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About Presenters:

Mrs Riitta Virtanen, ME, Lecturer, and Student Counselor, has 23 years working experience in the education sector, of which 6 years are as a lecturer in student counselor education in JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Teacher Education College. She has taken part in two international projects as a manager. Both projects were dealing with the issue of Assessment and Accreditation of Prior learning. Riitta has written some articles in Finnish about Teacher-Tutor Training, Student Counseling and Accreditation of Prior Learning. She has taken part as a speaker in IAEVG conferences in Denmark, Italy and New Zealand.

Auli Ryhänen, a Student Counselor, is working in JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Teacher Education College as a project manager in ERKKERI project (Guidance and Counseling Training for Adults Project, 2008 – 2011). She has managed several projects in which the aims were to develop both career and study counseling and students wellbeing.

Title of Paper: **Innovative Career Counsellor Training for Adults in Finland**

Abstract:

Adults' support and counselling services is currently one of the main development areas in Finland. According to the 2004 study on the assessment of the state of national student counselling, 80% of adults' support and counselling workers did not have the requisite qualifications. Difficulties were found with the lack of common counselling strategies and network-based working models. Those involved in counselling in different fields only emphasise their own administrative viewpoint.



Furthermore, counsellors and teachers are faced with increasing demands: they need to identify prior learning and assess the competences of adult learners in order to support individualized education, learning paths and professional development. By offering innovative models of training and by educating more competent counsellors we create the possibility of providing answers to these demands. As the need for counselling increases, so does the requirement for skilled practitioners.

In the Teacher Education College, JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Jyväskylä, Finland we offer internet-based teachers' continuing education that utilizes blended learning and is worth 60 ECTS to become study-counsellors. This programme provides a generic qualification for working at all levels of education. However, the programme alone is not enough to meet the increasing needs of those providing counselling. More innovative ideas for training are needed.

In our presentation we will concentrate on both the 60 ECTS study-counsellor programme and two new innovative courses one of which is worth 30 ECTS. We will begin by explaining the ideology of this course, followed by a description of the aims, structure and its content. Then we will introduce a series of 5 ECTS innovative courses that we have developed during the last year based on the most popular themes within adult counselling work. Finally we will sum up the results and their impact. One main effect is that these programmes have offered people working in the adults' support and counselling field a common forum to become familiar with counselling practices in different organisations and share experiences, thus, developing their own and their organisations' practices.