

**March 26 Wednesday**

PAPER SESSION 1A

**Many shades of green - Guidance counselor students' perceptions of green guidance**

Vesa Parkkonen, Päivi Pukkila & Keijo Hakala (HAMK University of Applied Sciences)

Sustainability meta-skills, as emphasized by the Finnish National Board of Education (Opetushallitus, 2019) and the European Commission's (2022) GreenComps framework hold immense potential for the future. They are not just competencies, but a beacon of hope and empowerment, guiding us towards a more sustainable world. As Asikainen and Tapani (2021) suggest, the pedagogical skills to be developed in vocational education, such as the internalisation of sustainability thinking, can strengthen transformative learning. This underscores the pivotal role of educators as well as guidance and career counselors in shaping the professions and jobs that will emerge from the digital and green transitions requiring new thinking. The objective of this study is to understand guidance counselor students' perceptions of green guidance and sustainable development in guidance and career counseling.

The theoretical background explaining green guidance in this study is based on Plant's (2015, 2020) principles of green guidance and Packer's (2019) light green and dark green approaches. They both emphasise the importance and active role of guidance in creating sustainable training and educational opportunities with a positive impact.

This research's approach is to map down the perceptions of 13 guidance counselor students on green guidance. The written research material produced by students was gathered as part of a Guidance Counselor education course assignment in April-May 2024. We examined the data using qualitative content analysis as a method (Silverman, 2000). First, we analysed the data according to research questions. Secondly, we reflected the results to Packer's approaches to environmental sustainability presented earlier.

As a result, it can be stated that the phenomenon of sustainable development is well-known; however, the term of green guidance remains rather unclear. Transition to the green economy was seen as a process, which includes ecological, social, economic and cultural sustainability. Ecological awareness was seen as an important factor in teaching and guidance, especially as a part of future change. However, there is a high deviation among respondents in putting sustainable development and green guidance into practice in counseling. Thus, there is a high demand for new thinking in green guidance and the necessity to provide new methods and tools for guidance counselors.

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### **Reclaiming a humanist guidance mission: the PIA 3 ACORDA project by and for professionals**

Sabrina Labbé, Naïma Marengo, Marie Breidenbach-Cassagnes, Gabriella Valente & Christiana Charalampopoulou (University of Toulouse)

While the presence of humans leaves an indelible mark on a geological and spatial scale, our planetary context implies a necessary transition in our ways of acting with and for our environment. This essential transition involves the future of mankind and questions our ability to take our destiny back into our own hands.

Our paper is a humble contribution related to this perspective. We will study how a large-scale project (ACORDA) enables professionals to regain autonomy in the implementation of the missions entrusted to them, to give meaning back to their actions and to rethink the axiological underpinnings of supporting students.

We will analyse the social representations (Moscovici, 1961) conveyed by various guidance stakeholders within systems designed as spaces for collective re-appropriation. Called Continuum Councils, they involve different institutions and different types of stakeholders. The principal aim is to co-construct actions on a local scale, taking account of specific local features. Will these spaces really enable the expected reappropriation? We cannot answer this question because the project is only halfway through. Thus, the study we are presenting here consists, first of all, of identifying the different themes expressed during the discussions and observing whether any semantic tensions can be glimpsed in the discourse.

Our research is based on the lexical analysis of 20 meetings (Continuum Councils) recorded and fully transcribed. The corpus was analysed using software for automated discourse analysis (IRaMuTeQ, developed by Ratinaud since 2009).

The first analyses reveal the themes associated with the speeches, highlight the semantic tensions and oppositions present in the group. Distinct representations of guidance seem also to be emerging.

The perspective represented by the ACORDA system lies in the opportunity it offers, both through the presence of deliberative forums such as the Continuum Councils and through the participative dimension of the project called “internal research”, to reappropriate the humanist issues at stake in guidance education. Will the participants seize this opportunity? Will we observe a movement from guidance-assignment to a more humanistic guidance? Will the professionals consider the specific characteristics of each individual in order to practice guidance portrayed by humanistic values? Will the professionals be able to co-construct a new guidance education while they are entrusted with a heavy burden in the age of the Anthropocene (Guichard, 2013)?

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#### PAPER SESSION 1B

##### **Constructing Expertise and Professionalism: Individual and Communal practices in Career Guidance Specialization Education**

Päivi Rosenius & Ulla Nuutinen (University of Eastern Finland)

This paper presents an ongoing research which explores the experience of constructing expertise and professional growth path (Nuutinen 2018) as an individual and communal (collective) practices among students during the Specialization Education in Career Guidance coordinated by University of Eastern Finland (UEF). We highlight both the individual practices of one's own career guidance expertise and professional growth and its development during the education and also the communal (collective) experiences of shared expertise, which relies on shared experiences and practices (Tynjälä ym. 2020). The student's at the education are heterogenous group of experts who work in various tasks and guidance roles in a spectral range of work and counseling sector, such as trade unions, companies (Human Resources), educational institutions, employment agencies and entrepreneurs.

The pedagogical structure of the education is based on integrative pedagogy (Tynjälä ym. 2016) and guided small group guidance (Borgen 1995; Vanhalakka-Ruoho & Ruponen 2013), which form a whole of the implementation, course contents and tasks, where the student is offered the space to build and reflect on his/her career guidance expertise both individually and collectively as a constructive, developing understanding, in relation to changes in society and working life, career guidance processes and theories, client interaction skills and methods.

Professional Growth Path (Nuutinen 2018) supports both individual and collective identification of competences and development as a career guidance and advisor.

The qualitative research data was collected from 14 students of the Career Guidance specialisation training in 2020-2021. 14 final interviews and written material constitute the research data. The data will be analysed using content analysis (Miles ym. 2014.)

The growth process of becoming a Career Guidance and advisor shows the multifaceted and personal character of the students' growth into their future profession. According to this research, the group's support and the heterogeneous of student's was central in professional growing. It has also shown that this kind of multidisciplinary education pedagogy provides students with the opportunity to build new networks across a wide range of fields to support their career guidance and advising work.

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## **Negotiating and Constructing Quality in Lifelong Guidance: Perspectives of Finnish Experts and Policy Actors**

Hannele Pitkänen (University of Jyväskylä)

(Career)guidance, currently found at the very core of transnational and national policy discourses promoting the idea of 'lifelong guidance' (Barnes et al., 2020), constitutes a multifaceted field of cross-sectoral policies, practices and activities aimed at supporting individuals in their educational, career and life choices in alignment with discourses of lifelong learning and continuous self-development (e.g. Robertson, 2021). These policies and practices of guidance—acted on individuals—are aimed at facilitating the governing of major political and societal challenges, such as the effective functioning of education systems in relation to the labour market and the economic prosperity and enhancement of nations in the context of the global market economy (see Hooley et al., 2018). Thus, guidance policies and practices are

subject to multitudes of hopes and expectations. This is reflected in the growing emphasis on the quality of guidance within national and transnational guidance policies (see Hooley & Rice, 2019).

While policies strongly emphasize quality, research consistently shows that the quality is often taken for granted. Its meaning is rarely made explicit, instead manifesting implicitly in these policies (e.g. Barret et al., 2006; Hooley & Rice, 2019; Saarinen, 2007). Consequently, the issue of quality becomes decontextualized from the socio-historical context to which it is connected, rendering it seemingly neutral and apolitical.

In this paper, we aim to focus on the issue of quality in the field of lifelong guidance as a socially constructed, context-specific, and political (see also Dahler-Larsen, 2011; 2019). We will examine how the understanding about the quality of lifelong guidance is negotiated and constituted in focus group interview discussions with Finnish experts and policy actors in this field. The study uses focus group interviews as its primary data source, especially those sections focusing on the quality, involving actors from three policy sectors (education, employment, youth services) and three levels of guidance policy and practice (national, local, institutional). A discursive reading is applied. It is expected that, in the focus group interviews, the issue of quality will be framed and reasoned from a variety of discursive perspectives.

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PAPER SESSION 1C

**Academic, Active, Social: University’s Implied Student**

Jussi Semi (University of Eastern Finland), Toni Kosonen (University of Jyväskylä), Sanna Vehviläinen & Päivi Häkkinen (University of Eastern Finland)

In this study, we discuss on the perspectives of university teaching staff on student support and guidance. We ask what kind of normative expectations teachers express in their discourse on what students should be like and what can be expected of them. Our interest is in the assumptions and ideals on the university students.

We approach the research question through the concept of the implied student (Ulriksen 2009). The concept highlights the implicit norms and ideals that influence student-teacher interactions, academic practices, and the broader educational environment. As Finnish higher education has diversified over recent decades, these assumptions shapes how faculty support and guide students, reflecting broader societal expectations of university education's role (Becher 1989; Hasse 2002; Ulriksen 2009, 518; Böe, Henriksen & Angell 2018, 653).

We collected research material through interviews with the teaching staff members at the University of Eastern Finland in 2022. The aim was to target individuals involved in teaching and student guidance, thus excluding those with purely research-focused roles. In total, we interviewed 19 staff members, including one professor, seven university lecturers, six university teachers, four administrative officers, and one project coordinator. In this study, we focused our analysis on those who are in the teaching positions. As a result, 14 interviews were analysed in detail. We analysed the interviews using dialogical thematic analysis with a focus on uncovering the implicit expectations that staff have of their students.

The research material was organized into three categories. The first category, referred to as the academic framework, envisions the implied student as an individual capable of independent thinking and driven by a curiosity to seek knowledge. Within this framework, the teacher's role was defined as a guide, an inspirer, and a quality controller. In the second category, the framework of activity, the implied student is positioned as a capable learner, equipped with study skills and motivated to learn. The teacher's role, therefore, is to serve as a pedagogical expert, supporting the development of these study skills, competencies, and learning processes. This framework is rooted in a pedagogical approach that emphasizes student activity, where passivity and disengaged study practices are viewed as partial problems. In third category, sociality framework, the implied student was characterized as an active individual with an open social attitude and strong social skills. In this context, the teacher's role was to support student engagement and emphasize the importance of active participation.

The study highlights the need for greater clarity and coherence in how these services are integrated into the academic and social fabric of higher education institutions. By bringing to light the implicit assumptions held by university staff, this research offers insights into how these expectations shape the student experience and the broader educational outcomes in Finnish universities.

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## **Navigating Uncertainty: Exploring the experience of uncertainty by generalist theology students**

Leena Itkonen (University of Helsinki, University of Jyväskylä)

Changes in the labor market and working conditions have intensified uncertainty regarding university students' future career prospects. Despite uncertainty, it is essential to orient oneself toward the future and understand the implications of current actions. Barnett (2012) argues for pedagogical approaches that accommodate uncertainty and empower individuals in complex contexts. Also in career research, there is a growing interest in understanding career uncertainty, with investigations into its relationship with decision-making, self-management, adaptability, and identity (e.g. Trevor-Roberts et al., 2016). This study focuses on how university students in a generalist theology program experience and respond to uncertainty. The aim of the study is to explore the role of uncertainty in students' study paths, examining how uncertainty is navigated and understood. The research questions inquire about students' experiences of uncertainty and the relationship between present actions and future ideas.

Traditional career theories have often emphasized certainty in planning and transitions, overlooking uncertainty. Although they don't explicitly address uncertainty, it is linked to deficiencies in self-knowledge, opportunity awareness and decision-making (e.g. Holland, 1973; Sampson et al., 2004). Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) suggest that career-related decision-making often occurs unpredictably, and it is influenced by various factors. More recent theories emphasize adaptability and identity development in uncertain contexts (Savickas et al. 2009). However, Trevor-Roberts et al. (2016) argue that the role of uncertainty is poorly understood in career theories, emphasizing its significant impact on career behavior.

The study involves 18 interviews with students in a generalist theology program, focusing on the uncertainty they face. Preliminary findings indicate that uncertainty arises at various points in students' academic journeys and is influenced by external comments and internal identity concerns. The ongoing thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) will provide further insights into students' experiences of uncertainty and its implications.

This research contributes to understanding uncertainty among university students and has implications for career counseling practices, offering insights into how to support students in navigating uncertain academic and career pathways.

Keywords: career choice, uncertainty, career planning, graduate careers

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#### PAPER SESSION 1D

### **Identify Yourself (Identifica-te): Impact of a pilot project on the integration of first (1st) cycle immigrant students**

Maria Paula Paixão, Sónia Ferreira, Pedro Cordeiro & Joaquim Ferreira (University of Coimbra)

Fighting school failure and early school leaving remains a priority theme in the national political agenda and is fully aligned with transnational directives. The 2030 Agenda proposed by the UN for Sustainable Development Goals to ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education for all aims to ensure that all children will complete secondary education by 2030. Some of those children come from immigrant families that cross countries in the search for a better life. These children will attend the education system of the destination country and early career counselling universal and selective measures should be in place helping promote their integral development.

Purpose: Aligned with this goals, Identifica-te (Identify yourself) a pilot project was carried out, aimed at promoting the integration of immigrant students with a selective intervention within the scope of the Intermunicipal Plan for the Promotion of School Success in the municipality of Leiria (central region of Portugal). A sample of 31 immigrant students was selected, of which 17 were part of the experimental group (pilot class) while 14 were considered a non-equivalent control group. Two studies were carried out. Study 1: Intra-subject pre-test and posttest analysis, focusing on the time-based evolution of behavioral, socio-emotional, parental involvement, routines and learning skills variables, over seven months of implementation of the



Identifica-te project. Correlations were analyzed between the variables measured in the pre-test and the outcome variables (classifications for core subjects, Portuguese and Mathematics) and exploration of possible associations between the sociodemographic variables of the participants and the results variables. Study 2: Inter-subject pre-test and posttest analysis of behavioral, socio-emotional, parental involvement and routine variables.

Results: The analyzes carried out in both studies point to the partial effectiveness of the implementation of project. However, due to time and other important methodological limitations, only the results of Study 1 will presented and discussed.

Conclusions: This research has several implications, regarding the implementation of effective interventions. It is a forerunner in analyzing the effectiveness of the Identifica-te project, constituting an empirical argument for the dissemination of its implementation, in order to make it possible to carry out more extensive and robust research.

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## **Securing Paths: Adult Migrant Students' Narratives of 'Ending Up' in UAS Studies**

Kirsi Autio (University of Eastern Finland)

In the degree programmes of universities of applied sciences (UAS) studied in Finnish, migrant students are a growing and diverse group, recognised as an exception to the 'ideal or normal' UAS student (Souto & Lappalainen, 2024). My dissertation research examines the agency and capabilities of educated adult migrant UAS students in their educational and career pathways. The narrative research is situated in the fields of critical career guidance research and sociology of education. The empirical research material was generated through a participatory focus group process and individual biographical interviews.

The focus of the paper presentation will be on the first sub-study of the dissertation, which looks at the meanings of ending up in education. The data used are the individual interviews (17).

The research questions are:

- What kind of meanings tellers give for the UAS degree studies in Finnish in the narratives of 'ending up in higher education'?
- What kind of negotiations about security are linked to the meanings of education and what kind of social expectations are negotiated in narratives?

As narrative tool for analysis I use the small stories research method. The Bamberg's narrative practice approach analyses how people as agentive actors position themselves in narratives and tellers in here-and-now storytelling situations. And how in doing so become positioned. "The agency-dilemma" - contradiction between the teller as positioning herself as agent and the societal constraints positioning "the subject" - is recognized and gives means to research agency in relation to the societal contexts. The small story research emphasises the way the referential world is constructed and how tellers "want to be understood". (Bamberg, 2011.)

Preliminary findings show that in the tellers' narratives, security runs as a cross-cutting theme in the negotiation of the meaning of education in relation to the master narratives of the meaning and functions of higher education. The degree studied in Finnish is seen as a way to be recognised as a fully capable highly educated person in Finnish society and the labour market.

The negotiations about security are connected with diverse positions that tellers' position themselves in the societal contexts of Finnish labour market, academic or specialised occupations, integration and education practices and in the family and private life. These positions intersect in various ways with each other. The capabilities of agency in these positions become evaluated in narratives about the past and hypothetical future narratives for example through experimented or assumed discrimination and opportunities to enter or exit in certain occupations (Claassen, 2017). The seek of certainty and security becomes one driving force in decisions considering UAS studies in Finnish.

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**March 27 Thursday**

PAPER SESSION 2A

### **The Societal Roles of Guidance Counselling in the Time of Eco-Social Crises**

Sara Peltola (University of Jyväskylä)

In Finland, guidance counselling reaches the whole age group in primary, upper secondary and vocational education. Access to guidance and counselling is a statutory right. An aim of guidance counselling is to strengthen young people's life planning skills. As the eco-social crisis intensifies, it is becoming clear that nurturing a viable planet and supporting the well-being of all species requires changes in all aspects of society: including the planning of studies and careers.

When referring to "environment" or "ecology" in guidance counselling research, it has usually referred to the man-made social environment, such as the current structures of education system or a workplace, rather than the life support system of our planet (e.g. Herr 1996; Sultana 2009). Researcher and career and guidance counsellor educator Peter Plant (1996; 2014; 2020) has consistently argued that planning career and educational paths is currently seen as detached from the constraints of the biological environment and green guidance should be developed to meet the challenges of a sustainable future.

The paper session will present the results of the first article of an ongoing PhD research "(Un)Entangled - more-than-human perspectives to guidance counselling".

The presentation will be based on the 18 write-ups collected from and 11 dialogues had with Finnish guidance counsellors in autumn 2023 and spring 2024. The co-researchers work in primary and secondary education in rural and urban areas in different parts of Finland. During the paper session we will create new shared understanding of the societal roles of guidance counselling in the time of current eco-social crises. What are the roles that are seen possible for guidance counselling in building more sustainable future? What creates boundaries of what is considered plausible and proper in guidance counselling? And what are the resources that enable guidance counsellors to act as changemakers in the sustainable transition?

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### **“Critical Consciousness for the Development of Inclusive and Sustainable Futures”: Development and Validation of the Scale for Italian High School Students**

Sara Santilli, Maria Cristina Ginevra (University of Padova), Terence Tracey (Arizona State University) & Laura Nota (University of Padova)

Critical consciousness has become an essential framework for addressing contemporary social and environmental challenges. This concept involves a deep understanding of power dynamics and dominant ideologies, which is crucial for recognizing and addressing structural inequalities (Diemer et al., 2022). Such awareness is increasingly important in today's globalized world, where issues of inclusion and sustainability are integral to achieving social justice (Nota et al., 2019). In particular, addressing educational and occupational inequalities is vital for creating equitable opportunities. Disparities in education and employment opportunities can significantly impact individuals' career development and overall well-being. By fostering critical consciousness in vocational guidance activities, students can better understand these disparities and prepare to engage meaningfully in efforts to promote fairness and sustainability. This approach not only supports their personal growth but also enhances their ability to contribute positively to their communities and careers (Shin et al., 2016; Thomas et al., 2014). In line with these principles, the “Critical Awareness for the Development of Inclusive and Sustainable Futures” questionnaire was designed in 94 items to assess various dimensions of critical consciousness among young adolescents. This instrument evaluates knowledge about social and environmental issues, beliefs about inclusion and sustainability, emotional responses to inequalities, and activism related to social change.

To assess the validity of the questionnaire, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were conducted to identify the underlying factor structure in a group of around 1000 Italian high school students with a mean age of 17 years. Various factorial models were compared. A specific model tested was the bifactorial model with the aim to evaluate whether a general critical consciousness factor could explain the overall structure, while specific factors related to each section (knowledge, beliefs, emotional responses, and activism) captured unique aspects of the construct. Both EFA and CFA confirmed a coherent factor structure. High internal consistency across sections further supports the questionnaire's reliability as a measure for assessing critical consciousness.

The “Critical Awareness for the Development of Inclusive and Sustainable Futures” scale is a validated and reliable instrument for evaluating critical consciousness among Italian high school students. These findings confirm its utility in enhancing students' understanding and engagement with social and environmental issues, aligning with established theoretical frameworks on critical consciousness.

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### **Eco-citizenship: development of a relationship to self, work and nature, an example of an analysis of children attending a forest school**

Jacques Pouyaud, Veronique Rouyer & Corine Ponce (University of Bordeaux)

This paper presents the first results of a study carried out with children aged 10 to 14 who attend a forest school. In this school, the 40 children (aged 3 to 14) learn the basics during lessons in yurts in the middle of the forest and during days of immersion in nature. The study seeks to understand how these children construct a relationship with themselves, nature and work that fosters an eco-citizen stance, fundamental to the coming issues and challenges of the Anthropocene. The aim is to explore how current issues of career guidance and counseling can be addressed from childhood through eco-citizen education. Using qualitative ethnographic methods, 8 children were interviewed using the method of “commented pathways” and semi-directive interviews. The paper presents the lexical and discursive analysis carried out on this material in order to identify systematic pathways and working hypotheses. The presentation also focuses on the progressive construction, from childhood and throughout life, of active forms of lives that respect the challenges of sustainable and human development. By contributing to the development of guidance skills compatible with these issues in children, we present a contribution to the debate on the development of a generation sensitive to the issues of dignified and decent work.

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## PAPER SESSION 2B

### **How a degree can rekindle the student desire to pursue its own path? A six-year group feedback**

Naïma Marengo (Institute National Universitaire Champollion, University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès)  
& Sébastien Lehembre (Institute National Universitaire Champollion)

Launched in 2020, the admission platform Parcoursup was aimed to help secondary school graduates to candidate in higher education. It was design to centralize and automatize the candidacy processes nationally. It also help to handle the massification the french higher education system is experiencing. But once in classes, some of the students are questioning their previous choices, and become more an more uncertain to pursue their studies. What's happen then?

The Institut National Universitaire Champollion has been proposing an innovative diploma for six years now. Its aim is to be an airlock (Cook & Leckey, 1999); (Lelardeux et al., 2022) for the students, in order to renew their projects. Guidance counsellors are very involved. We wonder about the capacity of institutions to individualise courses and to accompany each student through a complex and turbulent time. Otherwise, this communication, through an example, want to contribute to question how a university can allow sustainable trajectories for its students.

We used a theoretical framework anchored in social thought generally and in social representations in particular because of “the relevance of the notion of representation in dealing with social phenomena and changes” (Jodelet, 1991, p. 12).

After six years of deployment, we propose to review this experience.

Our analyses are based on quantitative and qualitative data including the characteristics of 120 students (fields of origin; gender; type of high school degree; scholarship holders or not). We collected also a qualitative data across semi-directive interviews (42) collected between February and June 2024, with former students (from 2018 to 2023).

First of all, we will introduce the pedagogical engineering process of this diploma based on alternatives pedagogies (Marengo & Labbé, 2019); (Lehembre & Marengo, 2022) and a skills-based approach. Then, we will report on the specificities of this students (social and academic background, gender, etc.) Finally, we will focus on the representation the students have of this degree, its impact on their trajectories (both professional and personal).

We will highlight the way this experience can rekindle the desire of the students, help them to connect with new opportunities. The qualitative interviews reveal that students perceive this diploma as a lifeline. This semester appears to be a crucial stage before embarking on a new training or integration project, especially through rebuilding their self-confidence and strengthening their skills and capabilities. This supportive pedagogical approach can provide essential insights and contribute to our reflection on the current state of counselling and the evolution of guidance practices in massified higher education system.

As a conclusion, we wish to remind the tension between the effect of the massification of higher education and the necessity to take the individual desire of our students into account. We would like by our contribution to share our professional realities and practices that could be inspiring for the community of guidance counsellors.

## **How Intensified Career Guidance Supports Young People in Their Transitions to Upper Secondary Education?**

Hanna Lonka, Anne-Mari Souto & Sanna Vehviläinen (University of Eastern Finland)

The extension of compulsory education to the age of 18, which came into effect in the fall of 2021, has been a significant change in Finnish basic education system and has also brought changes to the field of career guidance. The law on intensified personal career guidance aims to ensure that every young person receives sufficient support in making a choice for upper secondary education and it should be provided as needed in grades 8 and 9. The goal of intensified career guidance is for each young person to find an education path that aligns with their interests and strengths, but also to reduce inequality among learners and promote educational equality (Niemi 2022).

In this article, we approach intensified personal career guidance from the perspective of the young people who has received it from the school's career counsellors. We focus on how the intensified career guidance supports young people in making their educational choices as they complete their basic education. We ask which issues, relevant to their educational choice-making, are addressed and which are overlooked in the career guidance. What kind of career guidance practices, according to young people's interpretations, shape this scope? In our article, we combine educational sociological research on young people's educational choice-making (Hodkinson & Sparkes 1997) with research on career guidance practices and interaction (Vehviläinen 2001). The analysis was conducted using the method of dialogical thematization. Our research data consists of interviews conducted in the spring of 2023 and 2024 with 9th-grade students who have received intensified career guidance.

Our analysis shows that although guidance is fundamentally thought to be holistic and to consider the entire life context of the young person, certain themes that are meaningful to young people, especially those related to social relationships and questions of social differences and inequalities, are excluded from the scope of intensified career guidance. The experiences of young people in this study challenge career guidance to take a more emancipatory approach (Sultana 2018), which would recognize how social structures and social differences shape young people's lives. Our analysis also shows how subtly young people read the actions of school professionals and how meaningful seemingly small or even imperceptible actions are in the interactions. Research is a part of the project called "Intensified personal career guidance – work processes, encounters and student's agency" (TEHEKOP), which is implemented at the University of Eastern Finland, and it receives funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture.

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## **The objectives and tensions of intensive personal study guidance - from the perspective of career counsellors**

Anne-Mari Souto, Sanna Vehviläinen & Hanna Lonka (University of Eastern Finland)

The extension of compulsory education made it statutory for comprehensive schools to provide more intensive personal career guidance to pupils in need - for those who don't know where to apply for secondary education. In our presentation, we examine, from the perspective of study counsellors, how this more intensive guidance has been put into practice and where and to whom it is targeted.

Our study approaches guidance by theoretical lenses of activity theory (Engeström 2001; Sannino & Engeström 2018; Vehviläinen 2014). This approach provides conceptual tools not only for object-oriented analysis of guidance, but also for how guidance can be developed in schools, considering the wider context that frames it. Research on study/career guidance and educational transitions has long recognised the tensions between the institutional demands set for guidance and students' personal needs and life situations. In our presentation, we ask how these tensions appear to the study counsellors in the context of intensive personal career guidance. What other contradictions and tensions of guidance can be identified in the counsellors' interview speech?

This presentation is based on thematic content analysis of the interviews with more than 30 student counsellors. The preliminary results of the study repeat the previously observed tensions between institutional agenda ("everyone must find a place for the secondary degree") and holistic guidance, which considers the needs of the student in a variety of ways. In particular, the three groups of students - students with special educational needs, students studying Finnish as a second language and students with mental health problems - are identified by the counsellors as groups where this tension is the most highlighted. In this context, cooperation with other professionals in the school makes these tensions easier to manage. More thought-provoking challenges, on the other hand, are related to situations that are specific on the agenda of career guidance, for example, student school choice difficulties or school attachment problems. We interpret this contradiction from the point of view of the object of the work, the instruments and the division of labour. Based on our data, it seems that these challenges are successfully solved by those counsellors who are able to surpass the established time-place-orders of student guidance and who identify the object of their work in a more diverse manner than merely from the institutional agenda. These solutions can be interpreted as expansive learning.

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## PAPER SESSION 2C

### **Guidance counsellor's professional role in conversations with adolescents**

Liisa Voutilainen & Sanna Vehviläinen (University of Eastern Finland)

In the school context, guidance counsellor's professional role is to help the pupil to manage their studies and plans for the future. Particularly, their task is to ensure that each pupil will make a successful transition to secondary education. On the one hand, the counsellor represents the school institution and its demands, such as securing that the student sends applications for secondary education. On the other hand, the counsellor is "on the side" of the student, helping them holistically, identifying those issues that are relevant for them in order to strengthen their agency. This balancing between somewhat tensioned aims has been identified as a central, or even a constitutive, feature in Nordic guidance practices (Sultana & Watts, 2006; Senghaas ym., 2019; Vehviläinen, 2021). It has also been suggested that this balancing is a feature that shapes interactional practices of guidance (Vehviläinen, 2021). Our interest in the current proposal is on this professional role "in between" the school institution and the student's position.

The data of the study are video recordings (10) from real encounters between guidance counsellors and pupils in an upper comprehensive school in Finland. The study applies the theoretical approach as well as methodology of conversation analysis (CA). In the preliminary analysis, we found that the counsellors speak in a certain "straightforward" manner (without hesitation) when discussing the student's school performance, contrary to the way in which adult clients of career guidance are addressed (Vehviläinen & Voutilainen in prep). We will present an analysis of a collection of counsellors' suggestions, questions, and assessments considering the student's school performance and plans for further education. We will analyze the way in which the guidance counsellor builds "straightforwardness" to these actions, as well as the interactional consequences of these actions shown in the student's responses.

We will argue that the straightforwardness is one way to perform the guidance counsellor's role as a mediator between the school institution and the student's position. We will suggest that this kind of relaxed or informal tone in the interaction is one way in which the professionals build working alliance with adolescents. At the same time, the counsellors firmly maintain their institutional role as someone who guarantees that the pupils will follow the institutionally expected path.

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### **Hope for career counselors: The importance of emotional competence**

Kirsten Marie Dalene (University of South-Eastern Norway)

Recognizing the fundamental entanglement and hybridized nature of ecological and social questions and challenges we are currently facing, generates many important discussions about what career guidance can contribute to meet the various challenges that individuals experience (Hooley et al., 2019). Concurrently, the challenges faced by career counselors, as they deal with clients' increasing despair and more complex narratives, receive less attention. Previous research indicates that career counselors relate differently to emotions (Dalene, 2023). However, emotional competence among career counselors is absent in both international (NICE, 2016) and Norwegian competence standards for career counselors (Dalene, 2024; Bakke et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the European research project STRENGTH (Weber et al., 2021) has brought this topic to the forefront, and this paper will proceed with the research question: How can strengthening the emotional competence of career counselors contribute to the professionalization of the career counselor role?

The presentation is based on a pilot survey among career counselors in Norway about emotional competence and will primarily present a theoretical and conceptual discussion (Watts, 2011) grounded in theories of emotional competence among professionals (Jakhelln, 2011) and relevant research (Katsarov et al., 2022). The aim is to broaden the perspective surrounding hope in our present time to also include the significance of career counselors' professionalism through enhanced emotional competence.

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### **Guidance counsellor students' interpretations of pedagogical and supportive relationships in the context of practical training placements**

Toni Kosonen (University of Jyväskylä) & Päivi Häkkinen (University of Eastern Finland)

In Finland, as a part of their degree programmes, guidance counsellor students complete a number of practical training courses that include placements most often in schools but also in other contexts of guidance work. Practical training plays arguably a key role in the professional formation and development of guidance counsellor trainees as it provides an opportunity to rehearse the role of a professional in an authentic context and learn about oneself as a future professional practitioner. Our paper presents an ongoing study that focuses on practical training placement as a learning environment. It seeks to contribute to a relatively small body of research that has touched upon the training of guidance counsellors and career counsellors in general and with a focus on practical training in particular (e.g. Lara et al., 2011; Niles et al., 2019; Parcover & Swanson, 2013). Little is known about what kind of learning takes place and what supports learning in the context of practical training in guidance counsellor education.

The specific focus of this paper lies in the pedagogical and supportive relationships for learning in the context of practical training placements. Such relationships include for example the trainee-supervisor relationship and a trainee's relationships to teaching and other staff as well as to peer trainees. We approach pedagogical and supportive relationships as a socio-culturally constructed phenomenon and focus on how trainees collectively interpret these relationships.

Our research question is: How do guidance counsellor trainees describe and interpret pedagogical and supportive relationships that promote their professional development in the training context?

The data of the study consists of 10 focus group discussions with 44 guidance counsellor students on their practical training experiences. Our discursive analysis of the data focuses on what kind of pedagogical and supportive relationships are brought up in the discussions as relevant for professional learning and what these relationships are described to be like. The analysis overall seeks to capture variation in different ways of interpreting pedagogical relationships and assigning meaning to them as significant contributors to learning.

The results of the research are expected to shed light on students' ways of perceiving and interpreting the supportive, pedagogical relationships that frame the training period. Practical training as part of the guidance counsellor education is intensive and requires demanding professional learning. The student's perceptions of the support that is meaningful in terms of professional growth help the education organizers to structure the students' ways of identifying and positioning themselves in these relationships.

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#### PAPER SESSION 2D

##### **Perceptions of decent work among unemployed individuals: Examining predictors and outcomes according to Psychology of Working Theory**

Joaquim Ferreira, Maria Paula Paixão & José Rabaça (University of Coimbra)

#### Research aim

The present study's main purpose was to examine predictors and outcomes of the perceptions of decent work among unemployed individuals and discuss policy and practice implications relevant to facilitating the transition from unemployment to decent work.

#### Theoretical framework

The concept of Decent Work sums up the aspirations of women and men in their working lives and covers several elements: work opportunities that are productive and deliver a fair income;

security in the workplace and social protection for all; better prospects for personal development and social integration; freedom for people to express their concerns; organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and equality of opportunity and treatment (ILO, 2017) for all women and men. Promoting decent work, in line with the International Labor Organisation (ILO), is intertwined with creating opportunities for women and men to access decent and productive work under conditions of freedom, equity, and dignity (ILO, 2017).

The conceptual framework of the present study is the Psychology of Working Framework (PWF; Blustein, 2006) and the Psychology of Working Theory (PWT; Duffy et al., 2016). PWT is an innovative model that changes the focus of work-related perspectives from groups that have privileges and relative access to the labor market to those who struggle in the workplace (Blustein et al., 2018). The present study's main purpose was to examine predictors and outcomes of the perceptions of decent work among unemployed individuals. Economic constraints, career adaptability, volition at work, active job search, and daily discrimination were considered decent work predictors and needs satisfaction and well-being were the outcomes of the unemployed perceptions of decent work.

## Methods

The sample consisted of 1013 unemployed participants, 628 (62%) females and 385 (38%) males, 18 to 67 years old. To study the instruments we randomly divided the sample in two. Sample A consisted of 504 participants, 322 (63.9%) females and 182 (36.1%) males. In this sample, we conducted EFA's. Sample B consisted of 509 participants, 306 (60.1%) females and 203 (39.9%) males. In this sample, we performed CFA's. Instruments to assess predictors and outcomes of perceptions of decent work were administered in unemployment and training centers, using paper and pencil questionnaires.

## Results

All instruments showed appropriate psychometric properties. The results revealed that concern (career adaptability) and daily discrimination were the main predictors of the perceptions of decent work among unemployed women and men. Results also demonstrated that meeting basic needs predicts positive and negative affect and life satisfaction.

## Conclusion

The results have led us to conclude that the development of new decent work policies in Portugal can play a central and fundamental role in the integration and reintegration of unemployed people into the labor market. The acquisition of new skills will also be key to addressing the new paradigms and challenges facing the Portuguese labor market, and employers will have a share of this responsibility. Training workers for the new reality contributes to reducing unemployment in the future, which is also a social responsibility of employers and policymakers at the national and local levels.

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### **Diversity of actors for an ambitious goal: partnerships in educational guidance and counselling**

Gabriela Valente, Naïma Marengo, Sabrina Labbé, Christiana Charalampopoulou & Marie Breidenbach-Cassagnes (University of Toulouse Jean Jaurès)

In France, the Academy of Toulouse has solid experience in Secondary/Higher Education cooperation for creating orientation mechanisms, particularly regarding Continuum -3/+3 actions. Diagnostics concluded that while cooperative guidance actions exist, they can be further optimized. The ACORDA project (This project is financed by French government funds, notably the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignation) was conceived, bringing together over 20 higher education institutions and about 100 actors (Marengo and Labbé, 2022). The main objective is to develop a common, co-constructed approach to guidance on a territorial scale by coordinating guidance actors and actions.

To achieve this, field problem feedback, coherence of existing territorial measures, and pedagogical continuity between secondary and higher education are addressed through a departmental body: the Continuum Councils. These councils allow for action implementation follow-up, assessments, and feedback necessary for evaluation. By holding meetings between higher education and secondary school actors in each of Toulouse's 13 departments, these councils become forums for discussion and work in close proximity, facilitating dialogue, involvement, and project ownership by all participants.

Based on the psychosocial approach, mainly social representation theories, this paper addresses the question: How does the continuum counseling system contribute to changing long-term social representations of partnerships between different guidance actors? Through qualitative content analysis (Bardin, 2013) of data collected by recording four Continuum Councils conducted in one department from December 2020 to December 2023, we seek to identify the establishment and evolution of cooperation between secondary and higher education over the years.

Preliminary results indicate that the Continuum Councils allow for reciprocal knowledge between secondary and higher education representatives and discovery of their practices. This knowledge is essential for two reasons. Firstly, the establishment of collaborative practices: the Continuum Councils make successful practices visible through "flagship" experience testimonies ("Les cordées de la réussite" et "Les immersions croisées"). This exchange opportunity allows secondary schools to understand higher education expectations regarding prerequisites beyond the training offer. New common approaches are envisioned within the Continuum Councils' framework. Secondly, the development of a common guidance culture: the councils promote awareness among guidance actors of the need to strengthen links by placing young people at the center of the guidance process.

As an intermediate conclusion, we can say that these methods of working by addressing local issues and offering actors spaces for sharing the same topics would allow greater engagement of the actors. We also believe that the diversity of the actors is a real added value for the actors themselves, for the project actions and for the beneficiaries.

## **Representing Quality in Finnish Guidance Policy Discourse**

Hannele Pitkänen (University of Jyväskylä)

Guidance policies in Finland and elsewhere aim to promote high-quality guidance and counselling (see e.g. Hooley 2019). This pursuit of quality is reflected in the integration and normalization of "quality language" into both national and transnational policy discourses. A recent example is the introduction of the term "quality guidance" into these discussions (e.g. Cedefop 2021). Interestingly, this term does not simply refer to the expected quality embodied in practices labelled as "quality guidance." More importantly, it frames "quality guidance" as a specific policy solution to the broader issue of quality within lifelong guidance, as defined by policy discourse. In this context, "quality guidance" functions as a response to the challenge of how best to guide and support individuals in becoming competent, continuously self-improving lifelong learners, capable of managing the ongoing structural changes driven by economic, political, and societal shifts.

The example of "quality guidance" highlights the phenomenon explored in this paper. Quality is a mega-trendy concept in policy discourse, often appearing as an "easy" solution to complex issues. However, it is frequently used in a taken-for-granted manner, without a clear explanation of what quality in guidance actually entails.

In this paper, we aim at studying quality representations in the Finnish guidance policy discourse. Especially, by employing What is the problem represented to be -approach (WPR) and related critical policy discourse analysis framework by Carol Bacchi (2000; 2009) we examine:

- 1) How quality is represented in selected fields of Finnish guidance policies?
- 2) What policy problems "quality guidance" addresses in these contexts?
- 3) How these policy problems are approached through the focus on quality?

The data consists of selected national policy documents from the fields of education, employment, and youth services. We expect that, contrary to the universal notion of quality, the quality in guidance will be represented with policy field-specific emphases. Finally, contributing the conference theme, results allow us to reflect on how the hope is manifested in research data as a sign of good quality guidance.

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