TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS TO SUPPORT COUNSELING AT HIGH SCHOOL

PROBLEM
Counseling is a fundamental support that schools offer to students in order to provide them with guidance in academic and career planning. Therefore, school counseling must be functional, flexible, and easily available.

This project was developed and implemented in a specific context - Oulu Lyseo International Baccalaureate School – from January to May 2013. Students of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program do not have a compulsory course in counseling, where the school counselor would give all the necessary information. Counseling is mainly provided in the form of personal appointments and is centered on the counselor and on the time she is available for appointments.

AIM
The aim of the project is to provide technological solutions which would make counseling more accessible and information delivery faster. Moreover, the solutions should be student-centered, enabling students to find the necessary information independently, or seek for help when they do not find the answer. In addition, students should constantly have the opportunity to contact the counselor and set a personal appointment easily.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
The main educational theory behind the project is the theory of self-regulated learning. The four phases of self-regulated learning discussed by Pintrich (2000) are related to the context of counseling.

IMPLEMENTATION
During the implementation of this project, four main tools were considered. All of them are expected to make counseling more accessible and promote students’ self-regulation.

- **Counselor Web Page**: It is a part of the school website. It is a “starting point” for students looking for information or help from the counselor. The page includes general information about school counseling, provides contact information, and introduces the counseling tools.
- **Blog**: A counselor can publish, update and systematize information there. A blog is very easy to maintain from the point of view of the counselor, and it is extremely easy to use for students. The blog can also contain various widgets, Frequently Asked Questions, and external links.
- **School Facebook Page**: In this page counseling issues are also mentioned and discussed. In this case, a Facebook (FB) page is a good place for students to seek help from peers, teachers and Alumni.
- **Doodle**: This tool makes it easier and faster for both counselor and students to schedule personal appointments. It is important to remember that the counselor remains the main source of information and help.

Figure 2 represents the individuals involved into study counseling, their roles in each of the four counseling tools, and processes of students’ self-regulation when using the tools.

RESULTS
As a result, there is a combination of technological tools (see Figure 3) that helps students access information easier and faster, and that supports students’ self-regulation. However, it should be emphasized that a counselor is always there in order to help students in case they do not find the answer.

CONCLUSION
The suggested technological tools make the counseling system more flexible and accessible for students. The tools let students get necessary information and help faster and easier. In addition, it is much more simple to set a personal appointment with the counselor. The counseling system becomes more student-centered, giving students the autonomy in looking for relevant information.

REFERENCE

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