CAREER LEARNING AS A SUCCESS FACTOR FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Guide to Round 2 of Teacher Panel Sessions

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INTRODUCTION

Underpinning this Guide is the concept of teachers as not just key stakeholders, but co-creators of this research. The intention, therefore, is that the Panels should reflect the aims of the project by encouraging reflective thinking, collaborative learning/ decision making and teacher ownership.

The extent of the ground to be covered by the first Panel and the number of questions to be addressed suggested a sub-division into three sessions, each dealing with one of the themes:

1.   Choosing/Making Choices
2.   Working Identity/Career Identity
3.   Self-Efficacy

This Guide assumes such an approach and presents a suggested format for the second session on Working Identify/Career Identity. It is anticipated that a similar approach would be followed in sessions 1 and 3.

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR TEACHER PANEL SESSION 1

RATIONALE

The traditional focus group approach to gathering data from students and staff can have a number of drawbacks:

- Reflective thinkers may not have sufficient time to formulate their views before being asked to express them.

- Participants may be reluctant to voice their honest views in front of others, particularly if they do not know one another well.

- More vociferous/confident individuals may dominate the discussion and quieter participants may simply 'go along' with their views.

- In quieter groups, facilitators may be tempted to 'lead' the direction of the discussion.

- The discussion is filtered by a note-taker and the subsequent record created by them.

An alternative approach to data gathering is therefore suggested; one that is in keeping with the social constructivist principles in which this project is rooted. Drawing on Critical Skills/Co-operative Learning concepts, it has the following advantages:

- It makes effective use of a limited amount of time.

- It allows time for individual, reflective thinking which contributes to group discussion.

- It creates opportunities for all views to be heard in an environment in which participants feel safe.

- Participants direct the small-group discussions themselves and the subsequent record is created and owned by them.

- The whole group discussion can be used to probe/clarify responses, producing richer data.

SUGGESTED APPROACH

The approach has a number of stages. Timings are given for a notional session of 120 minutes. Throughout, facilitators should be strict about timings, so that activities remain focused.

In advance of the session:

• Organise a room large enough to accommodate the teachers moving around tables and coming together for a whole group discussion

• Send the questions to the participants so they have time to consider them in advance (see Appendix 1)

• Prepare a signing-in sheet (see Appendix 2) so that there is a record of who participated (but see note below about stressing anonymity/confidentiality)

• If possible, arrange for refreshments/snacks to be available at a suitable point

On the day:

• Bring along a paper copy of the questions for each participant

• Arrange tables around the room according to the number of questions

• Write each question at the top of a sheet of flip chart paper and place these on the appropriate tables (see Appendix 3)

• Put a coloured marker pen on each table – a different colour for each table

Stage 1:   Welcome (5 minutes)

• Thank participants for coming
• Facilitators introduce themselves
• Explain reason for coming together – brief description of project, their role in it
• Explain approach to be taken today
• Stress confidentiality/anonymity/need for honesty

Stage 2:   Community builder (5 minutes)

We know that people are unlikely to express themselves honestly if they feel ill-at-ease or fearful of being embarrassed/looking foolish in front of others. So, the purpose of this stage is to help participants to get to know one another, to relax and feel 'safe'. Any quick, simple ice-breaker activity can be used (see Appendix 4 for suggestion).

Even if the group already know one another, it helps to set the tone if the session is introduced with a fun activity.

Stage 3:   Divide into 6 small groups (5 minutes)

If it is a small group, this may not be necessary – they can simply work with the one or two people sitting closest to them. In a larger group, you may wish to split the group randomly (see Appendix 5 for suggestions).

If there are 12 or more participants, 6 pairs/groups of 2 or more can be organised and each allocated one of the 6 tables for the carousel activity. If there are fewer than 12, one or more tables will always be empty during the carousel.

Ask each group to appoint a scribe and a timekeeper

Stage 4:   Individual reflection (10 minutes)

Many people are reflective thinkers who need time to gather their thoughts before being asked to respond to questions.

In this stage, participants are given the question sheets and asked to spend a few minutes quietly writing down their own responses. Because they have been sent the questions in advance, they should already have considered their responses, so this stage gives them a chance to refocus.

Stage 5:   Carousel activity (60 minutes – 10 minutes x 6 tables)

Each group is given a different-coloured marker pen and allocated one of the tables with the flip-chart questions. They share their personal responses to the questions and decide together what they will write on the flip-chart sheets.

<u>Keeping the same coloured marker</u>, they then move to the next question table and discuss their responses to these questions. They also consider the responses given by the previous group; they put a tick beside any they agree with, a cross beside any they disagree with and add any of their own responses that are not already there.

During the carousel activity, the facilitators should move around, listening discreetly, so as to pick up any points of interest/confusion/debate, etc.

60 minutes is a long time for this activity, so you may wish to stop for a short break mid-way.

Stage 6:   Whole group discussion (30 minutes)

The facilitator takes the flip chart sheets for Table 1 and displays them.where everyone can see. S/he then picks up any points that require clarification or further probing and facilitates the subsequent discussion.   It is important to select only these points or the discussion will not move through all the questions in the time available. The different colours make it clear which group made which response and the ticks and crosses make it clear where they agreed or disagreed with one another. This is repeated for all the question sheets.

A second facilitator is needed at this stage to note the points made (this could be a member of the group).

Note: This session may go on for longer if participants have a lot to contribute, so good facilitation is important.

Stage 7:   Conclusion (5 minutes)

• Thank participants for their time and contribution
• Ask participants to hand in their completed questionnaires – they may later
  provide supplementary data
• As for feedback on what they felt about the session
• Explain what will happen next

After the session:

The facilitators collate the flip chart responses and the notes made during the whole
group discussion in a Panel Report (see Appendix 6 for suggested template).

TEACHER PANEL 1

SESSION 2:

WORKING IDENTITY/CAREER IDENTITY

QUESTIONNAIRE

1.1   Please describe what you think work means to students *for* their lives

1.2   Please describe what you think work means to students *in* their lives.

2.1   Do you think it is important to students that they do something for others or mean something to others in their work?

Yes √	No X	2.2 Why/Why not

3.1 Do you think students should try to describe their future jobs?

Yes √	No X	3.2 Why/Why not?

4.1 Do you think students explore labour market opportunities?

Yes √	No X	4.2 Why/Why not?

4.3 Do you think students believe it is important to explore labour market opportunities?

Yes √	No X	4.4 Why/Why not?

4.5 How do you think students would like to be helped in this regard? What could/should College do?

5.1 Do you think it is important for students to be prepared to start doing new things?

Yes √	No X	5.2 Why/Why not?

5.3 Do you think it is important for students to be prepared to interact with people they didn't know before?

Yes √	No X	5.4 Why/Why not?

5.5 **Do you think it is important for students to be prepared to see new possibilities at different stages of their lives?**

Yes √	No X	5.6 Why/Why not?

6.1 **Which of the following statements do you think best sums up students' attitude?**   √

A   It's better to start doing things and then reflect on actions   ☐

B   It's better to think things through before taking any action   ☐

CAREER LEARNING PROJECT

Date_____

TEACHER PANEL SIGNING IN SHEET

Please be assured that this information is for monitoring purposes only and will remain confidential. No-one who participates in this Panel will be identified in any subsequent reports.

Name	Gender		Years of Teaching Experience	Courses Taught /Vocational Area
	M	F		

TEACHER PANEL 1

SESSION 2:

WORKING IDENTITY/CAREER IDENTITY

CAROUSEL SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

Table 1, Sheet 1

What does work means to students **for** their lives?

Table 1, Sheet 2

What does work means to students **in** their lives?

Table 2, Sheet 1

Is it important to students that they
do something for others or mean
something to others in their work?

Table 2, Sheet 2

Why/Why not?

Table 3, Sheet 1

Do you think students should try to
describe their future jobs?

Why/Why not?

Table 4, Sheet 1

Do you think students explore labour market opportunities?

Table 4, Sheet 2

Why/Why not?

Table 4, Sheet 3

Do you think students believe it is important to explore labour market opportunities?

Table 4, Sheet 4

Why/Why not?

Table 4, Sheet 5

How do you think students would like to be helped in this regard? What could/should College do?

Table 5, Sheet 1

Do you think it is important for students to be prepared to start doing new things?

Table 5, Sheet 2

Why/Why not?

Table 5, Sheet 3

Do you think it is important for students to be prepared to interact with people they didn't know before?

Table 5, Sheet 4

Why/Why not?

Table 5.5

Do you think it is important for students to be prepared to see new possibilities at different stages of their lives?

Table 5.6

Why/Why not?

Table 6.1

Students tend to think it's better to start doing things and then reflect on their actions because …

Table 6.2

No, students tend to think it's better to think things through before taking any action because …

"Getting to Know You" Community Builder

The Name Game

Everyone sits in a circle and thinks of an adjective to describe themselves – it must begin with the same letter of the alphabet as their first name.

Person 1   "Hello, my name is Anne and I'm amazing".

Person 2   "Hello, my name is Linda and I'm lovely. This is Anne and she is amazing".

Person 3   "Hello, my name is Mark and I'm musical. This is Linda, she's lovely, and this is Anne, she's amazing"

… and so on round the group so that the last person has to introduce everyone else.

If someone gets stuck, the others help out!

Variation

Everyone has to give themselves a job that begins with the same letter of the alphabet as their first name.

Person 1   "Hello, my name is Anne and I'm an astronaut"

Person 2   "Hello, my name is Linda and I'm a lumberjack. This is Anne and she's an astronaut."

Person 3   "Hello, my name is Mark and I'm a mountaineer. This is Linda, she's a lumberjack and this is Anne, she's an astronaut.

etc.

Random methods for allocating people to groups.

1   Birthdays

Ask everyone to make a line across the room according to the date of their birthday, from 1 January to 31 December (this also acts as a community-builder as they have to speak to one another to find their place in the line).

Then go along the line giving everyone a number according to the number of small groups you need, so "1, 2, 3, 4; 1, 2, 3 4 …" for four groups.

Everyone has to remember their number and go to the others with the same number.

Variations:

Ask them to line up according to the letter of the alphabet their surname begins with. Ask them to line up according to how far/close to the school/college they live.

2   Favourites

Ask everyone to stand in a corner according to their favourite season of the year. Then just go round the groups allocating each person a number.

Variations:

The possibilities are endless! Group people by their favourite colour, favourite ethnic food, or by hair/eye colour …

REPORT OF TEACHER PANEL 1

SESSION 2:

WORKING IDENTITY/CAREER IDENTITY

INTRODUCTION

This report contains the findings for the Teacher Panel session which took place at

_____ on _____
(name of organisation)   (date)

_____ (insert number) staff members participated in this Teacher Panel

session and had the following profile:

	Gender		Years of teaching experience	Courses Taught/Subject Area
Teacher 1	M	F		
Teacher 2				
Teacher 3				
Teacher 4				
Teacher 5				
Teacher 6 ..				

FINDINGS

QUESTION	SMALL GROUP RESPONSES	WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS
1.1 What work means to students **for** their lives		
1.2 What work means to students **in** their lives		
2.1 Is it important to students that they do something for others or mean something to others in their work?		
2.2 Why/Why not?		
3.1 Should students try to describe their future jobs?		
3.2 Why/Why not?		
4.1 Do students explore labour market opportunities?		

4.2 Why/Why not?		
4.3 Is it important that students explore labour market opportunities?		
4.4 Why/Why not?		
4.5 How would they like to be helped in this regard? What could/should College do?		
5.1 Is it important for students to be prepared to start doing new things?		
5.2 Why/Why not?		
5.3 Is it important for students to be prepared to interact with people they didn't know before?		
5.4 Why/Why not?		

5.5 Is it important for students to be prepared to see new possibilities at different stages of their lives?		
5.6 Why/Why not?		
6.1 Do students tend to think it's better to start doing things and then reflect on their actions? or that it's better to think things through before taking any action?		

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

REFLECTIONS

 (emerging points of interest, how well teachers participated, reaction to the approach, changes for future sessions)