

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MEETS STUDENT POTENTIAL

BEST PRACTICES FROM THE [ETENE!](#) -PROJECT

ETENE!

ENHANCERS AND TACTICS FOR ENTREPRENEURS IN THE ENVIRONMENT OF INTERNATIONALISATION

www.jamk.fi/etene

PERIOD

1 Jan 2015
–
31 Dec 2016

FUNDING

European
Social
Fund

PARTNERS

University of Jyväskylä
and JAMK University
of Applied Sciences

COLLABORATION PARTNERS

Jyväskylä Regional
Development Company
Jykes Ltd and
Central Finland
Chamber of
Commerce

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES

CreaMentors Ltd

East Consulting Ltd

Kurikka Timber Ltd

Kytola Instruments Ltd

LH-Lift Ltd

NaturVention Ltd

Nokka Ltd

Personal Design Hat Ltd

Pisla Ltd

TPA Andersson Ltd

TARGET GROUP

Degree students studying in the international programmes of the universities and personnel of Central Finland SMEs aiming for the international market.

WITHIN THE PROJECT, THE FOLLOWING WAS IMPLEMENTED:

- over 40 company assignments by approximately 150 students
- 4 events for bringing companies and international students together
- Multicultural Business Project (MBP) course piloting and concept formulation
- International Lane: a model for launching collaboration between a company and educational institute

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Preface

LEENA RÄISÄNEN

Training and Services Manager, Central Finland Chamber of Commerce

Challenges of internationalisation for SMEs in Central Finland

Our operating environment has changed quite radically within just a few years. Digital tools and networks bring the whole world to the doorstep of all companies. At the same time, competition is impacted by international actors whose services we all use smoothly over the Internet without giving much thought as to where the provider of the service or products is physically located. It is virtually impossible to discuss the growth of companies without the viewpoint of internationalisation.

Bringing competent people and competence needs together

Many companies in Central Finland are, however, still in the planning phase of their internationalisation strategy and thinking of ways to access the market outside Finland. At the same time, we see an increasing number of international, culturally competent people from different countries around us every day. Many of them are here to study at universities, but also to expand their own network and even to look for employment opportunities. Do these cultural experts meet representatives of Central Finland companies in different forums? Experience has shown that they do not do so without first creating low-threshold opportunities and various ways of meeting up, networking, learning and finding collaboration possibilities. These possibilities were created in the ETENE! project and that is why it has been important to the Chamber of Commerce to be involved. It is our task to create the best possible operating conditions for the business life and this has been one way to ensure it.

Tools for finding and utilising competence

Often, different prejudices are linked to international experts as well as uncertainty whether or not our organisation has something to offer them. Within the ETENE! project, the aim has been to bring competent foreign people studying here closer to local companies and to enable their mutual introduction. The International Lounge concept is one way of achieving this. The concept was created and tested during the project. If a company has identified needs and tasks where foreign experts could be used, people and solutions have been offered for such needs. The Multicultural Business Project, among other things, has offered these solutions.

More collaboration

In addition, the collaboration between JAMK University of Applied Sciences and the University of Jyväskylä has been developed in the ETENE ! project. Generating collaboration is a key mission of the Chamber of Commerce. For local companies, it is essential to find the needed competence and solutions to their challenges – the name of the academic institute bears little significance. Therefore, the Chamber of Commerce is pleased to be involved in supporting these joint initiatives and projects of the universities.

Introduction of international students to companies within the ETENE! project

ANU RAULO

Project Manager, JAMK University of Applied Sciences

MURU LINJALA

Career Specialist, University of Jyväskylä

During the 2015–2016 academic year, a total of 1,373 foreign degree students from 101 different countries studied at JAMK University of Applied Sciences and the University of Jyväskylä. There is great potential that the local companies should make use of. In many companies, the lack of international experience, missing language skills, little knowledge of the target country's culture or the scarcity of financial resources may prevent the expansion of operations abroad, for example. According to the Confederation of Finnish Industries, up to 90% of companies considering or starting internationalisation need help in launching international operations. In addition, the transferable skills of international students and local networks may be lacking. New kinds of operating models are needed in order to better match the internationalisation needs of the area's companies and the competence of international students.

Looking for new methods

Universities in Central Finland, however, did not yet have a systematic operating method for bringing together international degree students

and companies. Therefore, JAMK University of Applied Sciences and the University of Jyväskylä, in cooperation with the Central Finland Chamber of Commerce and Jyväskylä Regional Development Company Jykes Ltd, launched the ETENE! project with the following goals:

- 1. To create permanent operating models for how the universities can make the competence of international students visible to the area's companies in order to activate collaboration and to bring students and companies together while developing the transferable skills of the international students and improving their future employment in Central Finland companies.**
- 2. To make the competence and networks of students coming from different fields and cultures better available to the area's companies to support internationalisation.**

Models from the world

JARI PENTTILÄ

Career Specialist, University of Jyväskylä

During the ETENE! project, it was mapped out as to what kind of services, operating models and projects directed at international students are ongoing in different parts of the world. During the mapping, the Career Services of over a hundred universities were explored. The majority of the universities offer international students similar services as to the other students. Many universities do, however, provide separate services and forms of activities for international students only with the aim of improving their employment within the country in question.

Most of the projects and operating models promoting the employment of international students focus on the following areas:

- **distribution of information to students: job hunting and internship**
- **distribution of information to employers: international university students and recent graduates as interns and employees**
- **job hunting training and counselling**
- **conveying internship and job advertisements to students**
- **networking events**
- **company visits.**

Main challenges related to the employment of foreign university students

- **Lacking knowledge of Finnish**
- **Job search services use Finnish**
- **Attitudes**
- **Bureaucracy related to hiring a foreigner**
- **Lacking networks**

Developing the transferable skills of international students

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES ABOUT THE EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

ANNAMARI ROVAMO

Career Specialist, University of Jyväskylä

A large share of foreign students is interested in working in Finland at least for a while after graduation. However, a smooth transition to the Finnish working life is only managed by very few. At the Career Services of the University of Jyväskylä, discussions with foreign students seeking a job in Finland are usually marked by three overlapping themes:

- 1. the significance of Finnish language skills,**
- 2. limited contacts within the Finnish society and**
- 3. lacking information about the practices in job hunting in Finland.**

Knowledge of Finnish is significant from two different viewpoints: knowledge of Finnish in view of the Finnish language skills required in the job and in view of access to information. Access to information is related, in particular, to the job-hunting phase, since a student without Finnish language skills cannot access information sources provided only in Finnish that are important in job searching.

Another challenge is that some of the foreign students are unable to form contacts with Finnish employers or even with Finnish students or the Finnish culture in a wider scope during their studies. In that case, the Finnish culture and customs remain foreign to the student and he or she is not able to build networks vital for employment.

The two above-mentioned facts link with the third employment-related matter of foreign students, i.e. internalising the customs of job hunting in Finland. For a student lacking Finnish language skills and networks with the Finns, it may be challenging to grasp the Finnish job hunting process and to approach employers when looking for a internship place or work. For some students, it is especially challenging to tap into the hidden job market. If the job searching practices of the student's home country are similar to those in Finland, he or she finds it easier to adapt to the Finnish style. However, if the practices differ to a great extent, the student has to put a lot of effort into internalising the Finnish practices thereby making finding employment slower.

In the worst case, these three factors (language skill, networks and Finnish job hunting) will form a vicious circle. If the student does not acquire Finnish language skills or contacts with the Finns during his or her studies, it may also be difficult for him or her to grasp the differences between the Finnish job search process and that of his or her home country. In such a situation, it is difficult for the student to find a job during his or her studies and finding work after graduation without any work experience is more difficult – and without work, no networks are created.

The universities' joint solutions for developing the transferable skills of international students

ANU RAULO

Project Manager, JAMK University of Applied Sciences

MURU LINJALA

Career Specialist, University of Jyväskylä

One goal in the ETENE! project was to test new models for jointly offering training in transferable skills for the international students of both universities. The challenges related to job hunting and transferable skills are the same regardless of the study place. The experiment was also about learning from each other and seeing if a joint implementation would generate cost savings.

Creating Careers course

International students do not necessarily have any links to the Finnish working life. As a response to this challenge, the Creating Careers course was formulated to improve transferable skills. The goal is that, once the course is completed, the international students have a better understanding of Finnish working life, they are able to recognise and productise their own competence (acquired at the university) and their transferable skills and job hunting skills have improved and they have an understanding of entrepreneurship as a career option.

The course lectures are related to both general themes for the development of transferable skills and topical phenomena and trends of the working life, such as:

- **hidden jobs**
- **entrepreneurship as a career option**
- **employment through temporary agency work**
- **preparing a Finnish job application and CV**
- **significance of the Finnish language in working life**
- **career stories of international students who have found employment in Finland.**

Students have the option of completing the whole course (1 ECTS credit) or to only attend the lectures that are interesting to him or her. The course lecturers include staff of the universities and external lecturers. International students have found the career path stories of (former) students who have found employment in Finland particularly interesting.

Ready...set...WORK in Finland (RSW) week

During the ETENE! project, also the Ready...set...WORK in Finland week was piloted. Its goal was to complete the offering of the Creating Careers course and to offer additional tools and coaching to students in a compact package to promote their employment through the following topics:

- **creating a LinkedIn profile and using the application in job hunting**
- **preparing an elevator pitch**
- **adapting a CV to suit Finnish job hunting**
- **writing a job application.**

Social media, in particular, has become an increasingly more important channel for finding employment. Students have also challenges in recognising their own competence and marketing it to employers, especially in fields where graduation does not yield a specific, predefined profession.

The educational offering of the RSW week was formulated in cooperation with the area's other actors. The programme was expanded to include, for example, the "Starting a business in Finland" workshop of the Enterprise Agency Central Finland and the "Boosting your career through volunteering" discussion organised by the Civic Activity Centre Matara.



New openings for the collaboration of companies and international students

ANU RAULO

Project Manager, JAMK University of Applied Sciences

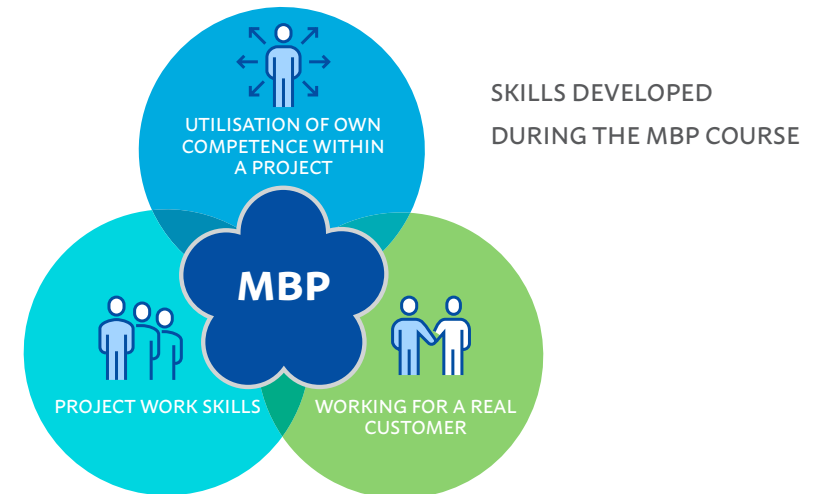
MURU LINJALA

Career Specialist, University of Jyväskylä

Multicultural Business Project course

The ETENE! project made use of the good practices of the Finnish-language Monitieteinen työelämäkurssi (Multidisciplinary Working Life course) developed at the University of Jyväskylä to construct a corresponding English-language course called Multicultural Business Project (MBP) for international students. The goal was to formulate a course for the students to improve the recognition and utilisation of their competence and their project work skills as well as to enable networking with Finnish employers and gaining experience in working for a Finnish employer.

Multicultural Business Project is an elective professional course to learn to work in a project and implement this knowledge in practice. During the course, multidisciplinary and multicultural student teams solve internationalisation-related development challenges of the companies. All students in international master's degree programmes at the University of Jyväskylä and students in JAMK University of Applied Sciences who are looking for specialisation studies can apply for the course. Preliminary information (recommendation): Intermediate studies in the major subject.

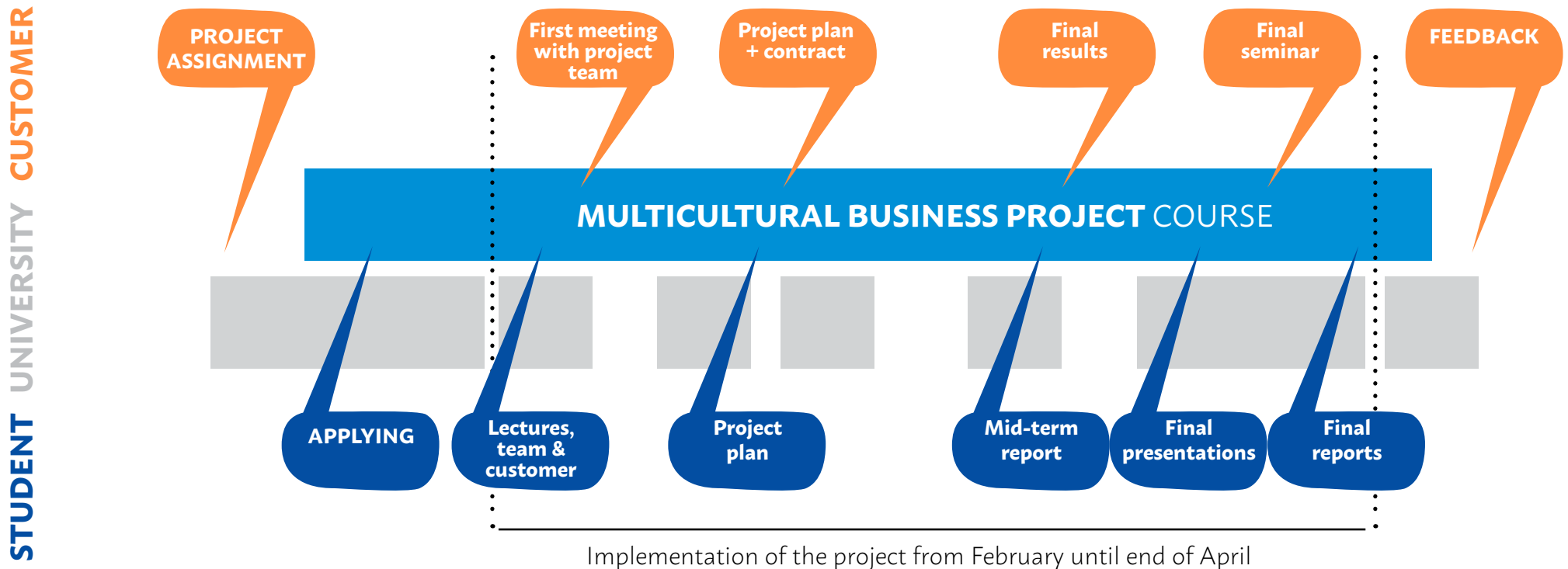


After completing the course, the student will be able to:

- identify his/her competence in project-based and multicultural teamwork
- know the principles of the project work
- work as a member in a multicultural project group
- set project goals, prepare a project plan, assess his/her time management and workloads, implement the project and present its results to the client and peer group
- act in co-operation with the client.

The students' teams and client companies will be selected at the start of the course. Multidisciplinary and multicultural team formation will be applied. The starting point is a challenge of a participating company needing solving and finding suitable competence for the job from among the applicants. Each team will have a dedicated Coach Teacher to support project learning and team activities.

Each team of five students will receive a preliminary client's assignment that will be further specified together with the client. During the project, the team will provide the client with fresh information and new ideas from a multicultural viewpoint. Workload for students will be about 135 hours and they will be given 5 ECTS. Timetable of the course is February–March.



Multicultural Business Project course – example cases

Case CreaMentors

The goal of the MBP project was to research business models and make a list of models that the company could introduce to their customers as a tool when deciding what kind of strategy to implement. The company also wanted a finished visual presentation that they are able to use with their customers.

The team created a toolbox for the company explaining and suggesting business models to their clients. Models can be recommended to the clients to improve their business or to see the clear vision of the business processes. Understanding models could be used to find different approaches on how to benefit from them. The team's presentation and report can be used as self-explanatory documents.

Customer feedback:

The period was fitting; the customer knows that the solution will be provided within a specific time frame. The work generated added value for us. It is important to set a clear goal and task. We gave the freedom of choosing industry examples, which were interesting to the students, in order to make the work pleasant. This way, I am sure, we got profoundly contemplated examples of better quality.

Case Kytola

The goal of the MBP project was to examine two interesting new market areas and find suitable distributors. That is why the Kytola team included students from the potential target countries.

The team examined the market potential of two Baltic countries

and conducted a market analysis of Latvia and Estonia. The point of the analysis was to find if there was potential for company's products in those markets. One interested distributor was also found.

Customer feedback:

We noted that it is important to keep contact with the student team. The project work went roughly as planned. Clearly the group reflected and thought about the project's implementation and, apparently, all of them participated in the work quite well. We have had preliminary discussions about the future with a few students. In this kind of a project, the students have the opportunity of demonstrating what they are capable of.

Case LH Lift

The goal of the MBP project was to create an effective branding strategy by distinguishing the company as a separate company from their "partner" tractor companies by identifying the company's image from the customer perspective and by making it easier to find the company in China and Scandinavia.

The following deliverables were put into practice:

- Survey (question bank)
- Wikipedia page in English, Finnish and Chinese (Full version including Wikipedia text)
- AdWords campaign
- Company interview video
- Social media guidebook for the Chinese website

Customer feedback:

The assignment must be very carefully specified and restricted. The project is not very large in view of the number of hours, so the company should not have excessive expectations. The orientation takes time as well. The task definition makes it possible to ensure a beneficial result. However, there must be room for creativity. Young people provide new viewpoints for doing things, because they are not in a rut or part of the company culture. We had the possibility to steer the project plan preparation and to impact its contents.

Case NaturVention

The goal of the MBP project was to develop a framework for an ideal training programme in accordance with the organisational structure and requirements of the customer and to identify key soft skills needed in the training programmes in the present corporate sphere.

The framework created during the MBP project will be used and implemented within the actual training programme. The company is able to improve their existing training programme and recruit more suitable trainees and give them the best opportunities for further development in their professional and personal career. Findings were specifically curtailed to company's present requirements.

Customer feedback:

The team was well prepared in advance before the first meeting. They had a good grip of the project and whilst challenging, they approached the project with a problem-solving mindset and delivered results. They were well organised throughout the project, and they seemed to be on top of the situation at all times. They managed their time well and reacted quickly to new circumstances.

Case Pisla

The goal of the MBP project was to help the company to expand to new markets – the Asian market, with the focus on entering Kazakhstan, and the North American market and in particular Canada and assess the market potential of entering these two countries and introducing HTT fireplaces, Tundra Grills and Muurikka pans there.

The team produced:

- Deep market research in Canada and Kazakhstan and analysed some resources in various areas such as politics, economics, culture and technology
- Contact lists of possible dealers from Canada and Kazakhstan
- Schedule of upcoming trade-fairs within the two target countries for exposure and possible dealer connections
- Suggestions of e-marketing for advertising the brands to customers; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube
- Three different documents (market research, list of potential dealers, social media marketing campaign)

Customer feedback:

The team had the ability to observe and identify the viewpoint of the company during the discussions. They were able to adapt theoretical information into practice. They familiarised themselves with the subject well and provided new viewpoints. Due to the work of the team, entering into a new market area has progressed.

Teacher's viewpoint on piloting a joint project course of the universities

JUHA SAUKKONEN

Senior Lecturer, JAMK University of Applied Sciences

Multicultural Business Project course (MBP), it's all about expanding boundaries – for all

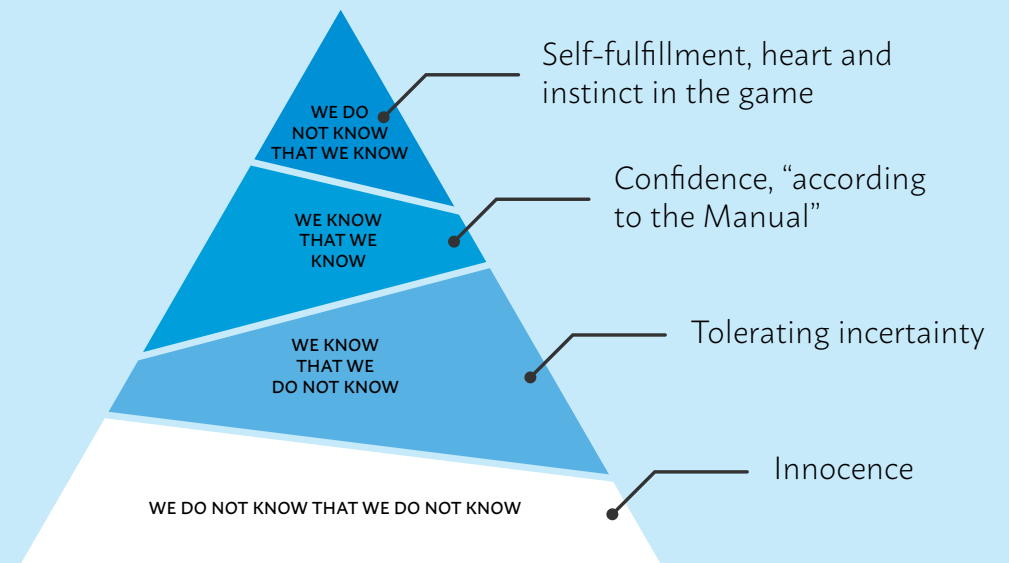
As a somewhat seasoned educator and project study tutor for international student teams, it was quite easy to see the features that make an MBP project to a certain extent different to the mainstream of project work done in collaboration between universities and industry.

The special ingredients are all related to innovation and going over the accustomed field borders.

For companies joining the ETENE! initiative it was about stepping partly to unknown – posing problems and/or challenges where the firm had not found or even sought answers to themselves as well as giving the student teams and tutors quite free hands in finding the working method and ways to answering the questions set. Joining ETENE! was a brave step by companies; hats off for that!

For Coach Teachers (CT) from within the 2 participating universities the unknown elements were both related to the topic area of the project tutored as well as the composition of the student teams. A decision was made at the start: The Coach Teachers were appointed to projects that were not a perfect match to their own area of expertise. This was done

TRIANGLE OF TEAM LEARNING?



for two reasons: 1) to avoid a situation where the CT starts to impact too much the content from the issue expert point of view 2) to make sure the CT gets acquainted with new companies and business processes, i.e. to grow their professional muscle by widening the views.

Last but not least, for students, the MBP was about meeting people from different professions, fields of business and study disciplines – both

at companies and inside the project teams. The team that I tutored was multi-everything: multinational, multidisciplinary, multi-experienced. In short, multitalented. We worked for a manufacturing business and the task was related to the preparation of their upcoming ERP system investment. Yes, we had some people who were more at ease talking of ICT systems, logistics, etc. Some were better in reporting, managing schedules, etc. Complementary skills.

At best, all the parties have been able to make a brief and joint journey from the bottom of the learning pyramid (see the image below) – from innocence of the subject studied to a wake-up into uncertainty (what should we know?) and also created some true knowledge and confidence of being on the right track. The top of the pyramid is reserved for true experts – we, as stakeholders, are on our way there. The road to the top has always passed and will always pass via the earlier steps, and that is why initiatives like ETENE! are needed!



Making capabilities of international students visible to the area's companies

ANU RAULO

Project Manager, JAMK University of Applied Sciences

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Career Specialist, University of Jyväskylä

It may be challenging for companies to collaborate with universities, especially in terms of international students. The models for collaborating with an educational institute are not necessarily known sufficiently well and the threshold to hiring a foreign student may be high. Therefore, it would be important to develop “easy access” models where the company representatives and international students can meet and mingle with ease.

International Lounge meeting place

As a joint concept of the universities, a model called the International Lounge (IL) was developed for bringing international students and employers together. IL is a concept about a meeting place where international students are brought to various business events for networking with employers. For students, the International Lounge is a possibility to make contacts with the local companies and to highlight their own competence. Students can, for example, look for a internship place or job or a topic for their thesis. The International Lounge concept involves:

- **An agreement with the event organiser.**
- **Student registration via an electronic survey. The students are asked to indicate their degree programme, work experience, language skills and competence.**
- **Preparing IL business cards based on the information provided by the students.**
- **IL coaching. The students selected to attend are given practical advice about the event, helped to set personal goals and rehearsed to present their competence in the form of an elevator pitch.**

International Lane to educational institute collaboration

There was a need to develop for companies a easy access way of approaching educational institutes within the field of international business. The International Lane is a day for companies where they can bring their challenges related to international business to be solved by international students. Companies register for the one-hour meeting by submitting their wishes related to university collaboration. Based on the preliminary information, the university maps the possible courses or

other collaboration models for implementing the assignments. Possible options are discussed and the collaboration launched at the meeting.

International Day at Work

In addition to the ETENE! project, ways of bringing international students and the area's companies together have been actively contemplated in Central Finland also by the Team Finland network members. As a result of the work group's brainstorming, the International Day at Work operating model was developed. The goal of the International Day at Work is to get foreign degree students of the University of Jyväskylä and JAMK University of Applied Sciences working for a day at companies in the Central Finland area. For companies, the day offers, for example, the opportunity of learning and practising a foreign language, learning about a foreign culture, giving the company's foreign-language materials to a native speaker for assessment or exploring the student's home country and networks as a possible target market area. Students see the company's operations and business possibilities through the eyes of an outsider and from an international perspective. At the same time, students have the possibility to explore Finnish working life and a Finnish employer. For the work contribution of every student, companies pay €50 to Operation a Day's Work Finland that supports development cooperation projects with the received funds.

FINAL WORDS

The need for coaching and services that support job hunting offered to international students will increase in the future, when students coming from outside the EU will be charged tuition fees. Educational institutes must be able to communicate what concrete models they have to offer for strengthening working life connections and entering the local working life. The challenge is shared by JAMK University of Applied Sciences and the University of Jyväskylä and, therefore, the collaboration in this field will be continued and further developed together with the business life.

We hope that the models for collaboration between educational institutes and companies as described in this publication are beneficial also to other educational institutes faced with the same challenge.

**WE WANT TO THANK ALL THE
SPECIALISTS, COMPANIES,
ORGANISATIONS AND STUDENTS
WHO WERE INVOLVED IN THE
ETENE! PROJECT.**

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ISBN 978-951-830-451-0