

The Finnish pre-vocational prison education
Workshop leader: Anu Kilku, Finland

In our session we are going to introduce the Finnish system of preparatory training for prisoners carried out at Kerava prison.

Keskuspuisto vocational institute is an upper secondary level vocational institution and resource centre of vocational special education. Over 600 hundred students study at Keskuspuisto every year.

Since spring 2004, we have organized preparatory training at Kerava prison. There are 8 to 10 students in the group. The training is worth 20 credits (approx. 13 study points) and lasts around 5 months. The students study 8 hours per day every Mo/Tu/Wed/Thu. Fridays are dedicated to independent study. The third group is finishing their studies in May 2005.

The study programme is based on the national curriculum certified by the Finnish National Board of Education.

Key skills to be studied:

Native language/Finnish

Mathematics

English

Information and communications technology

Physical and health education

Basics in life skills

Study and worklife skills

Knowledge of vocational studies and working life

Optional studies

The methods we are using are very hands-on and are based on learning by doing. The core content of the training is the development of life skills and cognitive skills.

In life skills studies much emphasis is placed on home economics. Students are provided with skills that are necessary to run an independent life successfully.

The students also practise their cognitive skills in Native language, Mathematics and English language in order to manage in vocational studies later on.

Every student is drawn an individual study plan. This plan contains the specific needs of every individual student. Since the plan is drawn together with the student himself, he has good possibilities to have an effect on the content of his course.

Together (teachers and students) we produce the rules of studies.

Keskuspuisto vocational institute's teachers at prison are committed to the quality of training, to follow the individual study plans and confidentiality.

The students commit themselves to be present, to take responsibility of their own studies, to follow the individual study plans, to give feedback and to follow the accepted rules of the group.

The student selection is based on personal interviews.

