopers and Lybrand) have conducted evaluations on behalf of government departments. Some of these bodies become involved in local evaluation, but the reality is that this is often on too small a scale to be financially viable.

[8] e.g. MORI (1996).

There is a long tail of consultants, small market research organisations, etc., each of which has conducted only one or two guidance evaluation studies, usually from scratch and with little or no awareness of or reference to the accumulated literature. The more 'local' the evaluation is, the more likely it is both that the organisations and consultants performing it are locally-based and that it is not widely disseminated, so that they and their work do not come into general view.

Most national evaluation is funded by government - usually, now, by the DfES, but also the DWP. However, numerous bodies supported by government such as the Learning and Skills Council and the Guidance Council are potential sponsors, acting as a conduit for government funds. At the local level, local authorities and major local bodies such as Local Learning and Skills Councils (or, in the past, the Training and Enterprise Councils) play a similar role.

However, it is very difficult to give a complete account, either nationally or locally, because guidance, conceptualised in a broad fashion - for example, to include careers education - is fairly ubiquitous. Hence, it can appear as *part of,* or at the edges of, numerous other objects of evaluation, such as New Deal (e.g. Winterbotham *et al.*, 2001), Sure Start, the work-related curriculum (Saunders *et al.*, 1997) and so on.

EXAMPLE: EVALUATION OF GUIDANCE AT THE EDGES OF SOMETHING ELSE (DEVINE, REID & THORPE, 1998)

Managed Effective Learning (MELSO) includes some shared elements with careers education and guidance: action planning for learning, use of adults other than teachers, and work experience enhanced to make it 'more meaningful' by emphasising its role in skill development. Devine *et al.* found enhanced work experience to be associated with higher self-reports in skill areas such as working individually, problem solving and taking responsibility. The study showed that certain outcomes are commonly attributed by participants to work experience and are enhanced if work experience is itself enhanced and structured[9].

3. How are research priorities identified?

Priorities are identified for different kinds of evaluation research in very different ways. Innovation in technique is often driven - especially in the USA - by trends in general psychology as applied to the psychology of careers. Other innovations derive from technological change such as the introduction of ICT, or institutional developments in education, and so forth. These provide new objects of evaluation. The usual motive for evaluation is to show they work, or work better than what they replace. However, more complicated questions can also be asked about client-treatment interactions, optimal treatments, cost effectiveness, etc. The main criteria of evaluation employed in such studies represent the concerns of practitioners with a psychological and/or educational approach: the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and attitudinal and other psychological changes.

In the UK, government policy tends to determine both the objects of evaluation (new programmes, or delivery under new funding regimes, in particular) and the criteria of evaluation. The pressure to assess 'hard' outcomes (e.g. effects on educational qualifications employment and wages) is considerable, since guidance institutions are subject to much central government direction and their funding is substantially by the state. The minimal position is that an adequate economic case must be made to the Treasury, since money spent on guidance is regarded as an investment and is money not spent on other priorities, such as health care[10]. Moreover, the case must be made repeatedly, as the socio-economic context changes and political values are contested.

Developments in *how* research is done and, especially, how non-experimental quantitative evaluation is to be undertaken, arise in the policy research, methodological, statistical and econometric literature.

4. How is quality control exercised?

Formalised quality procedures by the organisations conducting research are easier to implement in relation to some aspects of it (e.g. mass fieldwork, coding) than others. The peer-reviewed journals tend to ensure minimum standards in the guidance evaluation research conducted from an academic, applied-psychological perspective. In the UK, policy evaluation research is sometimes subject to less effective peer review, as it is often not published in ways that invite it. But research commissioned by central government often has two 'clients': the operating arm of a government department which is responsible for the programme under evaluation; and an internal, specialist research and evaluation unit. This, coupled with competitive pressures, has the potential to increase adherence to minimum standards.

The greatest difficulties arise when buyers are naïve and researchers are not subject to scrutiny by peers. This most commonly occurs when local evaluation budgets are spent, although national organisations which are 'infrequent buyers' can get into a similar position.

[9] Previous studies and reviews of work experience tending to such conclusions include Conrad & Hedin (1981), Jamieson & Lightfoot, (1982), Sims (1987) and Saunders (1987).

[10] There is virtually no convincing, peer-reviewed evaluation of private-sector guidance, such as outplacement services, against 'hard' outcomes in the UK. Corporate buyers seem either content with the *a priori* case, or able to justify the expenditure in other ways.

5. How is it disseminated?

Much evaluation of spending programmes is not disseminated at all, but used by the funding agency, whether national or local, within a committee or governing body to justify the work done. There is a great waste of potential here, as large studies could be of considerable wider interest and small studies could be aggregated into meta-analyses. However, in the UK some is reported in the form of features in professional magazines such as *Newscheck*, or the magazines of the professional associations such as *Career Guidance Today*. Evaluations of the more structured kind carried out within the academic community are generally published as refereed articles in academic journals.

The main journals in the USA for controlled trial etc. evidence include:

Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin
Vocational Guidance Quarterly
Journal of Counseling Psychology
Journal of College Student Personnel
Journal of Career Education (NB: 'career education' in the USA includes, but goes well beyond, what we in the UK call 'careers education')
The Counseling Psychologist
Career Development Quarterly
Journal of Employment Counseling
Journal of Counseling and Development
Measurement and Evaluation in Guidance.

In the UK over the last two decades the main sources have been:

British Journal of Guidance and Counselling
DFES Research Reports (formerly *Employment Department,* then *DfEE, Research Series*).

And less often, sources such as:

Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology (formerly *Journal of Occupational Psychology*),
Journal of Education and Work.

Other non-UK sources include:

Australian Journal of Career Development
International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance
International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling.

In some cases, evaluation findings are disseminated through reports targeted at policy-makers and practitioners either in the form of more quickly digestible Briefings (e.g. those produced by the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling) or as monographs (such as the Occasional Papers produced by the Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby).

6. What sorts of things does it tell us?

UK studies which gather client feedback on guidance tend to paint a picture of satisfaction with services and increased confidence. Many clients feel able to attribute concrete outcomes to their guidance, such as enhanced search behaviour and entry into work, education or training. Of course, younger people, in particular, are more influenced by (Witherspoon, 1995), and tend to *say* (emphasis added) that they are more influenced by, their families, and that guidance institutions are only one of their channels to future opportunities. However, there is an element of oversimplification in such comparisons, as contemporary guidance agencies neither displace the family nor act as the principal gatekeepers of (most) education and work opportunities[11].

Most of the evidence which has been tested against the counterfactual case concerns the 'learning outcomes of guidance'. This is, in part, because learning outcomes occur in the short run, and the potential effect size is big, in comparison to things which are harder to do, such as get employment or enhance wages. For learning outcomes, there is usually no need for lengthy follow-up, samples can be small, and studies are relatively cheap and easy to do.

This is not a drawback: the study of learning outcomes is also consistent with the immediate objective of much guidance practice, which is to help people acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes which assist *their own* decision making, transition and other career behaviour[12].

For the reasons explained, most of the evidence comes from US controlled-trial studies of specific treatments. Samples tend to be drawn inside the US education system, although important studies of adult samples have occurred (notably, studies of adults on welfare and of other disadvantaged groups). Reviews (e.g. Killeen & Kidd, 1991) show that on a simple 'vote counting' basis, gains are much more frequently reported than null results in each of these categories. Meta-analyses (e.g. Spokane & Oliver, 1983; Oliver & Spokane, 1988; Whiston, Sexton & Lasoff; 1998) tend to confirm this. There is also evidence of effects on associated behaviour, notably on information search.

But from the perspective of policy, learning outcomes are means, not ends. Robust evidence about outcomes corresponding directly to the objectives of policy, especially educational motivation, participation and attainment, employment and wage effects, is scarce. Some of the evidence comes from controlled-trials of specific treatments. But long-term randomised trials of guidance encounter formidable difficulties (e.g. sample attrition; 'contamination' of control samples) and have not been regarded as a priority by relevant

[11] And to the extent that guidance institutions do play a gatekeeper role, the task of estimating their 'effects' on education, training and/or employment becomes more difficult.

[12] There have been many attempts to classify the learning outcomes typically assessed in guidance research, e.g. Killeen & Kidd (1991).

government departments. Thus, evidence often comes from studies of general samples of clients who are compared to eligible but untreated people in a manner statistically adjusted in order to compensate for the absence of random assignment. The difficulty, size, duration and cost of such studies militate against their frequent undertaking.

UK studies have demonstrated positive effects on participation in education and training, both by employed (Killeen & White, 2000) and unemployed adults (Killeen, 1996). If this is the main effect of public provision to adults in the UK, any effects on adult employment and wages are likely to emerge only after quite a long delay - they have yet to be shown. However, studies of intensive guidance interventions with a strong emphasis on supported job search have been conducted in the UK, US and Finland, with mixed results. The best-designed studies have shown the effectiveness of intensive guidance interventions designed to help get people off welfare and into work (e.g. US 'job clubs' - Azrin *et al.*, 1980; 1981; Finnish 'guidance courses' - Vuori & Vesalainen, 1999). There are also hints in the US research that comprehensive guidance programmes in schools may have a small effect on factors such as grades and the perceived value of education as an investment for the future (Lapan, Gysbers & Sun, 1997). UK efforts to use existing general-purpose data sets - notably the Youth Cohort Surveys - to estimate guidance effects have proved disappointing, and those conducting such analyses take the view that they tell us more about the way guidance is distributed than about what it does (e.g. Howieson & Croxford, 1997).

7. What is wrong with it and what should be done?

Perhaps the biggest problem facing guidance evaluation in the UK is that so few people ostensibly responsible for it, either as buyers or sellers of research, are aware of the accumulated body of knowledge. There is quite rapid turnover of the people who commission and undertake guidance evaluation research. This means that it lacks a collective memory. This leads, in turn, to a tendency to assume that effects are easily demonstrated. Thus research designs are too frequently inappropriate to achieve their ambitions.

Three fundamental tasks remain paramount for all forms of evaluation. First, to test the null hypothesis (to establish that there *are* effects); second, to test for significant difference between the effect sizes of alternative treatments and treatments for different kinds of people; and third, to improve specification of the counterfactual.

It might be thought that, from the perspective of public policy, it is only a short step to attach monetary values, both to the effects and to the costs of guidance. But cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit are seldom calculated. Indeed, there is only one widely-available set of calculations of cost-effectiveness (Spokane & Oliver, 1983, in which the cost of guidance, but not the monetary value of effects, was taken into account). One of the reasons for the absence of cost-benefit calculations is, of course, that those who commission empirical studies do not frame the issue in these terms. It is also likely that, should they do so, it would be difficult to impute monetary values to the so-called 'soft' outcomes commonly measured in guidance evaluation research. Another reason is that, so far as 'hard' outcomes are concerned, such as employment and wage effects, we are really only now beginning to comprehend just how much work must be done to establish reliable estimates of effects upon which cost-benefit calculations should be based.

Too many resources for guidance evaluation are 'wasted', with results generally useable only for the immediate organisation concerned and sometimes not even that. They have nothing to add to the accumulated body of research. We are too dependent for good quality evidence upon the USA, where things are so different that it is, similarly, doubtful how far we should generalise to the UK. In the UK we often say that controlled trials are impractical, when what we really mean is that we do not regard them as important. But given that this is so, one of our aims must be to improve our ability to state the counterfactual and clarify the factors other than guidance which influence the outcome; also those which lead some people to be exposed to guidance whereas others are not. Rather than do poor evaluation, we could prepare to do it well.

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John Killeen: A Career

Tony Watts

John Killeen died last Christmas, after a long struggle with cancer. He was 56.

John read Behavioural Science at the University of Aston and then completed an MPhil in Sociology at Birkbeck College, University of London. He had various jobs as a Research Assistant and Lecturer at Aston and at The Hatfield Polytechnic before being appointed Senior Research Fellow at the National Institute of Adult Education in 1977. His main task there was writing an influential report on Paid Educational Leave.

John joined the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC) as Senior Fellow (Research) in 1980. It was, in retrospect, an extraordinary opportunity. NICEC had been set up in 1975 as a joint activity of the Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) and The Hatfield Polytechnic (now the University of Hertfordshire). The Institute's research programme had been launched by Professor Donald Super, previously of Columbia University in New York, with the aid of a three-year grant from the Leverhulme Trust. The Polytechnic was sufficiently pleased with NICEC's progress to agree to a full-time research appointment, without teaching responsibilities. It took some time for John to establish himself in what was a new field for him, but the quality and significance of his work amply rewarded the Polytechnic's faith. It is difficult to conceive of a similar appointment being made on the same terms today.

John's most important work was on the effects and benefits of career guidance. Following a literature review with Jenny Kidd of the learning outcomes of guidance, he was the senior author of the monograph on *The Economic Value of Careers Guidance* (Policy Studies Institute, 1992) which, along with the accompanying NICEC Briefing, had considerable impact not only nationally but internationally, and continues to do so. He later carried out two important empirical studies of the effects of guidance on both employed and unemployed adults. His fruitful partnership with Michael White of PSI in this work gave it added authority.

John also did some influential work on career theory, including a study with Jenny Kidd of the role of theory in the careers interview. Other studies included the demand for career guidance from adults, the changing relationship between the Careers Service and schools, the process of work entry, and the impact of The Real Game; plus a literature review on the relationship between career education and guidance in schools and pupil motivation and attainment. In addition, he supervised several successful research dissertations.

When in the mid-1990s we decided to produce a book to integrate the work that NICEC had done to that point, John took responsibility for the chapters on the social context of guidance, on career theory, on the learning and economic outcomes of guidance, on the Careers Service (with Jenny Kidd), and on evaluation. The book (*Rethinking Careers Education and Guidance: Theory, Policy and Practice*) was published by Routledge in 1996.

John's substantial contribution to the field of career guidance was distinguished by his rigorous knowledge of research methodology and by the breadth of knowledge across the social sciences from which he was able to draw, embracing sociology, psychology and economics. His knowledge of the research literature within the field was unparalleled within the UK, and across most of the world; his loss leaves a huge gap in this respect.

Within our many discussions in NICEC, John assumed the role of an agnostic sceptic. Surrounded by many committed believers in career guidance, it was a critically important role, from which all of us in NICEC benefited. His contributions were often presented obliquely and with an inimitable sense of humour. As one of my NICEC colleague, Geoff Ford, put it: 'It is virtually impossible to convey the suspended but always silent and respectful expectancy whenever John felt moved to make one of his always amusing and equally always wise and penetrating contributions'.

John is survived by his wife, Mary, and his son, Joe. He is deeply missed by all his colleagues at NICEC and beyond. His body of work provides a strong legacy on which we can continue to build.

John Killeen at NICEC

Ruth Hawthorn, Senior Fellow, NICEC

I joined a very small NICEC in January 1990, replacing one of the three Senior Fellows based at the Balls Park Campus of what was then Hatfield Polytechnic. We were on the first floor of a wing of the building that stuck out into a stately park, with oaks and cedars dotted over a great expanse of green, visible through every window in all the offices down our little corridor. The NICEC library was on the floor below us. We had four secretaries (one each!), an office each, a very small meeting room, and a kettle on a cupboard in a hall outside John's room with a plant that thrived on tea and coffee dregs. In fact, we were a proper Institute.

We also had a Visiting Fellow that spring, Peter Plant from Denmark, so I had a fellow novice – though none so green as I in relation to the academic disciplines of guidance. I had come from practice and then development work in adult guidance. Although I had done some psychology as an undergraduate and some sociology as a graduate student, my first and most important experience of John was as the repository of all there was to know about work that was relevant to guidance in those fields. He seemed a little, but benignly, surprised that I showed interest in learning some of this, but was exceedingly generous with his time.

We worked together on a project in that first year which luckily combined our fields of experience: advising the new Training and Enterprise Councils on who offered adult guidance (me) and what it was or could be (John) (IASU, 1991). He co-ordinated the case studies and showed me how to construct self-assessment questionnaires that would provide sensible results. The team who carried out the case studies - my first introduction to the NICEC way of working, in which data is collected not by junior research assistants but by honoured colleagues who all then contribute to the thinking of the project – were Diane Bailey, Jenny Kidd, Eddy Knasel, Peter Plant and Tony Watts, people whose names I had known for years by then but never thought would ever collaborate with.

It could not have been a better induction to John's ways of thinking and working: impatient of the general idiocy of the world beyond, while gentle and courteous over any slowness on the part of colleagues; in the spoken word using two words and sub-clauses where one would do, but writing like an angel of clarity on the most complex ideas; producing written work astonishingly (to me who sweats over every sentence) quickly, but always at the last possible moment. One feature of that period was the rising fever in the office when John approached a deadline, with Daphne his secretary, the world authority on his handwriting, typing as fast as he could pass her individual pages, and a courier on hand to race it to its destination.

This period did not last long: within one year of my arrival we were already beginning to have meetings called 'the future of NICEC' and within three we were rebuilding it in a very different form. In that period after we left the University of Hertfordshire, with the Senior Fellows dispersed and the present more virtual organisation beginning to take shape, I mainly saw John at meetings. He was still at Hatfield, working on large projects for the Department of Education and Employment, and doing more teaching for the University (both of which are described by others), but I was not able any more to wander down the corridor and take up his time asking for references or explanations.

We did work together again during that next phase, most memorably on 'the book' (Watts *et al.*, 1996). These were wonderful meetings for me, still a junior in all except years. They were a symbolic representation of NICEC as well as a demonstration of how the five very different approaches of the authors could combine yet maintain their individual voices. John's contribution to that book, in particular his chapter on career theory (Killeen, 1996b), was and remains the best possible overview of the subject.

But in the summer of 2003 I did have the great good fortune to collaborate with him again, on a report for the Guidance Council. By then I was living, like him, in Kentish Town. So instead of wandering down the corridor, we now made rendezvous at his local pub of long standing, the Pineapple; rough drafts often ended up with ring-stains of London Pride. This was a kind of re-run of our first collaboration on *Who Offers Guidance?*, only this time it was 'who offers research into guidance?' (me) and what it was or could be (John).

As John used to say, my *forte* is in lists, and I was very happy to concoct those; but I also realised as he drafted sections of that report on evaluation that this was a remarkable opportunity for John to provide a statement on just what standards we should expect from rigorous research of that kind. Here again was the old difference of understanding from which I had learned so much ten years before: evaluation for him meant controlled trials of particular interventions under as near laboratory situations as possible; whereas for me, coming from my different background but conscious too of the working of policy wheels, evaluation meant measuring any gains from funding initiatives after they had been introduced into the real world. John could bring the rigour of the first to the second, as others have described, but in this section of our report (Hawthorn, Killeen, Kidd & Watts, 2003, Annexes ii-xvii) he provides a deft, and charitable, sketch of a world that contains both.

In our report John then goes on to provide a masterly introduction to social research, illustrated with examples from the guidance literature. This would be an excellent text for any Masters student in the field, but equally should be on the reading lists of all studying for the Qualification in Careers Guidance: on the grounds that today's practitioners are the people who will be commissioning tomorrow's evaluation, and everyone should know what constitutes a sound argument. John's further section, on the research that should be considered by the guidance community from the neighbouring disciplines of psychology, sociology and economics, is an extraordinary insight into the breadth of his own unique perspective on the guidance field.

John was not well when he was working on this project, and I knew he was impatient to get on to a larger study in the early autumn, which was not to happen. So again it was written speedily but, of course, precisely. A difference from our first project at Hatfield was that this time I was properly aware of the unique quality of his understanding and abilities, and understood how privileged I was to be working with him so closely again, so was able to value it consciously. He is very sadly missed.

Models, Muddles and Memories

Jenny Kidd, Department of Organizational Psychology, Birkbeck, University of London

My collaboration with John in conducting research into career guidance spanned 14 years. Our first project together was a review of research into the learning outcomes of guidance, funded by the then Employment Commission (Killeen & Kidd, 1991; 1992). This work demanded some tenacity in the search for published US and UK studies evaluating guidance, and John's qualities in this respect, as well as his attention to detail, were soon apparent. The report of this project remains a useful guide to evaluation instruments, as progress in this area has slowed over the last decade.

Work on the role of theory in career guidance interviewing followed, with Julie Jarvis and Marcus Offer. The Department of Employment was preparing to introduce a competency-based approach to training for local authority careers officers. We and others were concerned that training in the future would be reduced to lists of skills and techniques, with scant attention being given to the ways in which occupational choices are made and the ways careers develop over time. The research was an opportunity to find out whether careers officers saw theory as relevant to their interviewing, how they used it, and how theory was taught on training courses.

Out of all the work I did with John, this was the most enjoyable. Using a questionnaire survey, interviews and group discussions, we showed that careers officers were familiar with quite a wide range of theories, although in their interviewing they tended to apply broad principles of theory, rather than more specific aspects. As John so aptly put it, theories which explain 'how the world works' had little influence on interviewing practice: the theories which were most influential were guidance theories, rather than career theories. Careers officers seemed on the whole to favour an eclectic style, adapting their approach to clients' needs and to the constraints of the interview situation. We suggested that there was scope for in-service training programmes to include more theoretical input, so that more experienced practitioners could have opportunities to consider how theory might be applied in a more sophisticated way. This work was published in the *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* (Kidd, Killeen, Jarvis & Offer, 1994; 1997), and John and I discussed our findings with practitioners and trainers in a number of workshops over the next few years. He enjoyed thinking of pithy titles for our papers. I remember the original title for the 1994 paper was 'Models or muddles', but eventually I managed to persuade him that this might not go down well with the careers officers whom we hoped would read our work.

Our next project was a review of measures of the learning outcomes of guidance, in collaboration with Ruth Hawthorn, Jim Sampson and Michael White (Killeen *et al.*, 1994). John and I spent much time complaining to each other in the course of working on this project, as the task of reviewing several dozen instruments was fairly tedious, to say the least. But John got a vast amount of work done in a very short time, again with meticulous attention to detail. Around the same period, we began a historical review of the development of the Careers Service (Killeen & Kidd, 1996), and this was published in *Rethinking Careers Education and Guidance* (Watts *et al.*, 1996). Our last project together, in the summer of 2003, was a small section of his contribution to a review of the research base of career guidance, which Ruth Hawthorn was co-ordinating (Hawthorn, Killeen, Kidd & Watts, 2003).

Working with John was, in the best sense, a challenging experience. I learned a huge amount from his critical approach to the social sciences, and he had no truck with my lack of precision and occasional over-expedient approach. We approached our work in very different ways. I liked to get something done, and then forget about it for a while, while he relished returning again and again to what we had written, tweaking language and extending arguments. This was sometimes immensely frustrating: something I thought we had finished the day before, just within the word limit, would reappear the next day half as long again, with lengthy footnotes. Happily, he usually grudgingly accepted my suggestions for cuts, but our work was always much better after his revisions.

Because we lived some distance from each other, we did not actually meet very often to discuss our work together. Instead we talked over the phone. As those who knew him will remember, it was impossible to have a brief conversation with John, and I had to choose carefully the times I phoned him, making sure I had nothing urgent to do in the next hour or so. One had to allow time for tangential discussions on things like sampling techniques, the vagaries of SPSS, and the difficulties of dealing with research sponsors; and I learned to welcome these. I always learned something as a result. I miss John's friendship, humour and wisdom.

Exploring Evaluation with John Killeen

Michael White, Policy Studies Institute

In *The Economic Value of Careers Guidance* (Killeen *et al.*,1992), John Killeen outlined the idea of an evaluation of guidance services to establish their economic impact on clients. Before long, John was carrying out an evaluation, on behalf of the Department for Education and Employment, of the Gateway to Learning pilot programme for unemployed people (Killeen, 1996e). The results of this were sufficiently encouraging to lead to a more ambitious evaluation project (also funded by DfEE) to assess the impacts of adult careers guidance on employed people. This project, on which John and I co-operated, spanned five years from feasibility study to report (Killeen & White, 2000) and was, I believe, a 'first' in two respects. It was the first labour market evaluation in Britain focussing upon a group of employed people, and it was the first study to apply a rigorous econometric evaluation method to careers guidance in any country. The latter comment is made without disrespect to previous attempts. They did not have the benefit of the large developments in evaluation methodology taking place (chiefly in the USA) in the mid-to-late 90s, just in time for our project.

The practical tasks involved in the adult guidance evaluation were formidable. In the absence of any national programme of careers guidance for employed people, there was a frantic search for local schemes, most of which were being funded by Training and Enterprise Councils on soft money. There was then the delicate task of persuading each under-pressure scheme manager to participate, and of negotiating the research procedures, which had to be adapted to how the local scheme operated. John handled most of this side, without which there would have been no evaluation. He also designed the personal interview, which was used to chart educational and employment events in the year following guidance (or, in the case of the non-guidance 'comparison group', in the period since they were recruited to the study). This was to be the key instrument for establishing outcomes and impacts, and all depended on gathering reliable and detailed information. Yet our budget, and considerations of response rate, required that this interview should be restricted to half-an-hour. With great skill and tenacity, John crafted a questionnaire which met this constraint but made no compromises (as I am certain I would have done) in defining the respondents' experiences and resolving the many potential ambiguities in educational and employment transitions.

I have already indicated that the study used a comparison group design. To estimate the impacts of guidance we decided to combine this with a method, new at the time but now well-established, known as propensity score matching. In essence, this method uses retrospective data to estimate individuals' probability of taking part in the programme under scrutiny - here, the probability of being a client for guidance - and then matches each participating individual with another who, while having *a priori* the same probability of participating, in fact did not do so. This method overcomes the problem which formerly undermined the credibility of matching, namely that only a few characteristics or circumstances could be taken into account. Propensity score matching can take account of any number of background variables.

John saw that clients for adult careers guidance were likely to have distinctive *attitudes* - for instance, to be more dissatisfied with their jobs or more frustrated about further education and training. He argued that these aspects needed to be covered in the initial questionnaires which guidance clients and comparison group members were asked to complete when they were recruited to the study. My instinct was to match only on 'objective' variables such as age, type of job, and prior qualifications. Fortunately, John's view, backed by his unfailingly friendly but firm argumentation, prevailed over mine. In particular, adult guidance clients proved to have extraordinarily low levels of job satisfaction, and this was the most powerful among more than 20 variables which were eventually used in matching.

If job satisfaction had not been used in matching the samples, the evaluation would misleadingly have found that adult guidance leads to subsequent increases in satisfaction, relative to non-participants. But once we selected the non-guidance sample to have the same levels of initial dissatisfaction as guidance clients, they proved to make equally large gains in job satisfaction over time. This was a somewhat depressing result of the evaluation from the viewpoint of careers guidance practitioners, since increased job satisfaction has been claimed as a result of guidance by previous research. The point is, of course, not that guidance 'fails' in this respect, but that people cannot put up with job dissatisfaction for long and find various kinds of help and self-help - apart from guidance - to escape from it.

There were, in any case, much more positive conclusions from the evaluation. Especially, adult guidance clients took part in more further education activities (independently of their employers), and these activities were more successful in terms of completion rates and qualification rates. These positive results came through strongly, despite including previous education and training experiences, and educational aspirations, along with the other matching variables. In a subsequent statistical paper (White & Killeen, 2002), we showed that the educational impacts were also robustly maintained in the face of quite severe sensitivity tests which we imposed.

John and I were keen to develop the findings about educational impacts. In 2001, we worked together on another evaluation, concerning innovative provision of adult literacy and numeracy courses. Here John once more displayed his virtuosity in questionnaire design, but his illness prevented him from taking part in the later stages. John was also developing an imaginative evaluation design for self-funded further education, which would use secondary data sources. On a day when we were due to meet to discuss his initial ideas, I learned that he was being taken into hospital. He continued to think about and discuss the evaluation of further education throughout his illness.

In Memory of a Supervisor

Gudbjörg Vilhjálmsdóttir, Lecturer, University of Iceland

John Killeen had all the qualities of a good teacher. Pleasant, patient, witty and knowledgeable: he was not only a friendly teacher; he was a teacher-friend. He was my principal supervisor for my PhD, but sadly did not live to attend the viva last February. Yet I felt that he was present in spirit.

Going through our correspondence that spans more than 10 years, I found this combination of teaching and friendship shining through. My first research ideas were hazy, but thanks to John's comments and directions, they gradually became clearer. I can see that it is he who points out to me in a letter from 1995 that I am in fact thinking about two distinct studies which share the same sample: something that is very convenient, but at the same time difficult to deal with. He encouraged me to pursue the two paths and "join" the studies "at the hip" as he often used to say. This was not always easy — a bit like learning to speak two languages at a time.

In 1997 I was still struggling to write my transfer report and complained about being blocked in my writing. He answered:

"You use words like 'afraid'. Does this mean that you become nervous and hesitant when you try to do this? This is common and can be disabling. Courage! You should try to set aside your inhibitions and write things out for yourself, even if they seem messy or foolish. All sorts of things happen in the mental boudoir which we would be embarrassed to put on public display, but even the strictest Calvinist recognises that they are necessary to procreation. Remember, that on another day you can adopt a more critical perspective, and review what you have written, putting it into order and throwing away the rubbish" (22.7.1997).

As I know well now, one of John's qualities was that he had a wide horizon within the field of career development, ranging from sociology to psychology and education, and his knowledge of methodology was extensive. This wide range was invaluable. For example, I remember him saying that a good theory of interests did not yet exist, or that the measures of career maturity were not being used as much as before. Such comments not only gave an overview over a vast field, but were also stimulating in looking for new ways of theorising career development.

In a tutorial I had on 21 September 2001 at John's home in London, I can see from my notes that we were discussing the developmental aspects of the *habitus* construct and how in research the objective is to examine real phenomena that exist out there. Different theoretical approaches can be used to describe bits of the same phenomena. John's wide theoretical horizon made such a comment natural to him, but to me this was a moment of learning. His background as a sociologist made him question whether it is the individual adolescent who makes the career decision, or rather, whether it is more fruitful to talk about the decision-making unit, i.e. the family and important others, that constructs a career decision or develops career strategies.

Most of our correspondence evolves around methodology and statistics: design, questionnaires, data analysis and planning - "a plan is so important – so that you do not forget where you are going and why" (20.2.1998). His encouraging and witty comments are prevalent in his letters, one example being his comments on patience in data analysis: "Patient steps are what is needed. It can be a bit of a dredge, but grit your teeth" (28.11.2000).

His humorous side also shines through in what he writes about the English language: "I think you should make a point of the apparent fact that about 2% of variance is explained, noting that it is small. In English we call this 'grasping the nettle' i.e. if you take a firm hold of something that can harm you it does not hurt you (do not test the literal truth of the expression, it is erroneous. We have another expression 'take the bull by the horns' which is equally dangerous advice)" (22.7.1997).

The outcome of this long and often arduous work was a thesis containing two different researches: evaluative research on two different types of careers education, and research on social group differences in occupational conceptualisations.

To give some insight into John's contribution to one of the two research projects, I want to mention some points he stressed in the preparation and implementation of an evaluative research of guidance outcomes. In educational research, children cannot be randomly assigned to different groups, mainly for ethical and financial reasons. The selection of schools or classes is bound to give non-equivalent groups, although by choosing many schools for the sample, school effects can be avoided. In a non-equivalent group study, the researcher has to bear in mind that any difference found between groups could be for some other reason than treatment. A multivariate method, such as logistic regression, is used to explain away differences such as gender, grades or social class. If the researcher cannot explain differences from the multivariate analysis, confidence can be built in the conclusion.

In the analysis of the evaluative data we follow these steps:

1. Examine how the groups differ on all measured independent variables.
2. If there is a difference, see if any of these are related to outcomes.
3. For those that are, exert control (multivariate analysis) and see if the sample differences in outcomes are affecting results.
4. Even where 1 and 2 do not lead to suspicions of confounding, there is always the possibility of more complicated interactions between sample group, measured independent variables and outcomes.

This description only gives an idea of what John's teaching was about: the emphasis on being systematic and careful when doing quasi-experimental research; never jumping to conclusions. John was adamant in his criticism of evaluation studies that do not adhere to these scientific principles. Formative evaluation studies in guidance aim at programme improvement; summative evaluation studies determine whether the guidance or careers education programme serves the purpose for which it was instituted (Killeen, 1996). As can be seen from John's writings on evaluation, it was of utmost importance to him that results from evaluation studies were trustworthy.

At the journey's end, I would like to express my gratitude to John for his guidance. I was not the easiest of students. I lived far away, was a mother of young children, and was submerged with work as a lecturer and director of the counsellor training programme at the University of Iceland. In addition, I had never attended a British university, my previous training having been in France. It took a leap of faith to believe in my capacity to do research in this field. Being the broadminded scholar he was, this did not bother John: what mattered was research.

John Killeen: An Appreciation

Gareth Dent

I first met John late in 1993. I had just taken my first policy job in the then Department of Employment after an extended spell in the Government Economic Service. Although I notionally had policy responsibility for the Gateways to Learning programme, one does not cast off an economist's training easily and I was intensely sceptical about the benefits of guidance for adults. If you had cut me in half at the time, it would have read 'what's your estimate of the counter-factual?'

The first meeting did not create an entirely positive impression. It was a meeting scheduled by my predecessor with NICEC Fellows. John stood out paradoxically as both very polite and combative. He seemed to have a particular bee in his bonnet about management consultants and money being wasted on what he saw as flawed evaluations of local pilots. This was not an insignificant criticism as it is important to remember that the full extent of adult guidance funding in 1993 comprised two pilot programmes, Skillchoice and Gateways to Learning, both locally differentiated, subject to short funding horizons and evaluated locally.

By this time John had already published *The Economic Value of Careers Guidance* (Killeen, White & Watts, 1992). Prompted to read this, I found myself increasingly convinced by the economic arguments. And it was here that John brought a massive strength to NICEC; he could use the sceptic's toolbox to construct the arguments that could not be dismissed as special pleading. The sceptic found himself forced to confront the question of whether practitioners could be held to account for the absence of evidence. If there were convincing theoretical arguments for guidance having an impact, why had policy-makers not funded a serious attempt at measurement?

A further conversation was decisive; the reasons for John's annoyance at local evaluations became clear. It was not that local TEC managers were incompetent in framing evaluation specifications or that management consultants were deliberately taking the money and running. It was simply that the effects that they were looking for were only ever likely to be small and would take time to emerge. Lots of small studies asking a couple of hundred of people a few weeks after a Gateways interview whether they were behaving differently were inevitably never going to convince; they were too small, too soon and the absence of a control group meant they were doomed from the start.

Slowly the idea started to form of taking some of the money from small local evaluations and using it to conduct a large robust study. This work, ultimately published in 1996, met many of John's criteria. It was limited in ambition; no outlandish claims were made for the impact that was being assessed. This was not to be a study of whether guidance changed people's lives. This extravagant idea was not current at the time and John would have been fiercely critical. Rather it was to be a study of the 'intermediate' outcomes of guidance: did somebody exposed to guidance change their behaviour over the next 12 months by either starting a course or leaving unemployment. It was to be a big study for the time, with some 800 respondents, and there was to be a comparison group made up of people not exposed to guidance.

The outcomes of this piece of research (Killeen, 1996e) are now well-known, but it is easy to overlook their novelty at the time. Participants in the Gateways programme could be clearly seen to be twice as likely to start a course as the comparison group. Never before had policy-makers had such robust evidence to argue that, if you want to create a learning society, here is something that works: we don't think it works, we know it does!

Of course, the need for evidence to support the case for public investment does not disappear in the face of a single piece of evidence. But what this study did was to set the standard by which future attempts to test the impact of guidance could be judged. The longitudinal research funded today by the DfES into the impact of guidance is following in a tradition established by John and by Michael White.

Over the time I was involved with John in the study, more things emerged from his battered leather school master's briefcase than evidence to argue for resources. Also came the arguments that convinced me that the time had come to get off the 'prove it' fence. So, for me, adult guidance moved from a two-year tour of duty to become a career. I remain immensely grateful to John for that nudge in the right direction.

John, of course, was as robust in his self-questioning as in his questioning of others. He regretted that typically British reticence which forbids social experiments. The executive summary of the study which would be used to argue successfully that the time had come to move away from pilots to funding long-term services, such as the learndirect advice service and local IAG services, concludes not with a demand for further funding for guidance but with a lament. The lament is that if we are not prepared to *deny* some people guidance, we will never be absolutely sure about its effects. Characteristically, the point is made robustly but politely.

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How Like the Man

Bill Law, NICEC with Malcolm Hunt, BECTA

I was impressed from the start. John was coming to NICEC from outside the 'careers education and counselling' field. I found him literate, articulate, with well-furnished mind and no axe to grind. A new, welcome, and maybe overdue voice.

We were neighbours on a corridor at one of The Hatfield Polytechnic's many campuses. I remember open-door chats, rarely about 'careers education' or 'counselling'. More likely about unwelcome changes in the poly, what our trades union should - but might not - do about it, the inadequacies of government, and from there to big problems in education. Not exactly rants, but not exactly comforting either; always interesting and informative. John found my questions naïve; he wouldn't say so – you knew it from the patient listening and the careful replies. Others have found my politics naïve, but somehow I could take it from John. And went back for more.

Photo: Bill Law

I was impressed at the end. A funeral church filled with such a diversity of mourners. His grieving and dignified family, surrounded by John's proud mentors, other admiring academics, loving neighbours, drinking chums and church people, together with NICEC colleagues - including Daphne, John's secretary at the poly. John's leaving us united us. We sang together – black and white, tidy and dishevelled, weeping and smiling. It was a good send-off from a good crowd. Later that day I heard that John rarely spoke of NICEC among the rest of this crowd. I'm not surprised; John's life was his own.

Malcolm Hunt, one of his higher-degree students at the poly, remembers that impressive 'I-am-who-I-am' quality:

'Even after six years I couldn't decipher John's handwriting; nor could my wife, or my colleagues, or any of my children. My only hope was John's secretary; I invariably sought Daphne's assistance on what he was saying to me. On one desperate occasion, I faxed her pages, and then 'phoned up for a translation!'

No attention-seeker, John. Like a national opera, a national institute gets its *prima donnas* – and the internal politics they play. John was magnificently above it all - but not compliant, either. He had a gravelly vocabulary of dissent. Faced with cant, self-importance or plain silliness, he used a repertoire of finely-modulated growls, throat-clearing humphs, and – in extreme – barely-audible gasps. Somebody says, 'I think we should be encouraging practitioners to do their own research'. Growl. 'We are not set up like a proper organisation; we need to be more like a company.' Growl. 'The labour market is changing; nothing will ever be the same again.' Humph. 'Isn't it wonderful, employers are taking such an interest in guidance.' Gasp.

Anyone as perspicacious as John will have some capacity for exasperation. But his was no more aggressive than a wry half-secret smile at the convenient *non sequitur*, or that *sub-voce* warning that one of us was straying onto disputed ground.

Malcolm remembers a distinctively organised intellect:

'John's office was a mass of paperwork, journals, questionnaires, papers, and the odd note (scribbled on the back of a page from a draft report). And there were books, piles of which normally required moving before you could find a chair. I had once ventured to move one of these piles, only to drop the lot on the floor - which prompted a grunt and a raised eyebrow from John. Locating a journal or book on John's bookshelf was rather like playing a game of "Jenga" - you waited with baited breath to see if by removing something, the pile of papers (and shelving) would cascade on to you. During one meeting I asked if I could open a window, only to find that - in doing so - the wind caught a pile of papers, and part of a data set floated to the grounds below.'

John's contributions to meetings were discursive; spontaneous, but issuing from a mind in control of all kinds of digressions, parentheses and recapitulations. This sometimes happened to the point where we lesser minds started to wonder where this journey had begun - and whether it would ever end. But John was always courteous. Was that close to the heart of the man? Not mere politeness, nor rectitude, and certainly not pretension – an unambiguous respect for others.

Malcolm remembers it:

'Much of my research was quantitative. I realised, early on, that John's heart was in sociology. And I feel sure that my research was not what he would have chosen to supervise. Yet he supported me through every stage. And he was nothing but rigorous in helping me wrestle with the statistics and the research methodology. He left no stone unturned, and showed me by example the need for attention to painstaking detail. On one occasion he 'phoned me one evening at home, to check two figures in my data (200 subjects, 50 variables). In the middle of that dense data matrix John had spotted two errors.'

Respect for people; respect for the facts. John never made nor implied nor even hinted at unsupported claims. His were among the most carefully constructed conclusions in our field. Not, like some of us, a fully paid-up member of the guidance supporters club, John was enticed into no blind alleys. We owe him more than we yet know: there are not enough like him.

In 1992 the poly pulled the plug on that end of the NICEC operation. Ruth Hawthorn and I packed our bags; but John cut a new deal and stayed for a further 10 years.

John was a big man in so many ways: an intellect, a survivor, independent, robust, wry, self-sufficient and one of the most trustworthy voices in the field. That's why you went back for more.

As Malcolm knows:

'In many ways he was a very private man - economic with his conversation. We never discussed his life. But talking about issues, and teasing out the meanings in findings, soon found John - mug of cold coffee at his side - engaged and highly challenging. He could switch quickly from his own to other people's work. A research meeting with John left you feeling as if you had been through a mental mangle. I well remember one meeting, which I had intended to be a 15-minute discussion, but lasted four hours. So engaged had I been that I had not realised how much my legs were aching. I had stood for most of the meeting, because I could not see a books-and-papers-free chair. I came away, not just physically, but mentally exhausted. John was always stimulating, thought provoking and rewarding. If he ever paid your work a compliment (rare in my case) you knew you had earned it.'

I don't think any of us knew John all that well. I doubt he intended that we should. But I have this gravelly voice, calling back to me, 'Well Bill, when you came up with that journalistic title "points of departure", I bet you never thought that I would provide your best chance of giving it some meaning, did you?'. 'No John, I didn't – right again!'

We were not much alike. We all need to learn to value the people least like ourselves. And his precise and honest rigour is important to me - a parting gift. 'As you know, John, it won't be easy. But thank you.'

When he came back to NICEC, after the first round of successful treatment, he was greeted with spontaneous and affectionate applause. What else could we do - what a triumph, what a pleasure, what a relief. He was never a demonstrative man, but as he stood for a moment taking it in, his eyes glistened.

A year or more later, the symptoms recurred. An e-mail came to us all. 'I have', he said, 'been unfortunate'. It was the last word we had from him. I think he knew it was a farewell. Such reserve, such understatement, such simple respect for the facts. How like the man.

Eulogy

Joe Killeen

I cannot express in words what my father meant to me. However, I shall try to express some of his many qualities, and the immense impact he had on my make-up. John was an immensely giving, considerate and polite man. He always made time for me, and was more than willing to answer, to the best of his abilities, any questions I had. In fact, one of the biggest shocks I had, growing up, was that he did not know everything. But between him, and a few books, we always got to the bottom of whatever my enquiry was. When I was titling this document, I could not for the life of me spell 'eulogy': this is precisely the sort of the thing that I would have consulted John on, rather than going to a dictionary.

One of the most striking things about John was his size. He towered above both me and Mary (my mother), and yet was not the least bit intimidating. I like to think of him as a big friendly giant.

I have not been able to come to terms with my own mortality, so it is especially difficult to think of death, when thinking of my beloved father. John was an atheist, and I take after him in that respect. But for those of you who are trying to find a way to cope with the concept, I thought it might be useful to repeat what some great thinkers, outside a theological context, have made of it.

Socrates' outlook on death in the Apology was that either death was akin to a deep sleep, which was inherently pleasant; or that it was a journey to another place where all the dead were, which would be pleasant, as it would enable him to converse with all the dead whom he admired.

Machiavelli's concept of Glory was the means by which, he thought, human beings could achieve immortality. He thought of Glory as being the highest non-religious good available to human beings. The Glory is one's reputation after death, which serves as an imperishable exemplar of the highest rank of human achievement.

This notion, if nothing else, I take from Machiavelli and apply to John. I would not be who I am without the experiences I shared with him. I am sure the same is true for all of you who knew him well. His achievements in the field of social research live on, even if, sadly, he does not.

This eulogy was delivered at John Killeen's funeral service.

NICEC NEWS

About NICEC

The National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC) is a network organisation initiated and sponsored by the Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC). NICEC's aim is to develop theory, inform policy and enhance practice through staff development, organisation development, curriculum development, consultancy and research. It conducts applied research and development work, of national and international relevance, related to career education and guidance in educational, work and community settings. Career education and guidance consists of a range of processes designed to help individuals to make informed choices and transitions related to their lifelong progress in learning and in work.

There is a NICEC home page on the CRAC web site: www.crac.org.uk/nicec

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Contents

NICEC
National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling
VT Careers Management

Career Research and Development: the NICEC Journal is published for the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling by VT Careers Management