

Conference of the International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance (**IAEVG**)

Promoting Equity through Guidance: Reflection
Action
Impact

15-18
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MADRID



Promover la equidad a través de la orientación
REFLEXIÓN, ACCIÓN E IMPACTO

Organized by: Department MIDE II (Educational Guidance, Assessment, Psychopedagogy) and Department MIDE I (Research Methods and Assessment in Education), of the **School of Education, Spanish University of Distance Education (UNED)** in collaboration with the Spanish Guidance Association (AEOP), the Mexican Journal of Educational Guidance (REMO), RIPO, EDUCAWEB and Euroguidance.

Decisions, decisions, decisions

or

How do secondary education students
go about making important choices?

Andreas Frey and Jean-Jacques Ruppert



DECISION-MAKING

PRESCRIPTIVE MODELS

versus

DESCRIPTIVE MODELS

PRESCRIPTIVE MODELS

rational normative

some characteristics

- **decision-maker knows all the available alternatives**
- **evaluation of each alternative using exhaustive criteria**
- **decision-maker will opt for a specific alternative only**
as a function of its subjective expected utility

DESCRIPTIVE MODELS

heuristics

some characteristics

- **decision-maker uses an incremental approach**
- **decision-maker considers only a limited number of alternatives**
- **consequences are evaluated on a limited number of criteria only**
- **problem solving task is not completed in order to remain adaptable to new information**
- **decision-maker aims to solve problem in the short-term**

HAPPENSTANCE and HEURISTICS

in her last year at secondary school, a student in natural sciences could not decide whether to go to university, where or what to study

3 months into her final year at secondary school, she fell in love with a 1st year economics student from Stirling University in Scotland

HAPPENSTANCE

going to Stirling met her aspiration to be with her boyfriend
“He’s the one !”

1st year: biology, chemistry, psychology
“ I’ll give it a go and see what it is like.”

2nd year: biology and psychology
“I like biology and psychology better than chemistry.”

3rd year: psychology
“Psychology is fascinating, 2 years of biology useful.”

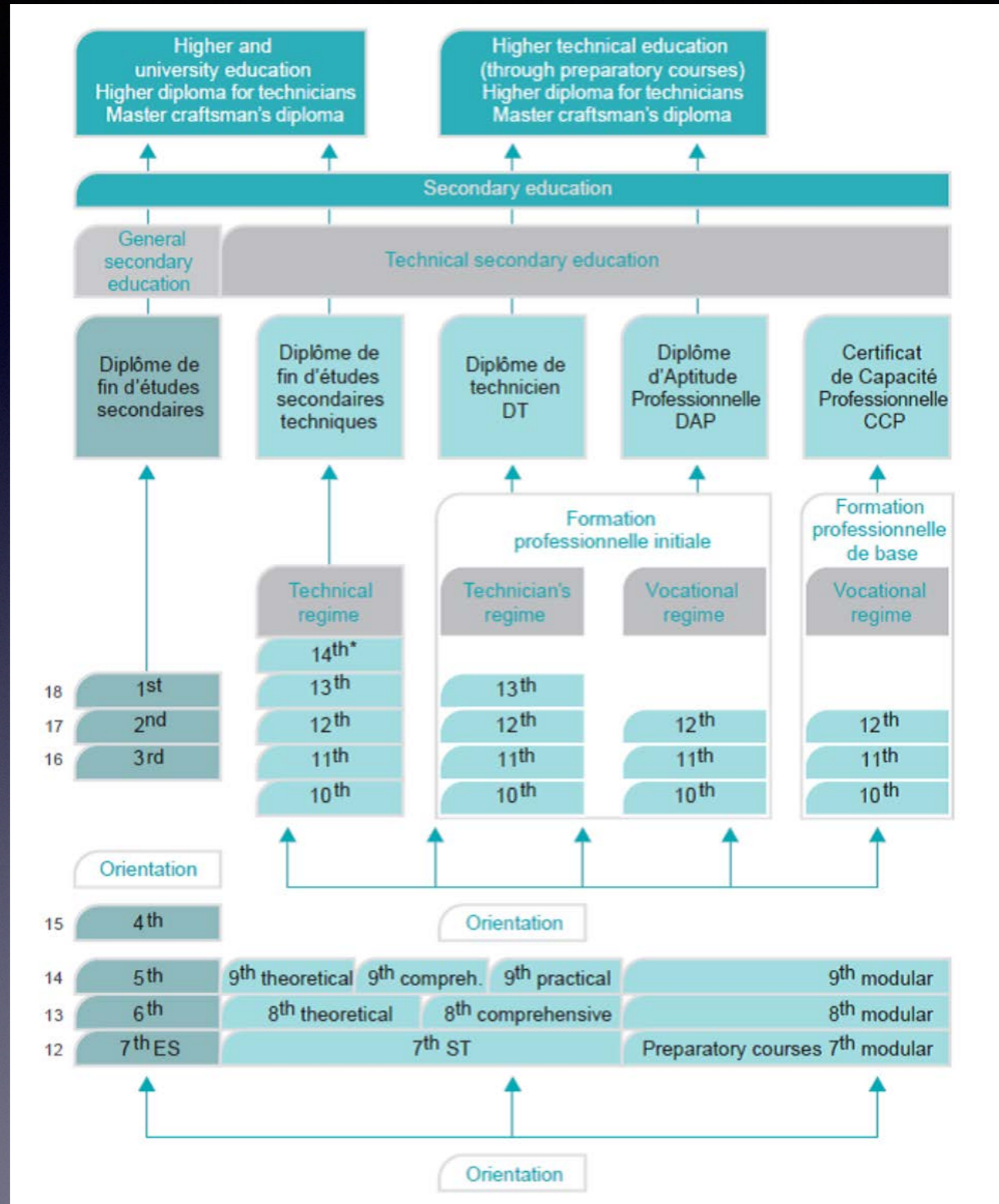
‘SATISFICING’
heuristic

‘INCREMENTAL’
heuristic

‘MINIMALIST’
heuristic

‘TAKE THE BEST’
heuristic

SECONDARY EDUCATION IN LUXEMBOURG





access to Higher Education



access to various specialised streams



**GENERAL
SECONDARY
EDUCATION**

TECHNICAL SECONDARY EDUCATION



access to a 'technical regime'
access to a 'technician regime'
access to a 'vocational regime'

**GENERAL
SECONDARY
EDUCATION**

**7th year
114 students**

**4th year
126 students**

240 students

**TECHNICAL
SECONDARY
EDUCATION**

**3rd year
147 students**

147 students

387 students

STAGES IN DECISION-MAKING

| | all | 7th year general secondary | 4th year general secondary | 3rd year technical secondary |
|---|-----|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| I have not thought all that much about it. | | | | |
| I have been thinking about pros and cons but I am still undecided . | | | | |
| I know more or less what I will do but still need further information. | | | | |
| I know exactly what I will and do not need any further information. | | | | |
| I have already decided what to do but still would like to have further info to help me proceed. | | | | |

STAGES IN DECISION-MAKING

| | all | 7th year general secondary | 4th year general secondary | 3rd year technical secondary |
|---|-------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| I have not thought all that much about it. | 5.2% | 3.5% | 7.2% | 4.8% |
| I have been thinking about pros and cons but I am still undecided . | 63.2% | 47.4% | 80.8% | 60.5% |
| I know more or less what I will do but still need further information. | | | | |
| I know exactly what I will and do not need any further information. | 39.5% | 49.1% | 12.0% | 34.7% |
| I have already decided what to do but still would like to have further info to help me proceed. | | | | |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

| “structures” | all | 7th year general secondary | 4th year general secondary | 3rd year technical secondary |
|--|------------|---|---|---|
| internet | | | | |
| written information material | | | | |
| “school” | | | | |
| HE information centre | | | | |
| educational psychology and guidance service within a school | | | | |

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

| “structures” | all | 7th year general secondary | 4th year general secondary | 3rd year technical secondary |
|--|---------------|---|---|---|
| internet | 44.3% | 49.0% | 46.6% | 38.1% |
| written information material | 14.7% | 9.8% | 21.1% | 14.4% |
| “school” | 11.1% | 6.7% | 14.9% | 12.4% |
| HE information centre | (1,1%) | 29.9% | - | - |
| educational psychology and guidance service within a school | 8.3% | (1,03%) | (6,8%) | 16.3% |

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

| people | all | 7th year general secondary | 4th year general secondary | 3rd year technical secondary |
|---|------------|---|---|---|
| parents / siblings / “family” | | | | |
| teachers | | | | |
| friends, mates | | | | |
| people with professional experience in target profession | | | | |
| staff in various guidance services | | | | |

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

| people | all | 7th year general secondary | 4th year general secondary | 3rd year technical secondary |
|---|--------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| parents / siblings / “family” | 40.8% | 32.5% | 48.8% | 39.4% |
| teachers | 20.1% | 15.3% | 20.3% | 20.2% |
| friends, mates | 20.3% | 30.1% | 18.8% | 14.9% |
| people with professional experience in target profession | (7,2%) | (14,1%) | (6,8%) | (2,4%) |
| staff in various guidance services | (7,0%) | 2.3% | 1.9% | 14.9% |

SATISFACTION WITH INFORMATION

| | all | 7th year general secondary | 4th year general secondary | 3rd year technical secondary |
|--------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| very satisfied / satisfied | | | | |
| <i>neither ... nor</i> | | | | |
| not satisfied / not satisfied at all | | | | |
| | | | | |

SATISFACTION WITH INFORMATION

| | all | 7th year general secondary | 4th year general secondary | 3rd year technical secondary |
|---|--------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| very satisfied / satisfied | 57.4% | 56.6% | 49.6% | 64.8% |
| <i>neither ... nor</i> | <i>35.3%</i> | <i>36.3%</i> | <i>40.8%</i> | <i>29.7%</i> |
| not satisfied / not satisfied at all | 7.3% | 7.1% | 9.6% | 5.5% |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF DECISION

| | all | 7th year general secondary | 4th year general secondary | 3rd year technical secondary |
|--------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| very important / important | | | | |
| <i>neither ... nor</i> | | | | |
| not important / not important at all | | | | |
| | | | | |

PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE OF DECISION

| | all | 7th year general secondary | 4th year general secondary | 3rd year technical secondary |
|---|--------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| very important / important | 91.2% | 97.4% | 86,4% | 90.5% |
| <i>neither ... nor</i> | 8.3% | 2.6% | 12.8% | 8.8% |
| not important / not important at all | 0.5% | 0.0% | 0.8% | 0.7% |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

PERCEIVED DIFFICULTY OF DECISION

| | all | 7th year general secondary | 4th year general secondary | 3rd year technical secondary |
|--------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| very difficult / difficult | | | | |
| <i>neither ... nor</i> | | | | |
| not difficult / not difficult at all | | | | |
| | | | | |

PERCEIVED DIFFICULTY OF DECISION

| | all | 7th year general secondary | 4th year general secondary | 3rd year technical secondary |
|--------------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| very difficult / difficult | 16.6% | 22.8% | 14.4% | 13.6% |
| <i>neither ... nor</i> | 41.7% | 43.9% | 36.8% | 44.2% |
| not difficult / not difficult at all | 41.7% | 33.3% | 48.8% | 42.2% |
| | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

DECISION-MAKING STRATEGIES USED

scale: 1= very much applies - 2= applies - 3=neither ... nor - 4= does not apply - 5= does not apply at all

I decide in favour of the alternative which *appeals most strongly* to me

I decide in favour of the *first* alternative I find which meets my expectations.

I guide myself upon the advice of *people who are important to me* e.g. my parents.

I avoid taking any risks and decide in favour of the alternative which *I already know already quite well: I can always improve on it later.*

I know the alternatives so well that I can make a clear decision.

I decide in favour of the alternative which *differs positively* from others *even if* it does so *on one criterion only.*

DECISION-MAKING STRATEGIES USED

scale: 1= very much applies - 2= applies - 3=neither ... nor - 4= does not apply - 5= does not apply at all

| | <i>only points 1 + 2</i> |
|--|--------------------------|
| I decide in favour of the alternative which <i>appeals most strongly</i> to me | 88.6% |
| I decide in favour of the <i>first</i> alternative I find which meets my expectations. | 54.7% |
| I guide myself upon the advice of <i>people who are important to me</i> e.g. my parents. | 47.6% |
| I avoid taking any risks and decide in favour of the alternative which <i>I already know already quite well: I can always improve on it later.</i> | 41.3% |
| I know the alternatives so well that I can make a clear decision. | 40.3% |
| I decide in favour of the alternative which <i>differs positively</i> from others <i>even if</i> it does so <i>on one criterion only.</i> | 35.1% |

DECISION-MAKING STRATEGIES USED

scale: 1= very much applies - 2= applies - 3=neither ... nor - 4= does not apply - 5= does not apply at all

| | <i>only points 1 + 2</i> |
|---|--------------------------|
| “take the best” heuristic | 88.6% |
| “take the first” heuristic | 54.7% |
| “social rationality” heuristic (<i>personal control</i>) | 47.6% |
| “incremental” heuristic | 41.3% |
| “optimizing” | 40.3% |
| “minimalist” heuristic | 35.1% |

STUDENTS' REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

students were asked to rank these items in order of preference/personal importance

What are the curricula of a specific educational path/vocational training scheme?

How can I find out whether I am suited for a specific educational path/vocational training scheme?

How can I find out whether I am suited for a specific profession?

What are my possibilities once I have reached my educational /vocational training goal?

What are my possibilities if I fail to reach my educational/vocational training goal?

What are my prospects on the labour market?

How can I get information on educational paths/vocational training schemes and professions?

How, where and who from can I get help?

possibility for students to enter a question of their own

STUDENTS' REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

items ranked in order of preference/personal importance

| | all | 7th year general secondary | 4th year general secondary | 3rd year technical secondary |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| possibilities after qualifying | most important | most important | most important | 2nd most important |
| suitability for a specific profession | 2nd most important | 2nd most important | 3rd most important | most important |
| suitability for a specific educational path/vocational training scheme | 3rd most important | 4th most important | 2nd most important | 5th most important |
| prospects on the labour market | 4th most important | 3rd most important | 4th most important | 4th most important |
| possibilities after failing to attain educational/vocational training goal | 5th most important | 5th most important | <i>6th most important</i> | 3rd most important |

CONCLUSIONS

“take the best” heuristic found to be the dominant decision-making strategy

recommend a switch from from rational decision-strategies to a **heuristics** based approach

encourage training of counsellors in ***“cognitive empathy”*** to allow them to better ***“tune into”*** the guiding heuristics of counselees

provide **high quality initial and continuous training** for counselling and guidance professionals to enable them to deliver an expert, objective and ethically sound service

invest into post-decision stages i.e. in the **follow-up** of counselees

move counselling and guidance away from a supply-based system to a **demand-oriented approach**

“teach” young people **information management** (internet)

“educate” **parents** so that they can (more) effectively accompany their children in educational transitions

**Thank you
for your attention**

andreas.frey@hdba.de

jean-jacques.ruppert@education.lu