



by Ester Morros

# Present and future of academic guidance

## Techno-science can also be of great help in discovering scientific vocations.

I am proud to share with you that I am part of that group of people who decided years ago to change the world of counselling, to propose an alternative. We are not only innovative, but also disruptive.

During this journey, professionals, researchers, technological research groups from universities and companies have participated, which to a greater or lesser extent have made it possible to find a solution today to a common problem: that of 92% of students not knowing what to choose when faced with the decision of *what to continue studying*.

It is a problem that has governments in all countries very concerned. A high percentage of those who start university studies in Spain do not complete them<sup>1</sup>. Knowing that around 125,000 students a year drop out, the annual losses derived from this failure are estimated at 974 million euros. This is only the economic cost, which must be added the higher cost: personal failure. This is the one we are most concerned about.

Technologies are here to stay and have a cross-cutting impact on all disciplines, including guidance. Applying

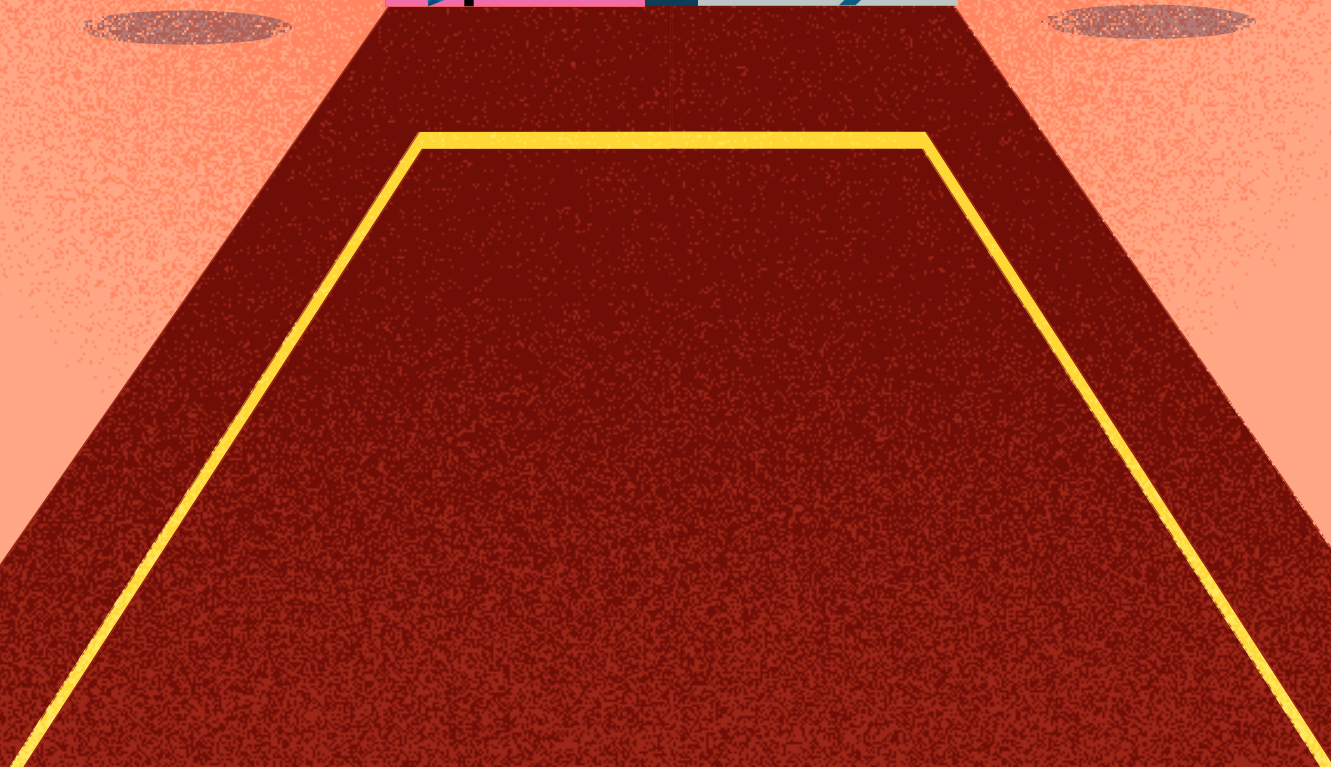
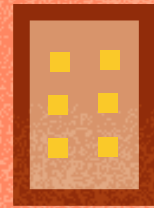
technology makes business sense by standardising quality, and increasing the speed of processes, reducing costs and increasing business margins. Just look at where in the profit and loss account the personnel item goes (costs) and where the acquisition of technology goes (assets).

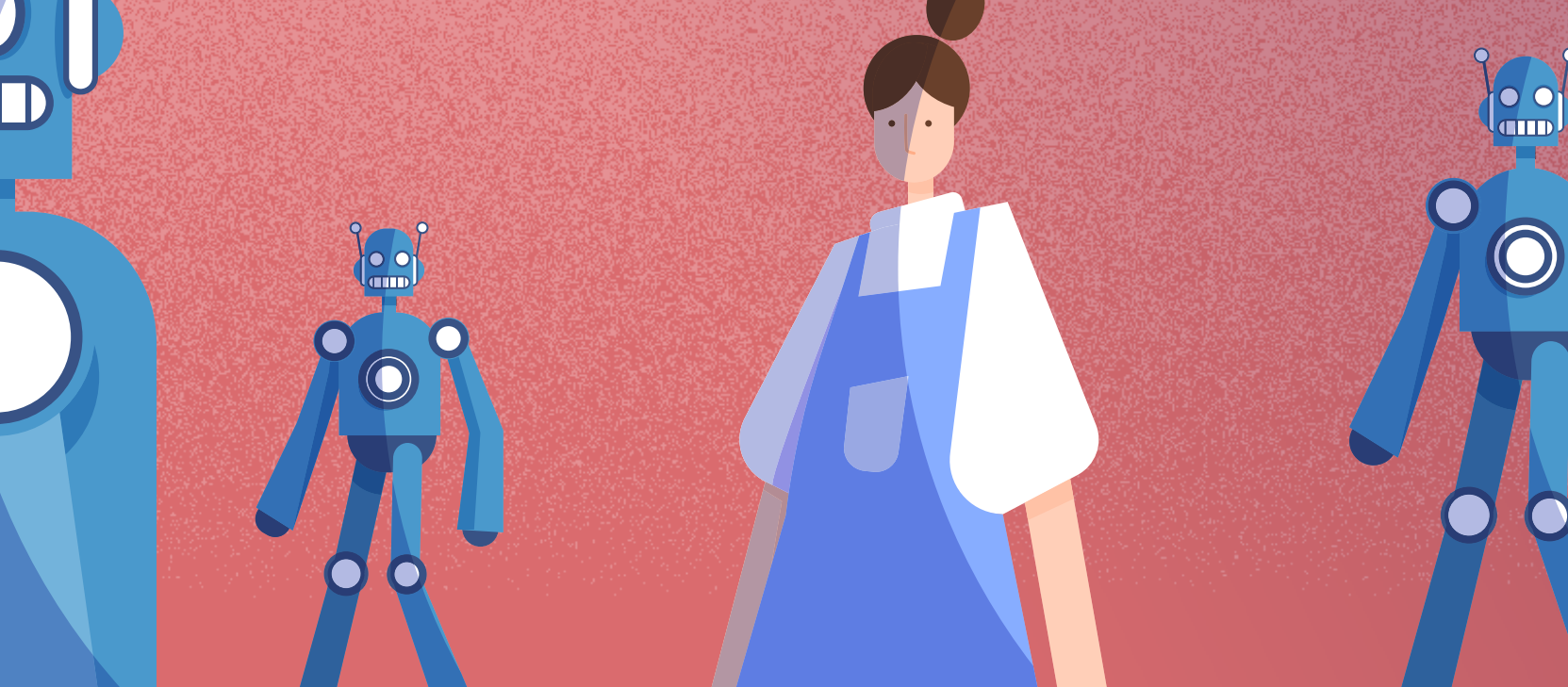
Technology will centralise knowledge in computers so that having this knowledge will no longer be a differential. Hence the importance of creativity, something that today, computers cannot do on their own. A computer can perform a function very quickly, but its limitation is that it can only do one task at a time. However, under development, quantum computing will be able to do up to eight operations at a time<sup>2</sup>.

Reading the above, it was more than twelve years ago that we decided to apply technology in the world of academic counselling, although it is true that we were treated as *Martians* at the time.

### ORIENTATION

Of the seven definitions given in the RAE, perhaps the most appropriate for academic guidance is *to direct or direct someone or something towards a specific goal*.





## A high percentage of those who start university studies in Spain do not complete them.

Contrary to what has always been thought, academic guidance is the help in making decisions in each of the educational and training stages, not only choosing the baccalaureate or the training cycle.

Therefore, we can no longer guide our children towards their professional future through a test alone. It is an important enough decision to devote all the love in the world to it.

Guidance has 4 key points:

1. Identify the career objective in order to design the academic pathway then, taking into account strategies based on the following differentials.
2. Identify the student's talents and strengths to determine his/her profile and best professional fit.
3. To associate future knowledge and training with their professional profile.
4. Involve parents as well as pupils in decision-making.

### PROFESSIONAL CAREER

A person's professional career does not begin when he or she enters the professional field, but when they choose their studies at the end of ESO. Therefore, the choice of studies that he/she will take will largely determine his/her

future profession. The very definition of orientation says it, ...*towards a certain end*. The end is the profession; the studies are the way to access it.

According to the latest report *Labour market insertion of university graduates*<sup>3</sup>, almost 30% of the graduates who completed their studies were unemployed four years after graduation: 53% did not find a job one year after graduating, 40.4% two years later and 32.2% three years later still could not find a job. Higher education is no guarantee of finding a job.

The Gallup consultancy, a global benchmark, conducts an annual global review of the state of the workplace<sup>4</sup> that measures employee engagement with the company through surveys in 142 countries and 25 million employees. In summary, it finds that 83% of professionals are unsuccessful in their work and are not engaged with their work or their company. The main reason is found at the time of recruitment. He observes a dissociation between the candidate's talent and knowledge: he or she was trained for one profession and has talent for another.

The problem arises when the person chooses his or her studies at the end of ESO when he or she should associate his or her talent with his or her future studies. But still, it is difficult to ask a person to choose their future when they are only 15 years old. For a young person, the future does not go much further than what they will do next weekend. That is why parents must be involved in the decision-making process because the decision to study is not just a question of the student's academic studies but





also a family's plan for a person's future: their child. The academic result of the current guidance<sup>5</sup> is that 33% drop out of the degree course they are starting, 66% if it is an online course, 21% change their degree course and 12% will definitely drop out of university. These data indicate that academic guidance using the lifelong test does not work.

### **WE APPLY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO GUIDANCE**

In order to do this guidance, it is essential to use technology. Of course, a robot or a machine should not make our decisions, but it does help us to make them. Therefore, our guidance work is carried out by a scientific-technological tool of our own design and development, which we call *ZQtech*. What *ZQtech* offers is the result of our experience of more than 35,000 guidance processes with students and families.

#### **Step 1: Provide information to *ZQtech***

We provide the technological tool with information on the *Job Descriptions* of the different jobs where the skills and attitudes necessary to develop the job are determined. To obtain this information, we also use technology.

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Technology helps us to classify the skills that companies are looking for and establish professional patterns, which we call *professional ADN*<sup>6</sup>. In addition, the academic pathways needed to access these jobs are linked.

#### **Step 2: Collect information from the learner to create their professional DNA**

The information that will be collected from the student will be, on the one hand, personal characteristics and, on the other hand, academic characteristics from a natural environment, an aspect that means that our technological system does not use any test as a basis.

The information that is collected on the platform about the student is their merits; academic record that allows us to make metrics and project university entrance grades; their interests, what the student thinks they would like to do; 360° assessment to identify who the person is from all their roles; and the student's own self-assessment. Once the information is uploaded on the platform and the invitees have responded, we can hold the decision-making meeting.

#### **Step 3: Decision-making**

At Zeno Quantum we are committed to blended systems.

During the interview, the system presents us with all the collected information, and we audit it with the family. Once the information is confirmed, we again use technology to convert this information into an alphanumeric code

## An expert guidance consultant uses ZQTech and enables him to advise the family and the student in their decision making.

that represents the student's talent: their *professional DNA*. From this point on, algorithms and artificial intelligence take over and help us to compare the student's professional DNA with the employers' professional DNA and propose six professions that fit the student's profile.

These proposals are confirmed with the student and the family and, once they have been agreed upon, the strategic academic itineraries are proposed to successfully access these professions, from the optional subjects of the baccalaureate or training cycles to the necessary cut-off marks and university degrees.

Technological support is a great ally, as it allows the creation of personal and individual reports for each student. The technology accesses many text libraries in several languages, images and infographics to build a personal report through a complex technological system. A report that is also a living document updates the information every time it is downloaded from the platform.

The technology also helps in terms of security, as the information in *Block Chain*, which the student will connect by entering their username and password, will create the report. This protects us against a hypothetical hacking attack on our servers.

However, guidance is a continuous process that does not end when we decide which university degree or training cycle we will do; each stage has its strategic decisions until we enter the labour market. But this is a topic for another article.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Estudi sobre l'abandó universitari realitzat per la Fundació BBVA del 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Doctora Talia Gershon (Directora d'Estratègia d'Investigació i Iniciatives de Creixement a IBM).

<sup>3</sup> Informe: Inserció laboral dels graduats universitaris. Curs 2013-2014 (anàlisi fins a 2018). Ministeri d'Educació, Innovació i Universitats. 2019

<sup>4</sup> *State of Global Workplace*. Consultoria Gallup.

<sup>5</sup> Segons l'estudi anual d'O-Rànquing de la Fundació BBVA.

<sup>6</sup> ADN professional: marca patentada des de 2016.

