



PAWT Adult Guidance Framework

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Entending Working Life – Pedagogy Assisting Workforce Transition

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Introduction to Transition Planning

The Lisbon agreement set a target for increasing the participation rate of older workers (aged 50-64) in the labour market. It identified lifelong learning as having a key role to play in improving older peoples' skills and adaptability.

Following the Stockholm European Council agreement, the Commission proposed a partnership approach (European Commission, 2002b:15), with public authorities developing policies to raise the participation of older workers in the labour force, working closely with social partners, regional and local authorities and education and training providers.

The Commission recommended a joint approach based on four main points:

- Focusing investment on enabling older people to update their skills
- Finding ways for employers to meet the needs of older workers
- Changing the view among employers that early retirement is a good way of downsizing
- Reviewing tax and benefit systems and encouraging people to work in later life.

According to the Labour Force Survey (Eurostat, 2003:16), 14% of 25-29 year olds participate in education and training, compared with 8% of 40-44 year olds and just over 4% of 55-65 year olds.

The need for older people to update and adapt their skills is a serious challenge, particularly since older workers tend to have fewer formal qualifications than younger workers and are less likely to participate in training. In many countries more than 20% of 55-64 year-olds lack an upper secondary qualification while in 17 EU countries this increases to more than 40%.

Changing Work Practices

Long term employment in a single job has now largely been replaced with short term and contract labour. There has been a greater willingness to displace middle age workers in favor of younger workers who have higher education levels.

In 2010, the world population aged 15 and over had an average 7.8 years of schooling. The amount of time spent in education has risen steadily from 3.2 years in 1950 and 5.3 years in 1980. The rise in average years of schooling from 1950 to 2010 was from 6.2 to 11.0 years in high-income countries and from 2.1 to 7.1 years in low-income countries (Barro. RJ, Lee. JW, 2010). Currently, EU27 has 141 millions of inhabitants aged between 50 and 70 years old, but only 6.5 million participate in education or training activities.

The higher percentage of highly educated young workers has fueled advances in technology. These advances have created new opportunities while making other jobs obsolete. These developments have further influenced work practices and introduced new demands on workers, demands which many older workers are ill equipped for.

With more short term work timeframes and changing work practices, older workers are faced with a number of challenges and opportunities.

Challenges

- Up skill to meet the current needs of their working environment. This can also be an expensive process.
- Seek recognition of their prior learning and experience.
- Tackle the existing stereotypes regarding the capabilities and productivity of older workers. This can also effect participation in education and training. Some training and education courses use age specific criteria for participants.

Most employers and older employees do not believe there is an urgent need to up skill to maintain employment and neither employers nor employees think further qualifications in later life is good use of time or energy.

Opportunities

- Work on a flexible short term basis (contract)
- Develop their learning
- Increase capacity to engage with the economy and community
- Older people more likely to train in sectors, occupations and organisations where training is part of the culture
- Unemployed older people who learn more generally, report benefits in terms of well being, even when they don't actually secure new jobs.

Role of employers

To facilitate greater use of the experience and knowledge held by older workers, employers need to plan how they will manage their aging and training process.

1. Creating a thirst for learning and building learning culture into the organisation
2. Encouraging employee job mobility and creating expectation of continued learning
3. Focusing on learning methodologies more suited to older learners
4. Consider working conditions throughout work life so that learning is supported. (Flexible working, career breaks etc)
5. Career counseling and reviews can play an important part especially for workers aged 40 years and older.
6. Using employee opinion leaders to galvanise those who fear learning.
7. Better publicity of all learning opportunities.
8. Improve management practice to make better use of underused skills of older workers.
9. Use approaches such as job rotation, tacit knowledge programmes, mentoring, senior apprenticeships, training for unemployed older people;
10. An obligation to help each worker remain employable

(www.taen.org.uk)

Older Workers-Myths

Older workers are at the top of their pay scales, earning a lot of money for what they do-

-The average workers wage peaks in their forties and fifties. The average wage reduces for older workers in their sixties.

Early retirement frees up jobs and gives young people a fair chance-

-There is a negative correlation in EU 27 between youth unemployment and the employment rate of older workers. Low unemployment rate for older workers does not equate to a high youth employment rate.

They will get good pensions if they do retire-

-A persons wage is usually significantly reduced upon retirement. In Ireland the full contributory pension is 33% of the average wage.



Computer Training

Central to participation in many workplaces in the 21st century is knowledge of how to use a computer. Computers allow people and businesses to organize, execute and evaluate activities in an easy and time efficient manner. Therefore, basic knowledge of computers is essential to older workers. There are a number of resources and tools available to support this type of learning.

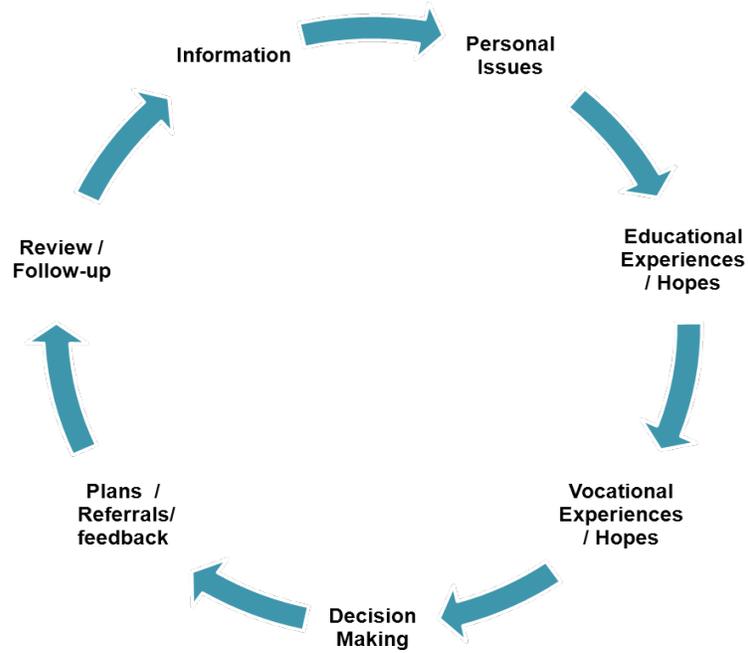
Defining Adult Guidance

“Guidance facilitates people throughout their lives to manage their own educational, training, occupational, personal, social and life choices so that they reach their full potential and contribute to the development of a better society” (National Guidance Forum 2007)

Guidance refers to a range of activities designed to assist people to make these choices. In the context of adult education these activities include: information; assessment; advice; counseling; teaching/careers education; placement; advocacy; feedback; follow-up; networking; managing and innovating systems change. Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education DES (2000)

The definition of guidance as referring to a continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and / or used (EU Council Resolution 2008)

The Adult Guidance Process



Challenges for older workers

Who are most at risk of early/permanent retirement?

There are two groups that make up the majority of this cohort of retirees; those in high paid positions who choose to retire for personal reasons and those in low paid positions who would not experience negative financial implications from deferring to the state pension.

Many older workers believe that once they reach the statutory age of retirement, they have effectively been replaced by somebody younger. Research has shown that experience grows with age and therefore older workers should be encouraged to stay in employment for as long as they deem appropriate. To facilitate this it is important to highlight and discuss some of the issues that may have hindered such participation. These include;

- Outdated skills
- Age discrimination
- Long term unemployment
- Uncertainty regarding how to access employment
- Lack of targeted employment programmes
- Lack of self confidence

Advantages of continued participation in education and training for older workers

Economic- Helping older people to retain work or continue working beyond retirement age increases economic output while reducing the possibility of unemployment in later life. Increasing the participation of over 40s in education and training can significantly reduce the possibility of long term unemployment in the case of redundancy. The adult education providers should ensure that their courses are not age discriminatory. Employers should be made aware of how valuable older workers can be due to their work experience and tacit knowledge.

Personal- There is a positive relationship between education and the economic, social, physical and psychological well-being of older workers. Therefore, education and training is not simply undertaken for economic development, rather lifelong learning can have a significant impact on positive aging.

Assessing the older workers needs

There are two main reasons for continued participation in the workforce;

Economic: Financial necessity to continue working

Personal: A love for the job or the social, physical and psychological benefits of participation.

It is important to note that the type of work is very important when working in later life. Manual labour can have serious negative effects on the health of an older worker. In North East England the mortality rate of males is 700/100,000 in manual labour as opposed to 200/100,000 for professionals (CARDI Presentation, 2010) "The relationship between employment and health is close, enduring and multi-dimensional. Being without work is rarely good for one's health, but while good work is linked to positive health outcomes, jobs that are insecure, low-paid and that fail to protect employees from stress and danger make people ill." (Marmot M, 2010: 68)

Motivation to learn alters throughout our life. We want different things from learning. In general, older workers want:

- Clear learning purpose and activities- the more the learning is associated with an action the better.
- Action orientated learning is increasingly important.
- The pace of learning should be determined by the learner.
- Clear learning structure- A preference for logical structures increases with age
- Independence- learning at an advanced age is characterised by sensitivity to interference (Rump and Eilers, 2007).

A recent study by Sloan Centre on Aging and Work found that older workers were more likely to be resilient and cope better than their younger colleagues during times of economic downturn (CARDI, 2010).

Facts about older people in the workforce;

- (i) Low skilled workers are less likely to return to the workforce as they could face age discrimination when applying for new jobs.
- (ii) Education and skills training for older people, not only increases their chances of employment, it also has positive effects on their social, physical and mental well being.
- (iii) Older people are more likely to have no formal qualifications thus affecting their employability.
- (iv) Older people face barriers to their ongoing participation in the workforce including age discrimination, financial difficulties, low levels of educational attainment and employers focus on younger workers.

(CARDI, 2010)

Developing a career profile

Mature workers tend to have diverse backgrounds and work experience which should be taken into account during the guidance process. It is crucial that older people are able to identify the skills and attributes they have, and can demonstrate them to prospective employers and clients.

The following list has been adapted from the Employability Skills Framework (DEST, 2006). Older workers should explore each heading and its corresponding list to identify what skills they have and what they would like to learn or improve. This also serves as a useful tool for curriculum vitae and interview preparations.

Communication

- Listening and understanding
- Speaking Clearly and directly
- Reading and interpreting documentation
- Using numeracy effectively
- Negotiating responsively

Teamwork

- Working as an individual and team player
- Apply teamwork to a range of situations
- Coaching/Mentoring and providing feedback
- Ability to identify strengths in others and define roles

Problem Solving

- Solving problems in teams
- Showing independence and initiative in problem solving
- Resolving possible customer difficulties

Initiative and Enterprise

- Ability to change working style
- Identify opportunities
- Creativity
- Executing ideas

Planning and Organizing

- Prioritise and manage time
- Being resourceful
- Adapt resources
- Participate in continuous improvement processes (personal and professional)



Self Management

- Monitor own performance
- Take responsibility
- Knowledge and confidence in own abilities

Learning

- Apply learning where possible
- Open to new ideas
- Contribute to learning in the workplace

Technology

- Basic IT skills
- Capacity and willingness to use more
- IT to organize data
- IT as a management tool

Job searching- Interview Tips

1. Make sure you continue to update your skills
2. Have an up to date and professional looking CV but don't include your birth date
3. Don't go back any later than 10 years on your CV
4. Research the company and job you are applying for before the interview
5. Physical appearance does matter. Make sure you look your best and present well at interview, tidy, well groomed, well spoken – make a good impression.
6. Show enthusiasm and energy
7. Sell yourself and your skills, including your work ethic, stability and reliability
8. Let the employer know that you are quick to learn and give recent examples if possible
9. Use positive language like energetic, keen, quick, flexible in the interview and the application
10. Don't talk negatively about previous employers
11. Don't mention any health problems unless they are serious or could affect your work performance.
12. If you don't get the job, ring and ask for some feedback – this will help you plan for your next interview. (www.olderworkers.com.au)



Further information

Personal/Career Guidance

If you are currently in employment, ask management if training is available to keep you up to date with modern communication technologies in your sector. If you are a member of a Trade Union contact your Union Representative to see if they can assist you in your future employment ambitions.

Professional career and personal guidance can sometimes help you decide how to proceed with your employment ambitions. Below are some links to websites and authorities that can provide you with personal and career advice.

Adult Education Guidance Service of Ireland: <http://www.aegai.ie/>

Guidance/Business Supports

To find your local development company or employment services (Ireland) visit <http://www.planet.ie/>
<http://www.fas.ie/>

College/University

www.studentfinance.ie
www.nqai.ie/FanDiagram/nqai_nfq_08.html
www.fetac.ie
www.fas.ie
www.nightcourses.ie
www.learningireland.ie
www.postgrad.ie
www.gotocollege.ie
www.learning.ie
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