

## **Learner Control and Responsibility: Expanding the Concept of Self-direction in Higher Education**

If we want learners to acquire the dispositions they need to successfully function in the midst of the ongoing global digitalisation, networking transformation and constantly changing occupational paths, they need to be placed in such challenging educational settings already in formal higher education. Instead of being mere mediators of accumulated knowledge and providers of rather rigid and pre-designed learning environments, institutions of higher education should provide educational experiences that maximise a shift of control and responsibility from a teacher to learners. Contemporary interpretations and applications of the concept of learner control appear to be too restricted and ignore the wide-spread invasion of digital and networked technologies that increasingly restructure and mediate all kinds of human activities.

The thesis demonstrates how existing teaching and studying practices can be successfully redesigned and reconfigured to encourage and promote increased learner control and responsibility for one's studies, thus to support the potential advancement of more general dispositions for self-directing intentional learning projects outside of formal higher education.

The results of this research suggest that the concept of learner control should be expanded by treating digital means as a part of learning environment that should be controlled by individual learners. The thesis proposes a list of guidelines that provides some orientation of how to avoid a number of re-occurring problems and obstacles that regularly emerge if one intervenes into current teaching and studying practices that share similar educational goals and perspectives. Such intermediate knowledge claims can contribute to the ongoing dialogue about learning and teaching in higher education, possibilities and risks, and about alternative ways how things could be done differently.

M.Sc. Terje Väljataga's dissertation in the field of educational technology "Learner Control and Responsibility: Expanding the Concept of Self-direction in Higher Education" will be publicly examined at the Tampere University of Technology (TUT) Faculty of Computing and Electrical Engineering, on day of the week 05.01.2011 at 12.00 in the Sähköotalo building, Auditorium S4 (address: Korkeakoulunkatu 3, Tampere, Finland).

The opponent will be Dr. Anoush Margaryan (Glasgow Caledonian University, UK). Professor Seppo Pohjolainen from TUT's Department of Mathematics will act as a Chairman.

Terje Väljataga comes from Tallinn and works as a researcher at the Centre for Educational Technology, Tallinn University, Estonia.

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