



EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

---

## Counselling & Guidance In European Higher Education For Inclusion

Author(s): Pilar Colas-Bravo, Teresa Gonzalez-Ramirez, Jesus Conde-Jimenez (presenting), Salvador Reyes de Cózar (presenting), Jose Antonio Contreras-Rosado, Patricia Villaciervos-Moreno

Conference: ECER 2016, Leading Education: The Distinct Contributions of Educational Research and Researchers

Network: 22. Research in Higher Education

Format: Paper

### Session Information

#### **22 SES 03 C, Inclusion and Diversity in Academia**

Paper Session

Time: 2016-08-23

17:15-18:45

Room: NM-J104

Chair: Rosemary Marron

### Contribution

#### Counselling & Guidance In European Higher Education For Inclusion

This contribution is part of STAY-IN[1], an European cross-cultural project, in which three European universities and the Association of European students participate. The goal of this project is to design and propose a continuous orientation service, including an online Counselling & Guidance (hereinafter C&G) service for students in Higher Education, in order to contribute an improvement to their engagement and prevent the dropping out of those students belonging to groups at risk of exclusion.

Previously, a diagnosis is performed to detect the real C&G needs of European students and to know the C&G services offered by European universities, and to assess the level of usefulness of this offer. This paper shows the results from this preliminary diagnosis.

#### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

University dropping out is a phenomenon which has repercussions as much in the individual as in society (Colás *et al.*, 2014). Thereby the rates of university dropping out would be one of the targets to be included in national and international educational policies.

It is advisable to make clear that in scientific bibliography two types of dropping out are identified: temporary and permanent dropping out. Temporary dropping out means that students, after two academic years, return to their studies, sign up for another degree or change their university. Permanent dropping out implies a definite cutting off from university

education (Villar *et al.*, 2012).

Research into university dropping out has favoured various lines of work. The facts are directed to, on the one hand, identify the causal theoretical models (Cabrera *et al.*, 2006; Araque, Roldán & Salguero, 2009), and on the other, to explore the significant explanatory variables and factors of a very different kind about this phenomenon (Tejedor & García, 2007; Rodríguez, Feixas, Gairín & Muñoz, 2015). These contributions lead us to conclude that the university dropping out is a complex phenomenon. This is brought about by a great number of variables, multidimensional as well as changeable over time. Dropping out cannot be attributed to a single cause.

Consequently, we are able to assert that students who fail in their university studies do not have a general common cause, but multiple factors exist which play a role to give rise to this situation. Neither does dropping out show itself to be same in every degree course, nor the reasons for dropping out are applicable in all fields of study. Therefore we have a multiplicity of approaches and explanatory models: sociological (Spady, 1971), adaptive (Tinto, 2005), psychological (Bean, 1980), pedagogical (González, *et al.*, 2007), economic, etc.

Although the university dropping out is a complex and personal phenomenon, a gap is detected in creating inter-university and cross cultural studies which seek alternatives to alleviate this problem. Furthermore, the university cannot remain indifferent to the main consequence of the dropping out: the exclusion (Gonzalez, Contreras & Conde-Jiménez, 2016). Therefore, searching for inclusive education, it is necessary to improve the C&G services provided by universities, because they must offer a real support to facilitate decision-making of students to the various problems that arise during their studies.

[1] This paper puts in place a first showing of the results of the European Research Project “Student Guidance at university for inclusion- Stay-In” (Ref.:526600-LLP-1-2012-IT-Erasmus-Esin). It is a two-year project co-financed by Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission, in which three European universities (University of Macerata(Italy), University of Technology and Economy of Budapest (Hungary) and the University of Seville (Spain).) participate as associates along with other international enterprises of research and consultancy (ARCOLA Research (England), Melius (Italy) and LYNX (Italy) and the international networks “European Union of Students” and the “European Network of Long Distance Learning and E-Learning”.

## Method

An online survey was created, whose objective was to capture and analyse the needs of students with regard to C&G services. The survey was implemented through a self-administered questionnaire (SAQ). The design and development of the SAQ took an iterative approach. The SAQ was developed using as input the results of the review of papers about policies, studies and practices based in C&G services in Higher Education. The content analysis template used to analyse this material included a coding category intended to elicit possible questions for inclusion in the SAQ. This provided inputs to the development of an initial draft questionnaire. The draft SAQ was validated using cognitive interviews (Cullen, 2013).. On the basis of the cognitive interview analysis, a revised version of the SAQ was drafted and circulated among the STAY IN partners for final checking. The final version of the SAQ was then translated into Italian, Spanish and Hungarian and uploaded in these languages, plus English, to the ‘Limesurvey’ server.

The target group for the survey was students involved in Higher Education, with a special focus on ‘at risk’ students and those coming from disadvantaged groups, and a focus on the needs of the students studying in the three participating universities: University of Macerata, (Italy); University of Seville (Spain); Budapest University of Technology and Economics, (Hungary) and the Association of European students. A total of 975 respondents accessed the survey, of which 56% completed the questionnaire. So the final sample was 546 students of European Higher Education.

The data collected from the online surveys were analysed using the software package statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS v.23).

With the results obtained in this first phase of the project STAY-IN, it is intended to continue with the design, piloting and development of a digital platform, in which an effective and efficient service for European students is offered, improving existing C&G services.

The cross cultural nature of this study gives value to this online platform as it is emerging as a technological tool that allows the internationalisation into the European university system.

## Expected Outcomes

Firstly, the students most likely to seek help in the C&G services are those with a longterm physical disability (Figure 1). Even though this is a minority group, over 60% of those who reported a physical disability received help for the problem. The needs most demanded by students have been those related to orientation, mental problems, but only 50% of those demands received adequate support. Students with social issues, relationship issues and students experiencing problems with fellow students were much less likely to receive help for these problems.

A key finding of the Survey is the relatively low levels of efficacy attributed by students to the support they received. Although 60% of students with a disability received help, only 30% of those who got support for a physical disability thought that the help they received was useful. In the case of social issues, relationship issues and problems with fellow students, less than 20% of those who received help considered the help to be useful.

Secondly, in the knowledge of students on the elements of C&G services of their universities (Figure 2), just over half the students surveyed reported their institution provided an on-line information service, and one third reported their institution provided a Student Handbook with information services. However, provision of other service elements appears to be low.

Finally, in the majority of causes for non-utilisation of C&G services, students simply did not need support. Just over 20% of students who did need support did not know how to access the services; 12% got help elsewhere; 11% reported that the service did not provide the right kind of support; 10% said the service was not accessible when they needed it, and 7% were unwilling to approach the service (Figure 3).

## References

- [Araque, F., Roldán, C. & Salguero, A. \(2009\). Factors influencing university drop out rates. \*Computers & Education\*, 53, 563-574.](#)
- [Bean, J. P. \(1980\). Dropouts and turnover: The synthesis and test of a causal model of student attrition. \*Research in Higher Education\*, 12\(2\), 155-187.](#)
- [Cabrera, L., Bethencourt, J., González, M. & Álvarez, P. \(2006\). Un estudio transversal retrospectivo sobre prolongación y abandono de estudios universitarios. \*Revista Electrónica de Investigación y Evaluación Educativa\*, 12\(1\), 105-127.](#)
- [Colás, P., De Pablos, J., González-Ramírez, T., Conde-Jiménez, J., González, A. & Contreras, J. A. \(2014\). La mejora del engagement en la universidad: la e-orientación como contribución a una Europa inclusiva. In F. H. Veiga et al \(Ed.\), \*Atas do I Congresso Internacional Envolvimento dos Alunos na Escola: Perspetivas da Psicologia e Educação\*, pp.1431-1446. Lisbon \(Portugal\): Instituto de Educação da Universidade de Lisboa.](#)
- [Cullen, J. \(2013\). Guidance for inclusion. Practices and needs in European Universities. London, UK: STAY IN Consortium.](#)
- [González, M. C., Álvarez, P. R., Cabrera, L. & Bethencourt, J. T. \(2007\). El abandono de los estudios universitarios: factores determinantes y medidas preventivas. \*Revista Española de Pedagogía\*, LXV, 236, 71-85.](#)
- [González, T., Contreras, J. A. & Conde-Jiménez, J. \(2016\). El abandono universitario. Claves socioculturales en los procesos de tutorización. In V Jornadas de Innovación Docente de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación de la Universidad de Sevilla. Seville \(Spain\): University of Seville.](#)
- [Rodríguez, D., Feixas, M., Gairín, J. & Muñoz, J. L. \(2015\). Understanding Catalan university dropout from a cross-national approach, \*Studies in Higher Education\*, 40\(4\), 690-703.](#)
- [Spady, W. \(1971\). Dropouts from Higher Education; toward an empirical model. \*Interchange\*, 2\(3\), 38-62.](#)
- [Tejedor, F. J. & García, A. \(2007\). Causas del bajo rendimiento del estudiante universitario \(en opinión de los profesores y alumnos\). Propuestas de mejora en el marco del EEES. \*Revista de Educación\*, 342, 443-473.](#)
- [Tinto, V. \(2005\). Taking Student Success Seriously: Rethinking the First Year of College. In \*Ninth Annual Intersession Academic Affairs Forum\*, California State University, Fullerton, 19 \(2\) 5-9.](#)
- [Villar, A., Vieira, M. M., Hernández, F. & Nunes, A. \(2012\). Más que abandono de estudios, trayectorias de reubicación universitaria. Aproximación comparada al caso español y portugués. \*Revista Lusófona de Eduçacao\*, 21, 139-162.](#)

## Author Information

[Pilar Colas-Bravo](#)

University of Seville, Spain

[Teresa Gonzalez-Ramirez](#)

University of Seville, Spain

[Jesus Conde-Jimenez](#) (presenting)

University of Seville

Seville

[Salvador Reyes de Cózar](#) (presenting)

Universidad de Sevilla

Métodos de Investigación y Diagnóstico en Educación

Sevilla

[Jose Antonio Contreras-Rosado](#)

University of Seville, Spain

Patricia Villaciervos-Moreno  
University of Seville, Spain