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GREAT SUCCESS

The 3rd International Summer School on the use of ICT in guidance was a great success.

The use of ICT, including social media, is a natural part of the work of more and more guidance practitioners. What skills and competences practitioners need to work professionally in technological contexts? This was one of the issues discussed and practiced at the Jyväskylä International Summer School in August 2018.

Multi-professional and international

Rapid advances in information and communication technology (ICT) have fundamentally transformed society over the past two decades. As technological advances change how individuals explore and acquire information about education, training and work opportunities, there is a pressing need to align

new technologies more closely with career services and associated professional practices. The use of ICT, including social media, is quickly becoming as much of a necessity as an opportunity in career services, and practitioners' competence to work in this new mode is an area of increasing importance and has become a topic of discussion. The skills and competences in the use of ICT in career guidance and counselling are often considered secondary and are therefore poorly developed in training. Both nationally and internationally, this is a pressing issue, given the increasing need for such professionals.

The third International Summer School, 'ICT in Guidance and Counselling' was organised by the Open University

of University of Jyväskylä and Finnish Institute for Educational Research, and took place in August 2018. There were 26 participants from the Nordic countries, the Baltic countries, Qatar, and Slovenia. The participants were degree students and experienced guidance and counselling practitioners from varying settings. The teachers were from Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Iceland.

Based on research and collaboration

Traditionally, the use of information and communication technology in guidance and counselling has centred on the distribution of information. In the International Summer School, this knowledge was extended from distribution and bilateral interaction to collaborative career learning and to co-careering via social media. The one-week International Summer School was based on researcher Jaana Kettunen's latest results concerning the requirements of the use of information and communication technology – particularly in terms of social media – in guidance and counselling.

During the International Summer School, great importance was attached

to students' experiments and collaboration. In each afternoon the participants depend their knowledge in interactive workshops in a goal oriented manner. As bilateral communication on the internet is mostly based on text, in the beginning of the week, focus was on text-based communication with email and chat. In the middle of the week, the participants proceeded to collaborative career learning and development of web discussion skills and also expression of active online presence. Attention was also paid to ethical perspectives connected with the use of information and communication technology in guidance and counselling.

Inspiring and aiming for the future

From the point of view of the Nordic instructors, the International Summer School was a very good experience. The knowledge, which was based on research, was connected to practice through both functional training and

the instructors' empirical examples. During the week, the importance of collaboration, knowledge sharing and learning together became obvious. The network that formed among the International Summer School participants and instructors will also allow them to further share experiences and learn new things together. Jukka Lerikkanen, director of the Jyväskylä Open University, said: 'Organising the International Summer School took a lot of effort on our part, and we are very pleased that it was such a success. This experience has inspired us to continue to develop the International Summer School and also provide such a course online.'

International Summer School participants have already shared their experiences and enthusiasm in their national and international networks. Maria Söderholm, one of the participants, says 'This course is one of the best I've ever taken. It is unique for researchers, educators and practitioners from four

Nordic countries to share and inspire participants to learn, discuss and try things out, all with a scientific basis and in such a pedagogically professional way. I strongly recommend, joint the course on next summer!' The next International Summer School on the use of ICT in guidance and counselling will take place in Jyväskylä in August 2019.

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International group contributing to mutual learning at 3rd #ictinguidance Summer School
Picture: Martti Minkkinen

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