



Surviving As Academic Teacher Without IRL-Students

Erika Sandström

erika.sandstrom@hgo.se

Gotland University Visby (Sweden)

Abstract

During recent years, the students taking courses in history at Gotland University have been pretty constant in number. What we have seen is however that we now have almost no students present IRL on campus, but hundreds taking our courses as distance learning. This development is not unique for my discipline - Gotland University has about two thirds of its students taking distance education, never to be seen on campus. For lecturers who had their own basic training in the traditional form of academic teaching, this poses a new challenge and one that can be quite hard to handle. Your role as a teacher is not longer the same, you can't do things like they have always been done and many teachers misses the daily contact with "real students". Working hours have also changed, since students groups are now larger and teachers are expected to be present at their computers also during evenings. In this paper I address some of the challenges we have had to deal with, like how to ensure that we assess the right student, how we manage without traditional seminars, how we try to make our students interact with each other and how we try to preserve the joy of teaching in this new virtual environment.