

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**Is Career Advice in New Zealand  
Secondary Schools Working?  
Five Career Advisers Tell Their Stories.**

**Sally-Jane Smith**

**2001**

**Is Career Advice in New Zealand  
Secondary Schools Working?  
Five Career Advisors Tell Their Stories.**

Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the Master of Education

Massey University  
Wellington  
New Zealand

Sally-Jane Smith

2001

## **Abstract**

This thesis describes the ways in which some career advisors perceive and experience working in secondary schools in New Zealand in 2001. Secondary schools are being increasingly seen as the initial stepping stone in which students develop the capacity to foster realistic and productive career pathways. Career development is perceived as a social and personal process, which ultimately should prepare the students to manage career transactions throughout their life.

My interest lies in the personal viewpoint of the career advisors. The focus of this research is on the unique way in which he/she perceives the world they work in. A qualitative research method was chosen in an effort to understand situations in what Patton (1985) describes as situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context, and case studies were used to collect and analyse data.

From the group of five career advisors, whom I interviewed, a 'snapshot' that represents each person's different experiences of providing career advice was developed. By connecting the pieces of each person's story this research investigates the realities of working as a career adviser in New Zealand secondary schools.

The first chapter explores through the literature review different aspects of past research in relation to career information and guidance. Chapter two outlines the methodology of the research including the evolution of the project. Case studies

and photographs were important components in this process. The third chapter describes the history of the project and the processes that were worked through to gather information and analyse the data.

In chapter four the findings are analysed in five categories. Each of the five career advisors is introduced and gives an overview of a typical day. This is followed by four categories, which describe different aspects of the experience of providing career advice for these five people.

This information is interpreted in chapter five. The key conclusions are that there is no formal policy or planning that is used by any of the five schools and that provision for information and guidance from year 9 is often minimal. The focus in all five schools was year 13 students and students who were thought to be “at risk” of having no post secondary school plan to follow. Limitations of the research include the small number of participants, and the time of year the research was conducted. Recommendations for future lines of research include the school management teams, year 9,10 and 11 students and the use of Career Services in secondary schools.

## **Acknowledgements**

I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to:

The five career advisors who gave of their time willingly and shared with me their personal experiences. The school principals who supported my application and allowed the interviews to take place during school hours and on school premises. The supportive personnel at Career Services. Massey University Library distance service staff who were efficient, and helpful on the Internet and over the phone. I am also grateful to Wanganui Regional Community Polytechnic for their funding and support that made this research possible; Alison Viskovic, my supervisor, who meet with me around the countryside and was always supportive with her feedback and guidance. marg gilling who introduced me to the research process: thank you marg for your guidance and friendship over the last two years. Lastly I would like to thank Adam, for his patience, loyalty, support, friendship and love.

# Is career advice in New Zealand Secondary Schools working? Five career advisors tell their stories.

	page
<b>CONTENTS</b>	
<b>Abstract</b>	i
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	iv
<b>Chapter One:        Review of the Literature</b>	
1.1    Introduction	3
1.2    Secondary Schools and the New Zealand Government Career Information and Guidance Policy	6
1.3    Career Services, <i>rapuara</i>	11
1.4    From the students point of view	14
1.5    Students and the world of work	17
1.6    Learning theory and career development in education	19
1.7    The role of career advisors in secondary schools	23
1.8    Career counselling in secondary schools	24
1.9    New Directions	26
1.10   Conclusion	27
<b>Chapter Two:        Methodology</b>	
2.1    The evolution of the project	30
2.2    Traditions of qualitative research	30
2.3    Comparison of qualitative and quantitative methodology	36
2.4    Qualitative research and case studies	39
2.5    Qualitative research and the use of photographs	40
2.6    Conclusion	45
<b>Chapter Three:     Implementation</b>	
3.1    The history of the project	46
3.1.1   Prior research project	46
3.1.2   The current project	47
3.1.3   Plan of approach	47
3.2    Approaching the career advisors	48
3.3    The schools	49
3.4    Phases of the interviews	50
3.5    The use of photographs	52
3.6    Background data collection	54
3.7    The interview questions	55
3.8    Data collection	56
3.9    Data analysis	58

## **Chapter Four: Presentation of the data**

4.1	Framework of the categories	62
4.2	A typical day	64
4.2.1	Mr Kairn	64
4.2.2	Beverly	66
4.2.3	Isabel	69
4.2.4	Anton Bott	71
4.2.5	Claire	73
4.3	National Administration Guidelines	75
4.4	Career Services	79
4.5	Career advice in schools	81
4.6	Professional development and training	83
4.7	Summing up	86

## **Chapter Five: Interpretation of the Data**

5.1	The role of the career advisor	88
5.2	Decision making and career advice in secondary schools	91
5.3	Career advice in secondary schools and the issue of time	94
5.4	Career advice provision in secondary schools	98
5.5	Conclusion of the interpretation of the data	100

## **Chapter Six: Conclusions**

6.1	Summary of the findings and interpretation	103
6.2	Limitations of the research	107
6.3	Recommendations for future research	108
6.4	Recommendations for career advisors	109
6.5	Conclusion	111

<b>Bibliography</b>	113
---------------------	-----

## **List of Appendices**

Appendix A - Information sheet	120
Appendix B - Consent form for the school principal	122
Appendix C - Consent form for the career advisor	123
Appendix D - Letter to the principal	124
Appendix E - Letter to the career advisor	125
Appendix F - Thank-you letter after first interview	126
Appendix G - Thank-you letter after final interview	127