

Round table 6

Session's theme: Guidance and counseling

Paper number: 3

Presenters: Simo Mikkonen

Presenters' Organisation: University of Jyväskylä

Session's chair: To be announced later.

Session title: Integration through group counseling: students as members of the academic community

Abstract:

This session aims at discussing and developing different forms of students group counseling with the immediate aim of increasing dialogue between students and department staff. Partly, the aim of mentoring is to enhance integration and prevent early drop-outs, but it is also important for opening communication channels, for getting feedback and increasing awareness of necessary learning skills.

The tendency to push students from high school into universities more quickly and without gap years has resulted in younger students who are less ready for autonomous studies and independent action than those with more experience having spent some years working or otherwise outside school rooms. This poses certain challenges in integrating students to university studies that require autonomy and decisiveness. Problems in these areas manifest themselves in early dropouts, delayed studies and generally lowered study motivation among students.

Mentoring and enhanced group counseling during first study years could increase motivation and study pace resulting in quicker graduation and improved experiences. In order to further develop ideas of mentoring and group counseling, we would like to share and present ideas related to these issues. You might have experiences of enhanced mentoring and group counseling, or be interested in developing such schemes at your institution. You might use different terms of your approach rather than counseling or mentoring, but if it matches the description, you are most welcome to participate or contribute to this learning group.

Convener of this learning group will introduce their plans for the academic year 2013/2014 which include combined efforts of student tutors, departmental coordinators and members of the teaching staff. The plan aims at increased mentoring of incoming students, improved internal dialogue within the departmental community and better integration of students into student and academic communities.