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About the Presenter:

Sanna Mäkinen, M.A., is a PhD student and a full-time researcher in the School of Educational Sciences and Psychology, University of Eastern Finland. Since 2007 she has participated in various roles in the developing of guidance practices in basic and secondary education. Together with her colleagues, professor Jyri Manninen, professor Päivi Atjonen and professor Marjatta-Vanhalakka Ruoho from the University of Eastern Finland, she is doing research in an evaluation project concentrated in developing guidance services in Finnish basic education. The research project is financed by the Finnish Ministry of Culture and Education during the years of 2008–2010.

In 2009 Sanna started her PhD studies in Sociology of Education. Her doctoral work concentrates on the political and socio-cultural dimensions of educational and vocational guidance for young people. In her studies, she is interested in the political, social and cultural relations of guidance policies, guidance practices and the educational decisions of young people.

Title of Paper: **Educational Guidance or Effective Governance? Deconstructing Finnish guidance policies and practitioner-stated objectives for basic education career counselling.**

Abstract:

Educational and vocational guidance is often conjoined with the interests and needs of labour market and economical development. In recent times there have been concerns about career guidance practitioners becoming unwitting or complicit agents of the neoliberal state by placing its political and economic agendas above all else (Irving 2010, Colley 2000, Harris 1999, McIlveen & Patton 2006.) Guidance has been argued as a being a subtle form of contemporary governance, engaging individuals culturally and socially and to the economical processes of education and labour (Fejes 2008, Edwards 2008; Usher & Edwards 1995). In the field of guidance there is an emerging need to construct a more critical and reflexive self-understanding in relation to guidance policies and their socio-cultural impacts on practice.

The context of this study is on Finnish basic education policies and guidance practitioners' representations on the meaning and importance of educational and vocational guidance (EVG) for young people. Inspired by the work of Foucault (1981,1991) on discourse and power, this study starts by looking at current policy documents that state the public goals of EVG in Finland. The second aim is to discursively analyze guidance practitioners' perceptions about the importance of EVG provided to students in basic schools.

The empirical research data consist of the responses to two e-questionnaires (2008, 442 respondents; 2009 358 respondents). Data was gathered from local development projects (n = 148) that have participated in developing the basic education career guidance systems in their region, municipality or school as part of a national development program of basic education guidance. The majority of the respondents worked in schools and education sector (counsellors, teachers, principals).

The respondents' conceptions about the importance of EVG were examined in one (1) open-ended question in both of the two questionnaires (2008, 2009). Responses were analyzed with thematic content analysis in two phases. First, the responses were categorized in statements and also their frequencies were calculated. Secondly, a more theory-based discourse analysis was conducted using ATLAS.TI program (Braun & Clarke 2006). The aim was to identify elements of different political, social and economical discourses where the importance of guidance was recognized and justified (Fairclough 2003; Foucault 1991).

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