CHANGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Saimaa university of applied sciences,
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This book is the result of the long – term and creative collaboration of two Universities – Saint-Petersburg State Polytechnical University, Russian Federation and Saimaan University of Applied Science, Finland. Our monograph is the contemporary dialogue of two cultures, in which the traditional teaching techniques along with the innovative teaching ideas are discussed together with the researchers and lecturers of our universities – partners.

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FOREWORD

Cooperative learning

Diverse use of teaching methods is central to the learning, study satisfaction, and motivation of students. Authenticity can be emphasized in the teaching by using genuine learning situations that provide opportunities for the students to become experts in their own field by trying a failing. Aspects that influence the selection of teaching method used include:

- competence level, routines, and motivation of the students
- skills and experience of the teacher in and willingness to experiment various teaching methods
- subject matter, contents of the study unit, and objectives
- requirements of various teaching methods with regard to the premises, group size, and available time
- the range of teaching methods and their suitability for the purpose.

There is no one right teaching method but the teacher must have a selection of methods, a toolbox, for each situation. Teachers can tailor their teaching within various learning frameworks. The main creative learning methods include:

- Problem Based Learning
- Project Based Learning
- Investigating Learning
- Cooperative Learning.

These teaching methods aim to help the students enter working life after they have completed their studies and to encourage them for creative and innovative thinking. This often requires an entrepreneurial attitude such as taking responsibility, passion, willingness to make changes, networking, an ability to work under uncertainties, self-confidence, and an ability to focus on what is essential.

In Problem Based Learning (PBL), linking learning with real-life problems and their solutions is central. The method is based on the contextualised nature of learning. The ideology is that solving real-life problems provides better practical competence than studying the same contents on a theoretical level. Since working life problems do not follow the content of individual training courses, students must learn to solve problems effectively. The gap between training and working life is narrowed by integrating teaching and working practices. PBL does not reduce the significance of concepts and theories: instead of the traditional contextual correspondence, the aim is to achieve operational correspondence between theory and working practices.

Project Based Learning or learning projects is one way to implement working life -oriented studying. In project based learning, student teams or groups implement various working life assignments such as functions, events, studies, and investigations phase by phase from project planning to their implementation and evaluation.

The aim of Investigating Learning is to teach students to participate in the collective production of information typical of expert communities. Instead of trying to solve problems based on previous knowledge, new information is sought from various information sources. During the task, students share information and expertise with each other, which develops and advances their skills.

Cooperative Learning is learning in small groups in order to achieve a common goal. It is more than just a teaching method: it is a different attitude to information, learning, other people, and the environment. Learning together is not about doing the same task in a group but about studying together in order to reach the set objectives. Each student brings their own knowledge to the group and is responsible for their own learning as well as that of the others.

Creative teaching methods can be utilized in various ways such as by writing, listening, doing, and developing. However, finding the method that suits each individual situation and allows for achieving the best study results and working environment is central.

Merja Heino
Vice-rector for educational work
Saimaa University of Applied Sciences

Dear reader,

You are holding the joint research publication prepared by the joint affords of the research oriented educators of Saint-Petersburg State Polytechnical University, Russian Federation and Saimaan University of Applied Science, Finland.

This issue is the result of the long-term and creative collaboration of two Universities. Our monograph is the modern dialogue of two cultures, in which the traditional teaching techniques along with the innovative teaching ideas, used by the researchers and lecturers of our universities – partners are discussed.

Our collaboration began in 2004. That's why it is remarkable that our universities can celebrate the tenth jubilee year of our joint work by such a successful result as this representative volume's publication.

Our joint work began when the new educational program "Foreign Regional Study" with the direction "Nordic Countries" was opened at the International Relations Department in Saint-Petersburg State Polytechnical University. The students participated in this program were taught history, economics, politics, culture, literature of the given region.

The special attention was paid to the Finnish language study. Although there were highly professional teachers of Finnish as the second language among the staff of the Department, we set the goal for the students to be able to get the language training with the native speakers and to enable our students to study Finnish in the country of the language studied. This vital methodology is described as the "language bath" or teaching language in the linguistic environment. And this necessity made the Department of International Relations search for the partners in Finland.

One of the first Universities that responded to the partnership was Saimaan University of Applied Science, Finland. The first meeting of the educators of these respective institutions manifested a new stage of the wonderful collaboration among two institutions.

The Finnish language teachers of Saimaan University Arja Matikainen and Sirpa Ruotsalainen-Niskanen were the first to teach Finnish to the Russian students, a little later Seija Varis joined them as well as the Swedish language teacher Anneli Asunmaa. We are deeply indebted to the work of these lecturers as they not only taught the students the Finnish language but also carried out the intensive courses of the Finnish language and cultural perception two times a year They helped the Russian educators to upgrade some new language methodology and to master the linguistic skills. We value their perseverance and sustained affords to further Finnish-Russian education programs. The Finnish language teachers of International Relations Department Olga Bulavenko and Marina Sablina were invited to Saimaan University to teach the lecturers and students Russian language comprehension and Russian culture.

During these years of fruitful and sustainable teaching more than hundred students have been taught and practiced both Finnish and Russian languages in two Universities. The new forms of teaching have appeared as the result of the experience exchange in the field of methodology. This joint work has united and fostered our common activities. At present we, both parties, evaluate and are proud of the confidence in understanding and the support of the partners.

Since 2008 the annual teachers' traineeship for the educators of two Universities has been held. The seminars for the research oriented lecturers organized by Saimaan University of Applied Science, Finland and the International Relations Department, Institute of International Educational Programs have become the important factor for the contemporary challenging methodology training as well as the teaching experience and opinions exchange. The seminar "Challenges and Opportunities of Digital Era-CODe" held in September 2014 and organized by Saimaan University of Applied

Science, Finland became the milestone in our respective institutions' collaboration.

Recently the seminars "Express courses on the development of spoken language", organized by M.A. Sablina and O.A. Bulavenko have been widely welcomed by teachers and students alike. And there are so many challenging projects ahead of us!

On 19 March 2009 the bilateral agreement on partnership and cooperation between Saint-Petersburg State Polytechnical University, Russian Federation and Saimaan University of Applied Science, Finland was drawn up and signed. This agreement is multilateral. Signing the agreement opened a new page in joint activity of the two universities.

Our collaboration would be impossible without the excellent, enthusiastic and dedicated to their work employees. These are undeniably Virve Häkämies and Olga Bulavenko. It is they who during these ten years have been not only involved in joint activity planning, but also offered new challenging directions in it. This collection of articles has become such a new direction.

The research publication is devoted to different teaching methodologies. Teaching environment and learning situation development, ways of providing the challenging opportunities for students to master, motivation development – these are the challengers and tasks, facing the teachers of two universities.

And this is the main task of the articles in this collection. The opinions, teaching skills, related methodologies and experience exchange – this is the main purpose of the authors and collectors of the volume.

It appears that not all areas of education were discussed by the authors of this joint publication. But there is no doubt about their sparkling desire to make teaching fun experience focused on creative and proactive thinking. The engaged authors of the volume showed themselves as responsible, passionate people, eager to introduce innovative, and challenging strategies, and to create the most favorable training environment.

We very much hope that this joint work will be of interest for the scientific community of the two countries. We will be very grateful to all those who respond and express their opinion addressed to our collection.

Sincerely,

Merja Heino,
Vice-rector for educational work
Saimaa University of Applied Sciences

Sergei Pogodin,
Doctor of History, Professor,
Head of International Relations Department,
Saint –Petersburg State Polytechnical University

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary History and Principles of Russian Higher Education Development

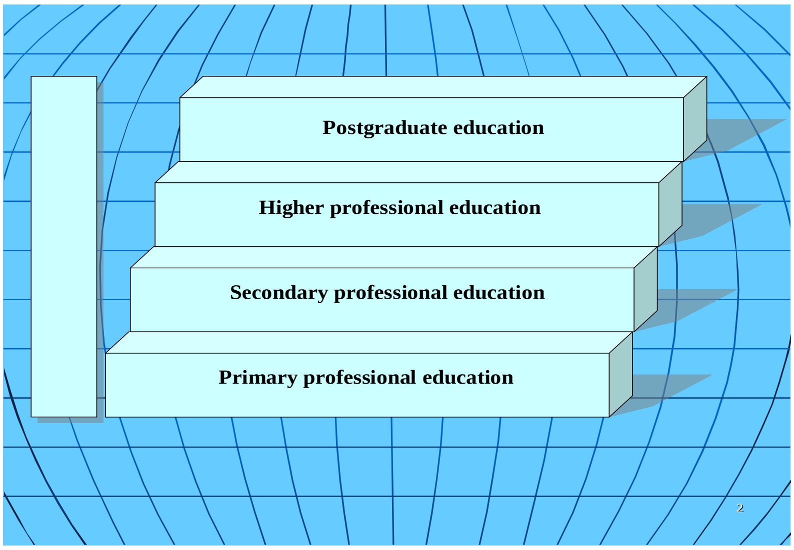
Pavlova Olga, Kozlov Vladimir

Since 1991 Russian educational system has been in the stage of permanent modernization. Three generations of state educational standards were developed and introduced in Russian Federation in 1991-2014. At the moment some approaches to development of the fourth generation of higher education standards are being discussed.

1. A general characteristic of modernization stages of Russian educational system.

Russian educational system consists of several parts including ***the legislative and normative legal bases of education*** and a set of educational organizations realizing laws and standards.

Legislative system of higher, postgraduate and additional professional education of Russian Federation is determined by Federal laws "On education" (1991), "On higher and postgraduate education" (1996), "On level system" (2007), "On federal state educational standards" (2007) and "Federal law on education 2012". On the basis of these laws educational programs of different levels were formed in Russian educational system (picture 1).



Picture 1. A structure of educational programs for different levels of professional education

It should be noted that the first documents announcing the beginning of reformation of the higher education were sent to Leningrad Polytechnical Institute named for M.I. Kalinin (Kalinin LPI) and to some other institutes of the country in October and November 1990. It was done on the initiative of the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of the RSFSR. About ten directions of development, which included, among other things, "continuing education", were proposed for discussion in these documents. In this direction in Kalinin LPI a project of the system of continuing education under the scheme "school- technical school- institute of higher education" was carried out. By 1990 the research in this direction produced some results including a concept, a structure, and a content of education. This research in LPI was carried out under the guidance of vice-rector for academic affairs G.V. Simakov. The second direction was called "multilevel education". This notion had been unknown before, which led to discussion within the administration of Polytechnical Institute and later within RSFSR. Thus two positions on the development of education connected with "continuing education" and "multilevel education" were taken in LPI. As a result of discussion on the directions of education development mentioned above a position on sending to the Ministry an application for a project of creation of "A concept, a structure, and a content of the multilevel system of technical higher education" was taken by the administration of LPI. It was largely due to an appointment of V.N. Busurin as vice-rector for academic affairs of LPI.

In February 1991a discussion of received applications took place in the Ministry. As a result of a competitive selection Kalinin LPI became the leading Russian institute on scientific and methodological program "Higher school of Russia" (HSR), which was started in1991. Rector of Kalinin LPI the corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences U.S. Vasiliev was appointed scientific adviser of HSR program and vice-rector V.N. Busurin was appointed his deputy. A coordination group was organized at the rector's office in which the following people were included: professor O.U. Kulchitskiy (mechanic-mathematician), V.E. Radionov (physicist-teacher), the author of this article (system analyst-mathematician), some scientists-methodologists of LPI namely professors K.K. Gomoiumov, F.P. Kesamanli, A.A. Pervozvanskii, V.I. Nikiforov and many other teachers of LPI and of other institutes of higher education. Such integration helped to withstand a high rate of working in collaboration with the Ministry represented by the initiator of the multilevel system - the deputy of the Chairman of the Committee professor V.G. Kinelev (later - Minister of Education up to April 1998) and "a generator of perspectives" professor U.G. Tatur – the head of Educational and Methodical Department. Professor N.G. Malishev was the Chairman of the Committee at that time. Professors V.S. Senashenko, V.E. Samodaev, E.P. Popova made a significant contribution to formation of the multilevel system. The main discussions were held on the structure and the content of education, which was under strict control. As a result the main principle of education content for the multilevel system included "deep fundamentality and professional orientation" realized in combination with the humanization of education.

Within the scope of this concept the research on the development of the multilevel system was started. It included a project of "The list of training directions for Bachelor, Master and Specialist degrees", which contained about 50 training directions and about 500 specialties, which formed the basis of the soviet system of higher special education. 55 institutes of higher education included into the list of participants by the Ministry worked in the program HSR under the guidance of LPI. By 1994 the documents which were necessary for legalization of the new system "Bachelor-Master-Specialist" had been prepared. In 1994 a well-known "Order № 240" was issued by the education authority which after the events of August 1991 had different names: "Higher school committee", "Higher school affairs committee", "Higher school and science committee" acting as the Ministry of Education of the country as in 1993 "The USSR education committee" (the Chairman of the Committee – the corresponding member of the USSR Academy of Sciences G.A. Yagodin) stopped its work. Experimental realization of the multilevel system involved different institutes of higher education when they were ready for that. In LPI, in particular, Bachelor program was started in1992 which caused some discussion among the teaching staff. This discussion acquired a constructive character after involving deans, heads of departments and leading scientists into the process of sponsored development. By that moment the tension connected with hostility towards the classical training of specialists which existed in the USSR hadn't yet appeared.

From 1995 to 2000 the created variant of the multilevel system was modernized. Within this period the second generation of the State Educational Standards (SES) was created. The basic content conception of the second generation of SES was "fundamental branch orientation", which helped to define "didactic units" of SES disciplines. These didactic units were under strict control for some next years while the procedure of "licensing, assessment and accreditation" was conducted by the "State inspection" of the Ministry of Education every five years.

The second generation of higher education standards (2000) implied the basic training of ***Bachelors*** (4years' teaching period), ***Masters*** (2years' teaching period), and ***certified Specialists*** (at least 5 years' teaching period). Higher education of the second generation on the basis of fundamental knowledge and professional orientation formed a new structure of personnel. ***"The direct process of fundamentality"*** and the study of basic disciplines at the first stages as well as ***"the inverse process of fundamentality"*** at the last stages are typical for these periods of Russian higher education development. The training of personnel was realized on the basis of 1994 year's standard and of 1998 year's modernization. The content of education was formed on the fundamental branch basis. Thus two first generations of educational standards created conditions for the new stage of development.

Since April 1998 Russian higher education was led by minister A.N. Tihonov, who had overseen the scientific research of the higher school before. The appearance of Russian higher school in the global computer network of the world community is connected with his name. The first institute of higher education which connected to the network on the1st of March 1993 was Leningrad State Technical University (LSTU), former Kalinin LPI. The university got this name in 1992 in connection with foundation of the Association of technical universities which conducted the inspection of Russian institutes of higher education under the instruction of the Committee for the purpose of giving them the status of a "technical university". The Association was founded on the basis of four institutes of higher education, namely Moscow Higher Technical School named for N.E. Bauman (rector I.B. Fiodorov), LPI (rector U.S. Vasiliev), Tomsk Polytechnical University (rector U.P. Poholkov), Leningrad Shipbuilding University (rector D.M. Rostovtsev).

From this moment organizations of higher (professional) education include different types of institutes of higher education, classical universities, and also technical universities whose active formation and establishment has taken place since 1991. The process includes the integration of different institutes of higher education. The universities which have arisen were formed as centers of educational and scientific development and integration. Modernization of schools of secondary professional and general education took place at the same time. The processes of modernization in the educational institutions mentioned above were based on the experience and achievements of the higher school.

By 2007 as many as 57 ***innovative universities*** realizing innovative educational programs had been formed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia on the base of competitive selection.

Since 2009 through competitive selection 29 institutes of higher education have received a status of ***national research universities*** with the right to realize their own educational standards of the advanced level.

Since 2009 up to now the ***content of education*** has been defined by Federal State Educational Standards (FSES) and has been realized on the base of normative legal documents of Russian executive authority and on the base of institutes of higher education normative documents. Special features of education content formation are connected with state and public organizations – educational and methodical unions (EMU) of institutes of higher education and regional educational and methodical centers. These organizations control the content, methodical support of institutes of higher education and personnel training of different qualifications.

2. The contemporary stage of higher professional education development.

Realization of the second generation of educational standards coincided with the accession of Russia in 2003 to the Bologna Process which was formed in Europe on the basis of principles shown in picture 2. The Bologna Process revived the interest in Russian multilevel system developed in 1991-2000 and defined a new stage of its development. As follows from the analysis of picture 2, many typical for Europe principles had been realized in Russia by 2003. In this transitional period from September 1998 to 2003 professor V.M. Filippov headed up the Ministry of education.

SIX PRINCIPLES of the Bologna Declaration

- **Introduction of *two-tier* higher education;**
- **Introduction of a *credit* system;**
- **Ensuring of *quality* of education;**
- **Extension of *mobility* of students and teachers;**
- **Assisting students in *finding* a job and increasing competitiveness of European education (providing common *Diploma Supplement*)**

Picture 2. Principles of the Bologna Declaration

At the same time the Convention didn't limit the right to realization of educational systems of participant countries which existed before their "accession to the Bologna Process". This fact is very important for correct understanding of the Bologna Agreements. Not taking this fact into consideration led to serious discussions. Preparation for the development of the third generation SES, which later got a legislative name Federal SES (FSES HPE) led to creation of competence models of educational content.

3. Competence models and the third stage of staffing development.

By the moment Russian higher education has been modernized on the basis of a ***competence model***. Federal laws "On level system" and "On federal state educational standards" passed in 2007 legislatively determined the development of education on the basis of the "***paradigm of competence".*** These ideas penetrated into branches. The important foundation of objects and technologies synthesis on the basis of knowledge, skills, and social and personal qualities was formed. The purpose was to ensure ***"successful activity"*** of an individual in modern society. It was a period of education transition from classical German system to Anglo-Saxon system.

Introduction of the competence FSES HPE which characteristics are not included in the legislative base of education was started in 2010. Within the scope of the "paradigm of competence" HPE is developing on the basis of different foundations shown in table 1. These foundations include humanitarian, mathematical, natural-scientific, and professional fields of scientific knowledge. It is advisable to develop a set of solutions of mathematical, physical, chemical, ecological, and other problems of creation an intellectual potential of a graduate using contents foundations shown in table1.

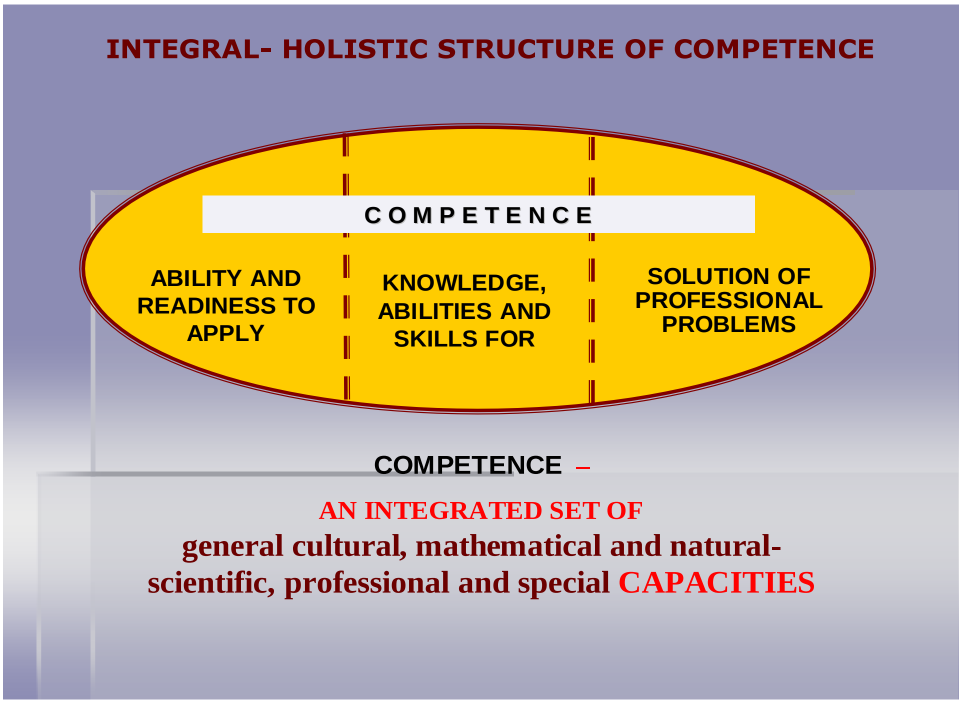
Table 1.

The types of foundations for forming capacities of polytechnic model of personnel training for the Navy	**Activity types of specialists-officers of the Russian Navy**							
	The tactics of the use of weapons	Ship systems control	Ship systems construction	Floating crafts production	Floating crafts research and development	Operation	Management	
1. Humanitarian and socio-economic foundation								
History Philosophy								
Political science Economics								
Different disciplines of the cycle								
2. Natural-scientific and mathematical foundation								
2.1. Mathematics								

The types of foundations for forming capacities of polytechnic model of personnel training for the Navy	Activity types of specialists-officers of the Russian Navy							
	The tactics of the use of weapons	Ship systems control	Ship systems construction	Floating crafts production	Floating crafts research and development	Operation	Management	
2.2. Physics								
2.3. Chemistry								
2.4. Biology								
2.5. Ecology								
2.6. Computer science								
3. General professional foundation								
3.1. Mechanics								
3.2. Electrical engineering and electronics								
3.3. Materials science and technology								
3.4. Metrology, standardization and certification								
3.5. Information technology								
3.6. Different disciplines								
4. Foundations of special disciplines								
4.1. Bachelor's degree disciplines								
4.2. Master's degree disciplines								
4.3. Specialist's degree disciplines								

The continuity of fundamentality, professional content and paradigm of competence of the education has to ensure the ability of graduates to create technologies of ***synthesis of new objects for theoretical and applied areas of knowledge*** and also to increase activity success in new socio-economic conditions. This required new techniques of content and constructive forms formation for realization of professional ***competence and capacities***.

Competence as integrated set of capacities and capacities as knowledge, abilities, skills, grasp and socio- personal qualities have to be the basis for the formation of personnel potential (picture3).



Picture3. To definition of competence as an integrated set of federal and military professional capacities

Competence base of training of engineering and scientific personnel for the national economy required new effective techniques of training of Bachelors, Masters, Specialists, PhDs and doctors of Science, which is determined by the "Federal law on education 2012".

Thus the analysis of the modern history of the education development shows the constant improving of Russian higher education concepts, structures and forms. The content and quality of Russian higher education influences the development of the whole country.

Education System in Finland

Vaittinen Pirjo

According to Ministry of Education and Culture (2013) the welfare of Finnish society is built on education, culture and knowledge. The flexible education system and basic educational security make for equity and consistency in results.

The Finnish education system (figure 1) is composed of:

- nine-year basic education (comprehensive school) for the whole age group, preceded by one year of voluntary pre-primary education;
- upper secondary education, comprising general education and vocational education and training (vocational qualifications and further specialist qualifications);
- higher education, provided by universities and universities of applied sciences (polytechnics).

The Finnish education system has no dead-ends. Learners can always continue their studies on an upper level of education, whatever choices they make in between. The practice of recognition of prior learning has been developed in order to avoid unnecessary overlapping of studies. Students' opportunities to progress from one level of education to the next are safeguarded by legislation. Both general and vocational upper secondary certificates provide eligibility for further studies.

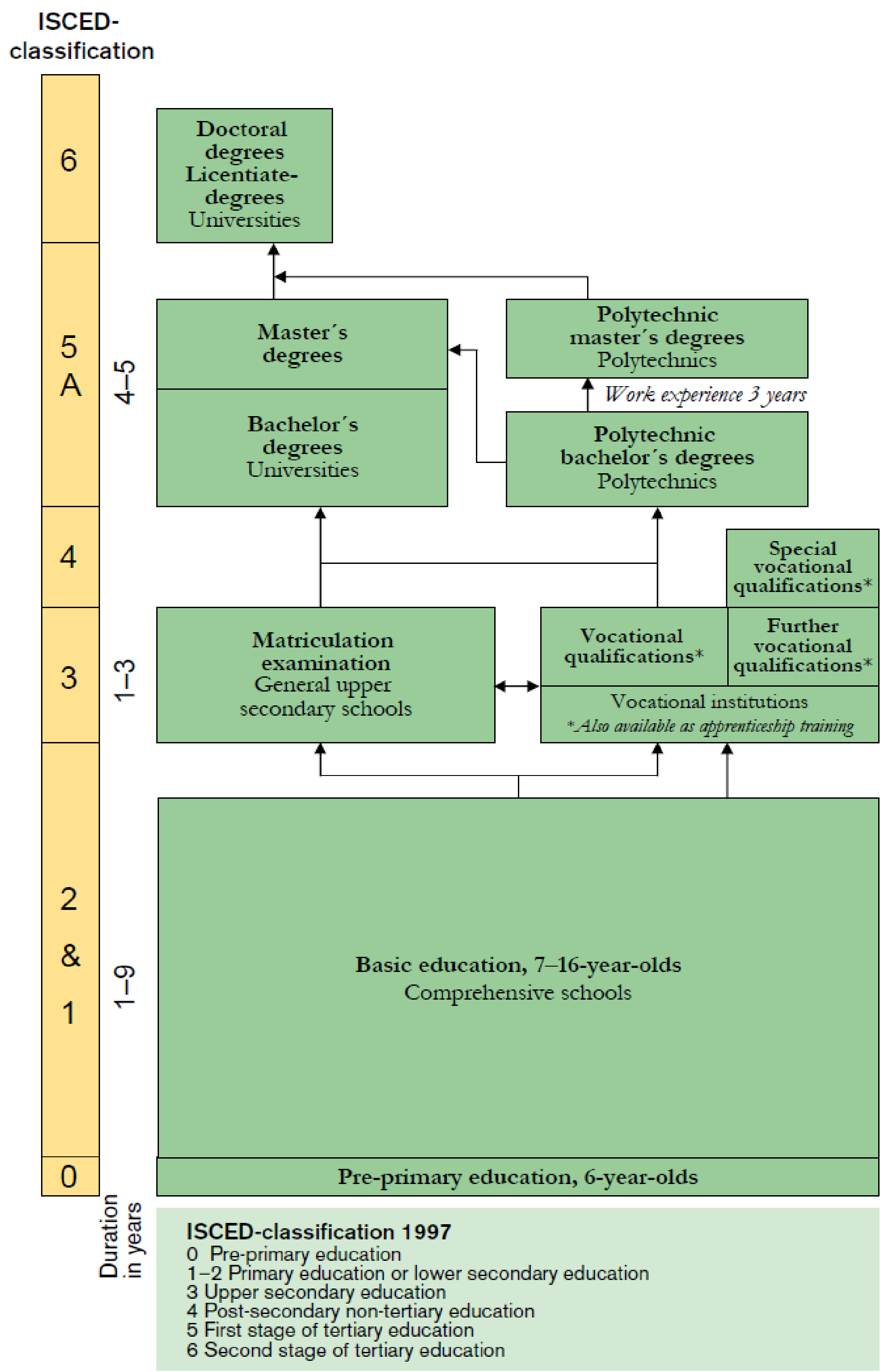


Figure 1. Formal education in Finland

Higher education in Finland

The Finnish higher education system consists of two complementary sectors: Universities and universities of applied sciences, also known historically as polytechnics. Both sectors have their own profiles. Universities emphasize scientific research and instruction. The mission of universities is to conduct scientific research and provide undergraduate and postgraduate education based on research. The universities have operated in this new form from 1 January 2010 onwards. Their operations are built on freedom of education and research, and university autonomy. Universities confer Bachelor's and Master's degrees, and postgraduate Licentiate and Doctoral degrees. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2013.)

Universities of applied sciences train professionals in response to labour market needs and conduct research and development which supports instruction and promotes regional development in particular. We can say that universities of applied sciences adopt a more practical approach. The polytechnic Master's Degree Programmes are linked directly to work in the profession, where graduates should exhibit expertise in theory as applied to practice, as well as research and development. The requirement for Master's studies in universities of applied sciences is a Bachelors' level polytechnic degree and at least three years of work experience. The polytechnic Master's, which is 60 - 90 study points (credits) and takes 1.5 - 2 years, is equivalent to a university Master's degree in the labour market. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2013.)

The Master’s Degree Studies in the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences

The Saimaa University of Applied Sciences (Saimaa UAS) has campuses in the cities of Lappeenranta and Imatra. The faculty of health care and social services is located in Lappeenranta. The faculty of health care and social services has 6 programmes of Bachelor’s level degrees: paramedic nursing, physiotherapy, nursing, public or community health nursing, social services, and occupational therapy. There is currently one master’s degree programme in health promotion offered at Saimaa UAS.

The goal of the programme in health promotion is to educate professionals from the county and from various organizations as experts in health promotion. The second cycle polytechnic degree provides direction in working as an investigator and organizer of preventive health promotion as well as functioning as a member of multi-professional groups for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of health promotion projects. This programme prepares the students for participation in an ever-expanding network both at home and abroad for the promotion of health.

The programme targets practicing professionals in the fields of social and health care specialties. The education includes both near and distance learning so that it may be carried out by working students. Each student has a personal study plan, which facilitates student guidance and the monitoring of progress in studies. Learning methods will include lectures, workshops, seminars, web-based learning, and independent and group study. The master's thesis will comprise 30 credits of the degree plan, and will be linked to professional development projects in the field.

The Master Degree Programme is still fairly new, since 2003. According to the study of Saliba (2012), the Master's Degree Programme is useful in the development of expertise in existing duties. It also proved to be useful in developing the skills required in work tasks. In addition, the degree improved job search opportunities and benefits by getting more demanding jobs for the applicants. According to her study, the recognition and appreciation of a master's degree from a university of applied sciences (UAS) is still quite poor. Fortunately, however, the attitudes and atmosphere towards master's degrees is good in the workplace.

Principal lecturer Pirjo Vaittinen, RN, PHN, PhD Nursing Science, worked as a registered nurse and a public health nurse in the community for 7 years before starting her teaching career. She attained her master's degree in nursing science and teaching in 1994 and has been teaching nursing and public health nursing in the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences for 24 years. She attained her PhD degree in Nursing Science in 2011. She is active in research and development, and specializes in early childhood development in her teaching. She is the coordinator of Master Degree Programme in Faculty of Health Care and Social Services.

Learning by Doing in Co-operation with Local Companies

Antikainen Marja, Karvinen Ann-Mari

1. Introduction.

Connecting theory and practice is the focal point of studies in universities of applied sciences. In the faculty of tourism and hospitality of Saimaa University of Applied Sciences (later called Saimaa UAS) the courses are carried out using diverse learning methods from lecturers and group works to project-based studies in our own restaurant Linnala as well as in co-operation with local companies.

Co-operation with local companies is common and versatile. Students taking placement in local companies is maybe the most common example of co-operation since the beginning of Saimaa UAS's existence. The thesis is also very often done in co-operation with local companies. Every academic year the students visit the companies and representatives of the companies are invited regularly to Linnala campus as visiting lecturers. Working in the local companies as part of some course has become more common in the recent years as the university has systematically formed strategic partnerships with some local companies – especially with the biggest and the most innovative ones. This article will introduce two cases in which students of tourism and hospitality faculty spent part of their course working in a local company during the academic year of 2013–2014.

2. The annual event of the Federation of Finnish Enterprises.

The annual event of the Federation of Finnish Enterprises (later called FFE) is held every year somewhere in Finland. In 2013 the event was held in South Karelia, in Holiday Club Saimaa (later called HC Saimaa) located in Lappeenranta, only about 8 kilometres from Linnala campus and the faculty of tourism and hospitality. HC Saimaa is by far the largest tourism and hospitality company offering a wide range of services in South Karelia. HC Saimaa is one of the few companies in the region welcoming also our international students who don't speak Finnish. This is because HC Saimaa uses English as management language. Therefor co-operation with HC Saimaa in all possible ways is crucial for our international students.

Earlier in 2013 Saimaa UAS had made a decision to replace the autumn holiday week by intensive studies' week. This decision together with the fact that the organisers contacted our Degree Programme Manager Heli Korpinen already in the beginning of the year 2013 made everything possible. There was enough time to define the courses suitable for the purpose and to plan the timetables fully according to the needs of the event. Several meetings with the organisers of the event and the teachers of Saimaa UAS were held in August, September and October to discuss the details.

Working during the event was related to the following four courses:

- Restaurant Functions, a compulsory course of the first-year students of the Degree Programme in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management,
- Planning and Organising Restaurant Functions, a compulsory course of the second-year students of the Degree Programme in Hotel and Restaurant Business,
- Typical Elements of Beer and Wines, an elective course meant for second and third-year students of the Degree Programme in Hotel and Restaurant Business and
- Project Studies, an elective course meant for all students of tourism and hospitality faculty.

All together 81 students and four teachers worked in HC Saimaa during the event. More info about what happened course by course next.

2.1. Restaurant Functions.

Including the Restaurant Functions course to be part of this co-operation was a perfect choice as the aims of the course and what actually happened matched. The aim of the course is to get acquainted with different types of restaurants and their functions. The co-operation offered the students a chance to participate in different restaurant-related functions as part of a large-scale event. This was the first time ever when we were able to be part of such a big event as about 1500 members of FFE took part.

The task range was everything from preparations such as polishing the cutlery, folding the napkins, laying and setting the tables, arranging meeting rooms, building up temporary bars or other service points to actually serving the customers during breakfast, lunch, cocktail parties, buffet dinner and gala dinner.

Each student needed to work at least one 7-hour shift, but some students chose even as many as three shifts. The extra hours were credited as elective Project Studies. The preparations' work during week 42 started already on Wednesday and the last shift was the gala dinner on Saturday evening. Depending on the shift the tasks varied, but every student got an overall idea of organising restaurant functions of an event lasting for several days. They got to understand how even the simple tasks effect the success of such an event. Also the evident importance of team work and communication became familiar to the students.

During the classes held before the event the necessary skills were studied and practiced either in the classroom or in restaurant Linnala. This was absolutely necessary as the students had been studying only for six weeks. About one week before the event HC Saimaa arranged an info to all the students involved. During this info the students not only learned details of the event, but also got to know the house rules and the premises.

2.2. Planning and Organising Restaurant Functions.

The aim of the course is to understand the importance of planning cost-effective restaurant functions as well as to learn about implementing the plans according to the business idea. HC Saimaa was kind enough to provide Saimaa UAS the plans made for the event at an early stage. This made it possible to study the planning process during classes before and after the event.

The tasks given to the students during the event were the same ones mentioned in chapter 2.1. However, by participating the students got a very good general idea about the implementation of the plans made. The students also got an excellent opportunity to learn about staff-related arrangements as more than 100 extra staff members were needed in addition to the whole personnel of HC Saimaa.

2.3. Typical Elements of Beer and Wines.

Wine tasting was part of the additional programme of the event. All together 15 students of the course Typical Elements of Beer and Wines took care of setting the premises for the wine tasting and also served the wines. The tasks given matched really well the course aims of learning how to handle and serve wine as well as how to organise a wine tasting.

Before the actual wine tasting the students were given a lecture about wine tasting and serving wines by the CEO of Wine Saimaa OÜ Tuomo Puhakainen, whose company imports the wines tasted from Italy. He also introduced the wines in detail and gave instructions of the Italian style proceedings of the wine tasting. The proceedings were rehearsed in restaurant Linnala several times before the actual tasting. And it paid off as the students were given a big round of applause after the tasting was over. Also the Italian winery owner present in the tasting was really pleased and he insisted the students should get a wine tasting of his wines later. The wine tasting for the students was arranged one week later.

2.4. Project Studies.

As part of elective Project Studies course the second-year and the third-year students specialising either in tourism or in hotel were “recruited” to work at the event info and reception desk. 14 students took this opportunity and they each worked three 7-hour shifts between Friday and Sunday. Blue and White Conferences Oy was responsible for enrolments as well as for info and reception desk services of the event. They arranged a special info for the students on Thursday afternoon and familiarised the students with their tasks as well as with the premises. The tasks included greeting and guiding the participants of the event as well as helping with different kind of problems at hand. Participating in the info, working three 7-hour shifts and writing a report of the learned gave the students one credit point as elective Project Studies. Later during spring 2014 it was “pay-back time”. As agreed, Jussi Saari, the CEO of

Blue and White Conferences Oy, visited Linnala campus to give a lecture about arranging events.

3. Red Nose Day – Nenäpäivä.

Red Nose Day is an international fundraising event created in England in 1988 by BBC and Comic Relief. In Finland Red Nose Day – in Finnish Nenäpäivä - is organized by Ylen Hyvä Säätiö. The main purpose of this charity event is to increase global justice and equality by organising entertaining and humorous program. In Finland this charity event has been arranged annually since 2007 in October or November. Red Nose Day includes both national and local happenings.

Saimaa UAS's students had a change to participate in Red Nose Day by co-operating with Imatra Spa where the local happening took place on 8.11.2013. The happening included casual buffet dinner, entertainment and charity auction. 14 first-year students of the Degree Programme in Hotel and Restaurant Business with their teacher were working there from 16.00 pm to 02.00 am as part of their Restaurant Services course. The tasks matched perfectly the aims of the course. Ten students acted as assistants to the waiters pouring wine, clearing the tables and selling additional drinks to the customers. Two students worked in the kitchen washing dishes and two as cloakroom attendants.

Students worked in pairs with a permanent staff member who guided and advised them when needed. Very soon the students were working as if they were members of the permanent staff. The teacher was supervising the students particularly in situations unfamiliar to them. E.g. selling drinks and cocktails had not yet been handled during classes. The teacher also participated in serving the customers working side by side with the students.

Before the Red Nose Day students practiced basic service skills during the classes as well as by working in Restaurant Linnala. This helped them to feel more comfortable serving in a professional manner during the Red Nose Day´s charity dinner. The event gave the students an opportunity to understand hospitality being one of the crucial values and success factors of the restaurant business. During this event they also got an idea what marketing and sales attitude means in real life.

4. Benefits and challenges of the co-operation.

It is obvious that all parties – the university, the company, the student and the teacher – benefit from the co-operation. Otherwise the co-operation would not exist nor would it continue. However, there are also some challenges for all parties involved.

4.1. The university view.

Part of the funds given to the university by the Ministry of Education and Culture is dependent on the level and the amount of co-operation with the companies in the region. The more co-operation there is, the more funds the university gets. All different forms of co-operation mentioned in the introduction chapter matter what comes to the funds, but we believe there is more growth potential in the kind of co-operation presented in this article.

Publicity, more media visibility, is very often achieved because of the co-operation. The bigger the “operation”, the more possibilities there are to get also Saimaa UAS – not only the company in question – mentioned on the media. This is very important public relations factor regarding multiple interest groups, most importantly regarding the potential new students. The media visibility certifies Saimaa UAS is up-to-date, active etc.

The biggest challenge for the university is to match the partners’ wishes and timetables with own goals and timetables. E.g. the company operates all year round, but the students are “available” only for about nine months. The students not being “available” during the summer unfortunately means turning down interesting co-operation “offers” every year.

The earlier the discussions of the co-operation start, the more likely it is to happen. Not only because of the timetables, but also because the university needs to consider which courses and which students would be the best choice. Matching the goals of the courses to the actual work taking place in the company must be examined and evaluated carefully. The university also has to consider the possible extra costs due to the co-operation. In the future Saimaa

UAS is going to charge the company at least for the extra costs especially in the cases where the company takes the initiative for the co-operation.

4.2. The company view.

For the companies, students working for them mean low-cost – maybe even free – extra pairs of hands to meet the uneven need of workers especially during high season. Food and Beverages Manager Mari Heikkinen and CEO Jussi Valtola of HC Saimaa admitted during the “Thank you dinner” in November 2013 that HC Saimaa could not have made it without the students working there. It would have been impossible to “import” enough extra workers from outside South Karelia. Jussi Saari, the CEO of Blue and White Confrences Oy, emphasised the importance of being able to use locals as additional workers. In his opinion, the students knew the region better than own staff members coming from Helsinki.

According to Mari Heikkinen co-operation also enables “scouting” of the future workers or trainees. Seeing the students in action, allows the managers a possibility to evaluate them as potential future staff members. Being able to pick up “the best among the rest” also lowers costs and saves time needed for recruitment.

4.3. Student view.

According to the feedback collected, students genuinely appreciate the possibility of working in a real-life working environment side by side with the professionals. They get more realistic idea what it actually means to work within tourism and hospitality. They get to know the company and its functions “from inside” as well as get an opportunity to show their skills to the managers. In fact any skilled student with the right kind of attitude may get an offer to take placement in the company later. Many students with previous work experience or students who have a vocational college degree may even get a job offer – temporary or permanent.

The biggest challenge for the students is to find the motivation, if the tasks given are not demanding or “glamorous” enough. Also getting used to the idea that the “classes” may take place any day of the week – also during the weekend – and may start and end at any time of the day – early in the morning or late in the evening is somewhat hard.

Usually students don't get anything but the experience and the credits for the co-operation. In the case of the annual event of the FFE it was agreed that the students will get a written certificate of participation in the event, two spa tickets of HC Saimaa as well as a dinner hosted by HC Saimaa and the organising team of the event. The delicious and abundant "Thank you dinner" with beverages followed by karaoke and bowling was organised in November 2013.

4.4. Teacher view.

The teacher supervising the students also gets an excellent "insider" view to the operations of the company in question. Also getting familiar with the latest technology, equipment and tools used is one of the most important benefits. You also learn to know the managers on more personal level which leads to more intense co-operation. Depending on the way and the level of teacher's participation, working side by side either with the students or the staff enables practising of some skills maybe long-time forgotten. We dare to claim that the relationship with the students is different in a positive way after a common experience outside school premises.

Also the teacher has to be flexible what comes to the working hours. You may have to re-arrange your personal timetable as you are needed any time of the day, any day of the week, maybe even when you expected to be on a holiday. The teacher's role is also different. The teacher is no longer the "know-it-all" expert. He or she also needs to adapt to the company policy and act as an intermediary or an interpreter in between the company and the students.

5. Summary.

The two cases presented involved two of the most important strategic partners of tourism and hospitality faculty. However, we are constantly looking for more new strategic partnerships in order to increase learning by doing possibilities outside school premises. Fazer Food Services Oy offering versatile restaurant services in the region is one example of a future strategic partner of tourism and hospitality faculty. The details of the co-operation will be negotiated later during 2014. In fact, the first step has already been taken as our students participated in serving the customers at Independence Day reception for about 800 children hosted by the mayor of the city of Lappeenranta in December 2013. We wish to find more new partners like this as learning by doing in co-operation with the local companies is a remarkable learning method.

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The Special Features of the "Social – Political System of the Nordic Countries" Teaching Course

Boldyreva Elena
Translaited by Anna Riabova.

In the modern epoch, when still more globalization processes are covering the Earth the processes of trans-boundary and trans-regional collaborations are becoming more intensive. At the same time international relations are getting stronger. The necessity of studying political, cultural, economic and other special features of different countries is becoming vital. Russia and especially its Northern-Western region, due to its peculiarities have got long and stable relations with the Northern European region. These ties are the most developed with Finland.

The intensification of those regions' mutual contacts causes the necessity of having the responsive profile specialists, versed in the special features of the neighboring country's business, and political life; those who have the second language skills at advanced level, and are sensitive to the traditional and cultural peculiarities of the country-partner.

These specialists in regional studies are prepared by the Department of International Relations, Institute of the International Educational programs of Saint-Petersburg State Polytechnic University. The students' specialty is Northern European region; they study all main aspects of that region's foreign and domestic life. And among those aspects the important role plays the study of Scandinavian countries' and Finland's social-political systems.

The author, having worked more than ten years as a lecturer of that course, has identified some special features and difficulties, which, while delivering the course of lectures and having some practical classes, should be paid special attention to.

Thus, it is advisable at the very first lecture to define the special literature, which may be helpful for the students' profound study and in their independent preparation for the practical classes. There are not very many, but quite a lot of books in Russian devoted to the state legal system and social - political system of Nordic countries as well. It is important to distinguish the works of M Morgunova, M. Isaeva, D.Barteneva, E. Boldyreva, etc. The works written by N.Grishina [1] D.Lanko [2], devoted to the experience of teaching courses for the specialties "regional study" and "international relations" are targeted at sharing the teaching experience. Such experience is worth paying attention to.

It is also advisable to pay the students' attention to such peculiarity of the course as the increasingly obsolete information, which should be constantly updated. This should be done during the very first class of the course. While writing the papers or self-preparation plans the students should be aware of what changes are happening in the countries. If the Parliament elections are discussed, then it is important to speak about the latest elections, to describe the number of seats, received by the parties. It is necessary to pay special attention to the list of the parties that managed to become the governing ones and how the ministers' posts were distributed, and, on the contrary, what parties turned out to compose opposition and to fall behind.

Among the five countries studied two are the republics (Finland and Iceland), and three are constitutional (parliamentary) monarchies (Denmark, Norway and Sweden). That is why, while speaking about the president' elections in the first two countries, it is important to keep in mind the result of the latest elections, to have an understanding of the participated candidates and their party affiliation.

It is also useful for the students to pay some special attention to the actuality of the recent administrative-territorial divisions in the countries, especially those that have been lately provided in Denmark, Finland and Sweden and have not yet been reflected and described in most textbooks.

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[1] Гришина Н.Ю. Проектирование когнитивной технологии обучения студентов технических вузов профессиональной иноязычной коммуникации. \ Научно-технические ведомости СПбГПУ. 2006. № 46. С.140-142

[2] Худолей К.К., Новикова И.Н., Ланко Д.А.Инновационное образование для балтийского региона: опыт российско-финляндского трансграничного университета.\ Балтийский регион. 2010. № 3. С. 21-28.

The lecturer should help the students to get acquainted with the information resources, those where they could get some latest and urgent news about any changes in the political systems of the countries' studied. It is important for the students to get the access and to compare some facts with the articles of the constitutions. All the constitutions define the term of office as a 4 year one, and it is always possible to find out the year of the last and next elections.

The students of the Institute of international Educational Programs (regional-studied students) specialize in Northern European region, but study only Finnish and Swedish languages. As a result, the order of the political systems' study of the countries is arranged according to these specifics. First Finland is discussed - it is a republic, then three monarchies - Sweden, Norway and Denmark, and in conclusion one more republic – Iceland is spoken about.

Let's consider in the said procedure some special features of political systems of the described countries. Finland can be classified as a parliamentary republic, but with some known reservations.

The classical features of parliamentary republic include the winning parties' formation or coalitions shaping. It means that "the state leader does not have much influence on the Government" [3]. As a rule a president is elected by the Government, "de-jure the government is accountable to the Parliament, de-facto the Parliament may be dissolved by the Government; thus, in fact, the Parliament is under some tough control of the Government" [4]. But the President in Finland has been popularly elected since 1994 [5], has enough wide powers, the sphere of foreign politics including.

This circumstance leads us to the period before 2000, when Finland was the classical example of partly presidential republic, did not have the single Constitutional Law (it was composed by two Acts; the Act of the forms of

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[3] Апанасенко Т.Е., Болдырева Е.Л., Быков И.А., Гончаров В.Э., Гусев К.А., Данилевская О.В., Кроль Е.Н., Милецкий В.П. Политология. Учебно-методическое пособие / Ответственный редактор В. П. Милецкий. Санкт-Петербург, 2002., с.117

[4] Ibid

[5] Болдырева Е.Л. Социально-политическая система стран Северной Европы., учеб. пособие / С.-Петерб. гос. политехн. ун-т, Ин-т междунар. образоват. программ. СПб., 2004.

government, (1919); the Act of Eduskunta right to control the legality of the State Council, Chancellor of Justice and the legal representative of Eduskunta while their being on duty (1922); and the act about the Law of the Supreme State Court (1922). Since 1 March 2000 the country has lived according to the indivisible constitutional document –the Main Law (Suomen perustuslaki), which has greatly changed the political system of the state. That is why the students should not use the books, published before 2000, as the information there has become obsolete because of the adoption of a new Constitution and some changes that have occurred.

Thus, now the Head of the State in Finland is the President, that is elected by direct and general elections for a 6-year term. The main duties of the President include the following: the foreign policy and safety questions, but only in the collaboration with the government. Furthermore, those duties were gutted in 2011, because of some European Union's demands to abolish the right of "two plates", typical for a semi-presidential republic, where both the President and the Prime-Minister have the right to represent the country during European Summits and other International events. Since 2011 the state has been represented during these events by the Prime-Minister only. Furthermore, in 2011, the duties of the President in the area of senior officials' appointment were reduced; the President appoints only officers and judges. The President is the Supreme Commander of the defense forces of Finland, and he has the right to pardon convicts.

The President can dissolve the Parliament at the request of the Prime-Minister; The Head of the state can veto the bill, but, the veto can be overridden by the Parliament. In this case the Parliament should approve that law again, and after that it can become a law without the President's signature. It means that the powers of the president in Finland are limited, however much broader then the powers of the president in classical parliamentary republics.

Besides those already mentioned powers in the international sphere conducted by the Prime-Minister, he has got the following ones: the management of the State Council's activity, the Prime-Minister monitors the preparation and discussion of the affairs, which are negotiated by the State Council, and is a Chairperson of some Government Committees, etc [6].

The competence of the State Council, which consists of the Prime-Minister and ministers, includes businesses and cases that are especially listed and referred to in the Main Law as well as different questions of management, administrative authority, and etc [7].

While referring to the State Council (Valtioneuvosto), it is necessary to pay attention to the terminological difference between these two notions. “State Council” and “Government” – are the terms, which are characteristic and typical for all countries of Northern Europe. The first concept is similar to Russian “Government “or “Council of ministers” and means work as the part of the Prime-Minister and his ministers. The concept “Government” is used in the Nordic countries in the case of joint meeting of the Board of Ministers and the Head of the State.

The legislative branch of power in Finland is provided by single chambered parliament – Eduskunta – that consists of 200 members of Parliament. They are elected for a 4-year term by direct and proportional elections. The powers of Eduskunta are typical for the powers of the parliament in parliamentary republics and are recorded in details in the Main Law of the country. The special powers of the members of the Parliament, who represent the province of the Aland Islands, can be referred to as the special features of the Finnish parliament. The second peculiarity of the Parliament is the existence of the Large Examination, before performing the functions of the Upper-House (chamber).Now the Examination deals with and is engaged in pending questions related to E.U. It also deals with the questions of future, etc.

The registered parties possess the right to announce the candidates for the Eduskunta elections; it is possible to list the National Coalition, Social-Democratic parties, Finnish Centre, Real Finns, Swedish People’s party, Left Union, Green Union, and Christian People’s party. The characteristic feature of

[6] Болдырева Е.Л. Социально-политическая система стран Северной Европы., учеб. пособие / С.-Петерб. гос. политехн. ун-т, Ин-т междунар. образоват. программ. СПб., 2004.

[7] Ibid

all Nordic countries is the existence of initially rather strong agricultural parties-Parties of the Centre, which have changed their names as a result of agricultural population’s reduction in the countries studied.

The legal power in Finland is represented by the independent courts headed by the Supreme Court and the Supreme Administrative Court. The courts of the first level are the regional courts; the second level is represented by the local courts [8]. The Constitutional Court does not exist.

Finland, as other Northern European countries belong to Scandinavian or Nordic legal family. The role of legal practice is more important for these countries than for the countries united by the continental system of law. Still, you will not see the system of general legal rights and duties that are typical for Anglo-Saxon models.

According to its administrative-territorial organization Finland is a complicated Unitarian state, it is divided into 19 provinces, which unite 342 municipals. The Aland Islands autonomous province is inhabited mostly by the Swedish speaking population, and has some special powers.

Despite the fact that the Swedish speaking Finns compose only 5-6 per cent of the population in Finland, there are two state languages in the country – Finnish and Swedish [9].

Sweden can be classified as the constitutional (parliamentary) monarchy.” The King reigns but doesn’t govern” in all European monarchies, but in Sweden the powers of the King are limited to the highest degree. In particular; the King’s powers in Sweden are the following: he visits other countries and receives the representatives of different countries in Sweden, is the Head of the foreign

[8] Болдырева Е.Л. Социально-политическая система стран Северной Европы., учеб. пособие / С.-Петерб. гос. политехн. ун-т, Ин-т междунар. образоват. программ. СПб., 2004.

[9] Болдырева Е.Л. Социально-политическая система стран Северной Европы., учеб. пособие / С.-Петерб. гос. политехн. ун-т, Ин-т междунар. образоват. программ. СПб., 2004.; Могунова М.А. Государственное право Финляндии, М., 2005; Бартенев Д.Г. Основы конституционного права Финляндии. СПб, 2004.

policy Consultative Council and delivers the opening speech in the sessions of Riksdag.

Riksdag plays the key role in the political system of Sweden. It consists of 349 members that are elected for a 4-year term. The seats distribution in the Parliament is arranged according to a proportional scheme (method of Lagu).The chairperson – tallyman is at the head of the Parliament. The powers and structure of the Swedish Parliament are typical for all European single - chambered parliaments. The main political parties of Sweden are divided into two blocks – 1) Alliance for Sweden that consists of the Moderate Coalition (Moderates), the Party of the Centre, Propels' Party – liberals and Christian-Democratic party; and 2) Red-Green Coalition that embraces the Social Democratic Party, Green party, and the Left party. Besides that, after the elections of 2010, the nationalistic party of Swedish Democrats, which does not belong to any coalition, has gained 20 seats.

The Swedish Government has turned out to be the most numerous in Europe after the elections of 2010. It consists of 24 ministers. The number of Ministries and ministers does not coincide, as several ministers can manage one Ministry, each minister is in charge of his own district and the field of work.

Sweden is the motherland of such Institution as the Human Rights Representative – ombudsman.10 There are the ombudsmen who are in charge of some consumer's rights defense, gender equality, ethnic discrimination, mass-media, rights of disabled people, children's ombudsman.

Norway as well as Sweden is a constitutional monarchy. One interesting special feature of this country is the existence of the second one among the oldest active and working constitutions in the world – Eidsvol Constitution, which was adopted by Constitutional Assembly in 1814.

The King is the head of the state; he possesses all powers typical for European monarchs. He represents the country abroad, receives the credentials of foreign ambassadors. On behalf of the King's name the members

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[10] Болдырева Е.Л. Социально-политическая система стран Северной Европы., учеб. пособие / С.-Петерб. гос. политехн. ун-т, Ин-т междунар. образоват. программ. СПб., 2004; М. А. Исаев. Основы конституционного строя Швеции МГИМО-Университет, 2008 г.

of the Parliament are established, he appoints the superior civil officers as well as the military men; he is the Head of the Norwegian State Church and the Commander - in - Chief.

Storting plays the leading role in Norwegian political system; it was the unique event before 2009 – a single-chambered parliament with the features of a double-chambered one. It was divided into two parts Lagting and Odelsting. Since 2009 this division has been abolished and now Storting is a typical single-chambered Parliament, which consists of 169 members that are elected for a 4-year term.150 members are elected according to the lists of political parties (the state's leading parties are the Labor Party, the Party of Progress, Heire, Socialist Left Party, Christian People's party, the Party of the Centre, and Venstre), and some more 19 mandates are the equalized ones. The method of proportional mandates distribution (method Lagu) is used in the country.

The Parliament has worked in Norway since the time the constitution was accepted. The Government is formed by the parties or parties' coalitions, which have won the elections and are responsible for the Parliament. The legal system in Norway can be described as the following one; it is headed by the Supreme Court, the Courts of the second instance are six province's courts, and the district courts, which are about 100 in the country [11], are on the local level.

One more Constitutional Monarchy among the Northern- European countries is Denmark. The Constitution was adopted in 1953. According to this Document and the Act of the throne legacy the Head of the state is the King, in the contemporary time period – the Queen Margareta II.

The Danish Parliament that is elected for 4 years consists of one House (Chamber), which composes not more than 179 members, two members from the Farer Islands and two from Greenland. The large districts have 40 extra mandates.

[11] Болдырева Е.Л. Социально-политическая система стран Северной Европы., учеб. пособие / С.-Петерб. гос. политехн. ун-т, Ин-т междунар. образоват. программ. СПб., 2004; М.А. Исаев. Основы конституционного строя Норвегии. М.: Муравей, 2001.

The main political parties of Denmark are the ones that compile the governing “red coalition». They are Social-democratic party, Social peoples’ party. The united list consists of Red-Green and Radical Venstre, and also the parties that are represented in the Parliament and unite the “blue “coalition – Christian people’s party, Venstre, Children people’s party, Conservative people’s party and Liberal alliance.

The parliamentary activity is active in the country; the government has got all main powers to maintain the state authority. The government according to the paragraph 14 of the Constitution is appointed and resigned by the King. However, it is done by the Prime-Minister in practice. The King appoints the leader of the Parliamentary majority party in Folketing; moreover, the coalitional government from two or more parties is a regular event in Denmark. Such staff allows the government to be based on the majority in Parliament.

As the confirmation of the common tendency targeted at the consolidation of the local self-government units, administrative-territorial structure reform was held in Denmark. Since 1January 2007 the country has been divided into five regions and 98 communes. Besides, Denmark is a complicated Unitarian state, which compiles two self-governed territories – the Farrier Islands and Greenland. It is important to remind the students about this fact and leave some time in order to consider and discuss the political structure of the indicated territories.

The Supreme Court heads the legal system of Denmark; the step below it two Courts of Appeals can be noticed, the ones in charge of the eastern and western regions; and the lowest part of the legal system might be described as the municipal courts, which are formed in 82 legal regions. More than that, according to some traditions the general legal court is considered to be the one that considers the navy and trade cases [12].

It is preferable to finish the study of the course of “Social – Political system of Nordic countries” by scrutinizing the state system of Iceland, which is the parliamentary republic, but with the same special features that Finland has got –

[12] Подробнее о политической системе Дании см.: Болдырева Е. Политическая система стран Северной Европы: Учебное пособие. СПБ., 2005; Исаев М.А. Основы конституционного строя Дании. М., 2002.

that is the national President's election. More than that, the term of presidency is not limited by the special number of terms, and if only one candidate is nominated, then the elections are not held and the candidate becomes the President.

So, the present President – Olafur Ragnar Grimsson has been permanently on the post since 1996.

The experience of Iceland connected with the national writing and adoption of the Constitution by using social nets, and etc. is enough interesting and unique. It is the new word in the Constitutional Law and this experience is worth being thoroughly studied. The text of the Constitution was supported on the People's Referendum. This text is being approved by the Parliament right now and will, likely, to become official soon.

But still the legal branch of power is personified by Alting according to the Constitution in force. Alting is considered to be the oldest Parliament (was founded in 930); it consists of 63 members, that are elected for a 4 year term in 6 electoral districts. The leading parties are represented in the Parliament – The Party of Independence, Progressive Party, Social-democratic alliance, Left-green movement, Bright Future and Pirate's party.

The executive branch of power is represented by the Government with the Prime – Minister at its head. The powers of the government are traditional for parliamentary republics. The legal power in Iceland consists of the district courts and the Supreme Court. Iceland is divided into the regions and municipals (8 and 74 accordingly).

This is the author's opinion on the main points that should be paid attention to while delivering the course of lectures entitled "Social- Political system in the Nordic countries". These ideas are the key points and without the thorough analysis and good knowledge of this information it will be difficult for the students to penetrate into the further courses 'content that forms the "political block "of the educational program, such as, for example," The Civil Service in the Nordic countries" and "Local authorities of the Northern Europe".

Methods of incentive motivation to speaking in foreigner language teaching program

Bulavenko Olga
Translaited by Evgenia Plotnikova

Who exactly do we teach? What are the main factors of language choice? What can we, as teachers, do to keep students motivated and interested in speaking?

1. Finnish language as the part of the learning foreign languages puzzle in State Polytechnic University.
2. Students who choose to learn Finnish language and culture, or the specific features of the target group.
3. The term motivation in the works of Russian researchers.
4. Russian features of students' motivation.
5. Special aspects of Finnish language teaching at International Relations Department.
6. Let us discuss charts! Commentaries.
7. Cultural aspect of learning language helps to keep students motivated.
8. Things a teacher can do to help students stay motivated.
9. Teacher as the example is an effective way to help students not to lose motivation.
10. Programme named Tandem as the way to arouse motivation.

Finnish language as the part of the learning foreign languages puzzle in State Polytechnic University.

International Relations Department of State Polytechnic University is the studying and research centre for aspects of culture, history, economics and demography of different countries of the world. Bachelor degree programme European Researches as well as Musters degree programme Northern Countries contain packs including subjects concerning different aspects of social, political and cultural life of the region of choice. One of the subjects – probably the key one – is the language of the region of choice. Students can choose Finnish as their language since year 2002. Students have 8 hours of language a week. They study language for 8 terms, what as a result comes out at significant 1624 hours of class hours (or 45 credits).

Finnish language takes up 22% of the whole class time during 8 terms of Bachelor degree programme, which is in turn two times more than the amount of time assigned for English as the core subject at this department. It is important to mention that English is not new to the students since they start studying it at school. At the same time, the programme of Finnish language is drawn up for those who have never studied this language before.

It is also necessary to mention that Finnish language programme is not linguistically oriented. On the contrary, it is intended to be socially linguistic as the logical part of curricular devoted to all significant aspects of life of the region like history, culture, economy and politics. As a result, the central idea of the course is to teach students different aspects of speaking. Besides, the teacher has only four years in his/her disposal to teach language. It means that by the time the student graduates his/her level is A2-B1 or B2 at the most. In addition, it is there, where the motivation plays the key role as well as the amount of hard work of each student.

Students who choose to learn Finnish language and culture, or the specific features of the target group.

Resent years have brought many changes in the international economy, politics and relations. The number of international companies, international conferences and international exchange on different levels and in different spheres mean that the students have a chance to take active part in the process. People make friends worldwide. Interpersonal relations are no less important than official ones. Finnish language is popular and necessary in Saint-Petersburg especially due to its geographical situation.

First year students are offered wide range of choice of languages: Spanish, Chinese, German, Swedish, Finnish, English and Russian as the language of the region of choice. Who are the students who choose Finnish? Why do they choose the Baltic Region Countries? What can teachers of Finnish do the help students get the best possible result? Petersburg is very popular destination among Finns and vice versa. There are many Finnish-Russian companies in North-West Region of Russia, too. We are historically close with Finns and have a very old history of relations. Besides, North-West Region of Russia is traditionally the territory of Ingrians who use Finnish as their Lingua Franca, so the family influence can be the reason.

The factors above show the main reasons why students, who leave in Saint-Petersburg, choose to learn Finnish as their language.

It is obvious that not only young people of Saint-Petersburg choose to study Finnish. What makes other students take the same decision? Some dream of working in Finland as in the prosperous country of Europe. The others prefer to find a position in the international company and not come back to the home region. There are students choose Finnish as the exotic European language though they have just a vague idea how difficult to study Finnish is. The thing is that Finnish does not belong to German or Latin group of languages like most of European languages. So very few students are aware of its uniqueness and history. One also should not forget that some just poke the sky and find themselves in the group of Finnish learning students. Luckily, there is always a number of students (though they are few) who are constantly interested in the Baltic Region, its history and culture and Finnish in particular. These students inevitably show the best results in their studies no matter how little time they have for it.

- Consequently, we see four mini-groups of students:
- Active people from Saint-Petersburg and Ingria
- Students who come from other regions

- Those who are really interested in Finland
- Students indifferent to any language or culture.

M.L. Vaysburd in his book Use of educational role-speaking situation while teaching speaking foreign language [1] states that the teacher needs to know the reasons a student had as well as student's individual characteristics. Thus, the teacher understands individual needs and motives for learning the foreign language of every student in class, so that he/she, in turn, could choose the appropriate instruments of improvement of motivation. The programme of teaching Finnish can be applied within the topic of International Researches in the aspect of goals and incorporation of the programme. Expertise in linguistics of students is application-oriented as well. These to facts reflect in the methods of teaching the language. (Zymnyaya, 2010:130).

The term motivation in the works of Russian researchers.

Irina Zymnyaya [2], the expert in psychology of development of speaking, states that "motivation is the key problem in Russian and foreign pedagogical psychology" [3]. When you know what can motivate the student you know which methods to choose. Some teachers mix the ideas of motivation and interest, believing them to be synonyms. It is helpful to find the form of teaching which will make the student the central figure of the process and encourage him/her to be active, independent and initiative. That is how the student stays interested in the subject matter of the programme and in the process of studying as is. The main point is to offer the kind of tasks that will keep students active and occupied with the process of learning most of the time. The more active they are the more interested they become. Easier tasks are usually ignored, but the ones that require active thinking are appreciated and believed to be useful. On the other hand, the task should not be too difficult otherwise people easily loose interest and motivation.

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[1] Vaysburd M.L. Use of educational role-speaking situation while teaching speaking foreign language, 2001. p.71

[2] Zymnyaya Irina Alexeevna (1921) PhD of Psychology, professor, member of the Russian Education Academy, Honored Scientist of RF. Her key work was dedicated to the development of original functional-psychological scheme of birth and perception of speaking.

[3] Zymnyaya I.A. Pedagogical psychology, 2010. p. 134

The task should be of appropriate difficulty. Thus, encountering the obstacle they cannot overcome applying the knowledge already available the students feel the need to learn the new amount of information. It is preferable to change materials and strategy of teaching from time to time (but not too often!). Students like new materials. The manner of the teaching, emotions and friendliness are also helpful. In her book, Pedagogical psychology, Zymnyaya I.A. states that there four paths of types of motivation:

Process	(students like to study and enjoy the process of studying)
Result	(students knows exactly why he/she studies the subject, e.g. language)
Teacher's appraisal	typical for first year students who equal the appraisal with the amount of knowledge they get)
Avoiding of uncomfortable situation	(students know that if they are not successful, they get expelled) [4].

Russian features of students' motivation.

Since studying is stressful, time consuming and implies deadlines, motivation plays the key role in the process. First year students (though with few exceptions) are highly motivated. The reason is that when they choose International Relations Department and Finnish language in particular they are rather sure of their choice.

Former pupils traditionally become students right after school at the age of 18-19.

That is why the most significant criteria for first your students is Teacher's appraisal (see Chart 1). However, with time students find other paths of types of motivation more important. Some students find part-time jobs and have less and less time for studying at home. As for undergraduate students, they show even less interest, and as a result, it takes a lot of teacher's time and effort to keep students motivated.

The specifics character of learning Finnish is that accumulation of language potential takes significant amount of time. The thing is that the student need to

[4] Zymnyaya I.A. Pedagogical psychology, 2010. p. 135

learn wide variety of material at the same time: morphology, prosodic systems and intonation, grammatical and prepositional structures and the philosophical aspect of the language. Only after all that will he/she be able to communicate effectively. That is way the teacher should put most effort into the development of the path of type of motivation Result. It is recommended to use mini-dialogs, exercises dedicated to perception of the talk spurt, learning of idioms and clichés. It is a kind of trick to make students believe that they can actually speak language though the amount of knowledge is quite low.

Teacher's personal motivation is no less important, especially in the beginning of the course. Moreover, motivation is originally a two way process - the teacher shows his/her interest in the language, which makes students to be more active and hard-working, which in turn helps teacher to be more creative and inspires him/her.

Russian linguist and researcher P. Gurvitch[5] distinguishes five sources of motivation:

Purpose	The purpose of the studying and every task is obvious to the student.
Success	The students is quite ambitious and wants to use new knowledge in class and in real life.
Culture of the language speaking country	The students get a chance to understand the culture and way of life in the language speaking country. Most of unclear things become clearer with every new level of language competence.
Ethic factors	Learning language is a joy.
Factor of the tool	Every person has his/her own ways of approaching the tasks. The well-organised and intuitive book is a key to success.

(Chart 2)

[5] P. Gurvitch is the Soviet and Russian teacher, public figure, professor of State University of Vladimir city, the creator of the scientific school of cognitive-communicative method of studies reflected in the series of the books for learning English in secondary schools.

Special aspects of Finnish language teaching at International Relations Department.

On completion of the course, the students are expected to know language at the level B1-B2 in The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. What are the ways to manage the time in class wisely?

At level B2 the student can take part in a discussion about everyday life, politics and social aspects of life as well as understand literature. It implies being active and communicative in class and spending significant amount of time studying independently.

Here are some details at Level B1 [6]:

- Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.
- Can deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling in an area where the language is spoken.

At level B2:

- Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation.
- Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.

The above skills are especially important if we take into account that the key goal of the whole studies is to use language in everyday life as well as in the sphere of the chosen profession. For example, the main purposes of the studies of the programme European researches. Countries of the Baltic Region are as follows:

“The student is expected to have following knowledge and skills:

- be able to choose the correct socio-linguistic form of language and use it in situation given;
- know the vocabulary essential in professional and everyday life;

[6] According to The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

- be able to find necessary information in materials in Finnish;
- know about the specifics of country and region;
- be able to translate and communicate in public (giving prepared in advance presentations, having discussions, introducing companies, giving spontaneous presentations),
- be able to take part in professional and everyday life discussions and conversations” [7].

Finnish language course is designed to encourage speaking at an as early stage of learning as possible. The main course programme consists of two subprograms.

The first part of the programme is called Language of the Region and takes up two years (27 credits). During this period the student gets the whole picture of the language structure and grammatical features. The key activity of every lesson is speaking-oriented meant to develop each aspect of language skills. The teacher is mostly the observer and conductor of the communication.

The second part of the programme is called “Language of the region. Finnish language” (18 credits). During the first period the students had the opportunity to take part in arrangements designed to get used to culture of the country such as meeting teacher and native speakers, visiting Finland and Finnish universities, taking part in CIMO programmes and other Summer language courses, taking part in exchange programmes. The students are acquainted with the socio-cultural aspects of language. More over, they have become part of this culture themselves. During this period the teacher continues to motivate speaking and the students are highly motivated, too. At the first lesson the students are offered to decide for themselves how much time they would like to spare on different aspects of learning language.

The results of the researches held in years 2012–2013 are shown in Charts 3-6 below.

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[7] The programme of Finnish language, State Polytechnic University, International Relations Department, 2011

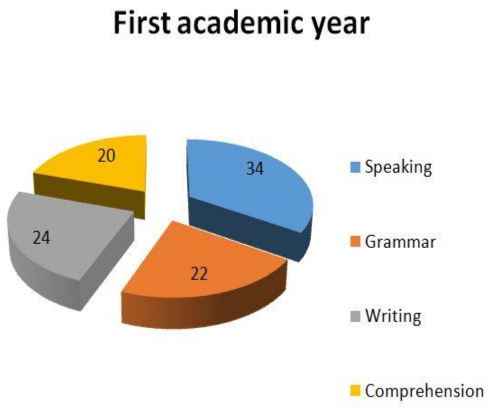

Chart 3

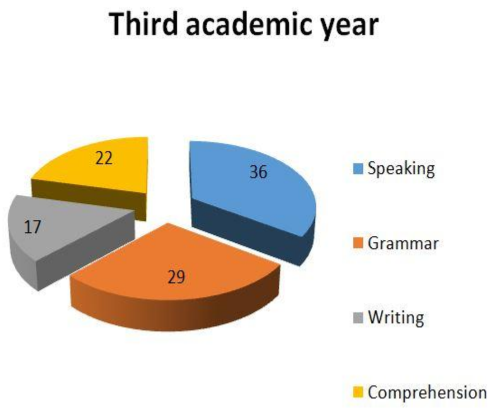

Chart 4

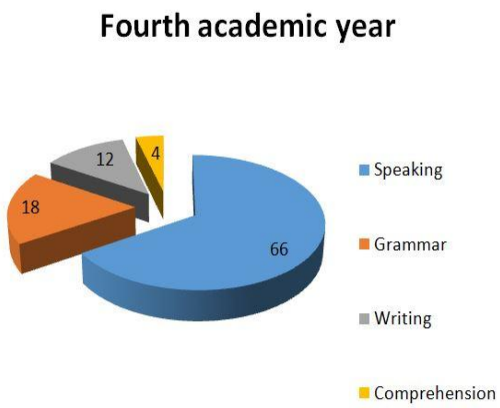

Chart 5

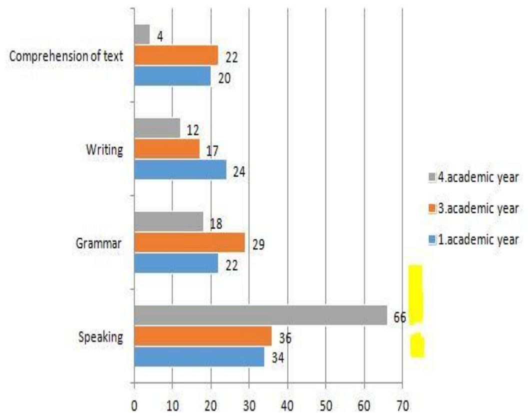

Chart 6

Let us discuss charts! Commentaries.

At a first sight, one may believe that the results shown in charts are typical for the programme, which doesn't concern linguistics. The students prefer the result rather than the philological aspects of the language.

It is only logical. When we ask, 'Do you know Finnish?'– we usually mean – 'Can you speak Finnish?' Speaking is the main factor in level of knowledge of the language. Speaking skills and ability to react appropriately in the situation given show the readiness of the person to take part in a reasonable conversation.

Nowadays everyone is concerned with culture interactions, in which conversational skills are more important than ability to present information. What should teacher do to help students to feel comfortable and relaxed in the situation when they need to use all the earlier obtained knowledge and skills in order to speak?

In our course we start developing speaking skills from the first lesson. The simplicity and banality of the topics is just a matter of lack of vocabulary. The idea is to find proper exercises to polish the speaking skills, or, if necessary, the teacher should invent such kind of exercises him/her-self. Students enjoy taking part in conversations, being able to pronounce sounds properly, asking and answering questions and using the authentic material.

First year students do recognise the significance of grammar, writing and reading along with speaking. Moreover, they are absolutely right!

Third and fourth year students, though, change their attitude and prefer to do more speaking exercises of different kind.

Thus undergraduate students do everything they can to polish and further develop their speaking skills. They take part in the programme Face to Face that gives them the opportunity to communicate with exchange students from Finland; they talk to their teachers-native speakers; they attend international meetings and conferences organised by the department; they take part in exchange programmes as well as in the events held by Finnish Embassy and Institute of Finland in Saint-Petersburg.

To sum up, we may consume that most attention and efforts to keep students motivated the teacher should devote in his work with second and third year students.

Here is the list of books, methods and strategies used to keep the students speaking-alert:

1st and 2nd year students: basic speaking topics and grammar + interactive materials on speaking skills development available to support basics like exercise books, adverts, maps, pictures, music, videos and movies, listening drills, poems and literature extracts.

3rd year students: speaking based on modules like Let’s have look and talk! (”Kuulostaa hyvältä! ”, Lily Ahonen), Everything’s fine! (Hyvin menee 2!”, Satu Heikkilä ja Pirkko Majakangas), Business Finnish (teachers personal developments), Mass Media of Finland (teachers personal developments).

4th year students: speaking based on modules like Short Review of Finnish Literature (”Kirjallisuutemme lyhyt historia”, Leena Kirstinä plus teachers personal developments) and Social Science of Finland (teachers personal developments).

Thus, students have every opportunity and chance to polish and develop their speaking skills and still be motivated to speak Finnish, be interested in Finnish language and culture.

There are many ways to keep students motivated, e.g. offer them interesting course, organise language courses with native speakers, and give a chance to take part in different kinds exchange programmes. The students are offered a wide choice of programmes organised in collaboration with Finnish partners: obtaining two diplomas, exchanges programmes, programmes of academic mobility.

Cultural aspect of learning language helps to keep students motivated.

Russian linguist Efim Passov [8] states that student becomes more motivated when he/she understands that language is a kind of pass into the world of new culture permitting to appreciate the values of this new world. Idioms, saying and proverbs, music, architecture, events – they all become available with every new portion of language and help to understand it better in their turn.

This strategy gives the best motivation ever – the aspect of discovery. Realisation of new knowledge is one of the teaching techniques as well as opening of new horizons work as the firm factor of new motivation.

Even more topics to discuss and present! Students like making presentations about objects and representatives of culture. They take part in disputes and panel discussions. Although the most popular classes are the ones given by native speakers, during which country studies are discussed.

Things a teacher can do to help students stay motivated.

[8] Passov E.I. Programme-concept of communicative foreign language learning.- Moscow, 2000.

What the teacher can do to help students stay motivated? There are lots of ways and approaches. The teacher in his/her turn might think of some new and original ones, too. Some of them are presented below.

To our mind, one of the most important things is culture. It is presented throughout the whole course. Students learn about Finnish culture both in Russian and in Finnish. The programme as a whole is designed to acquaint the student Finland – they solve this jigsaw puzzle and thus get the whole picture. History of Northern Countries, international and domestic policies, history of religions all these courses along with learning language help to see the whole picture – the country with its culture and language.

Besides, during Finnish language lessons the students get the materials connected with culture of the country – its holidays and weekdays, customs and traditions. Yet the best and most effective way to know about the culture is travelling. The department organises such trips for students.

On planning the new academic year, we include a week-long visit to the partner university. Usually they fall to Christmas or Ester time. Students like these trips as they work as the new impulse to continue studies. It comes as no surprise as mostly these trips are oriented to involve 2nd and 3rd year students. In most cases 4th year students take part in the long-term exchange programmes.

We are very grateful to our Finnish colleagues. Native speaker inevitably creates special atmosphere and does magic of sort. New people, methods, approaches as well as new information and a chance to get answers first-hand inspire both teachers and students.

No less interesting are the visits of Finnish students. It is a chance to use language, show favourite places in the city and tell about them in Finnish, and of course, it is the best way to make new friends. Excursions to Finnish-Russian companies in Saint-Petersburg are invariably popular.

There are millions of ways to blend the routine.

The lessons are organised in the way that encourages students to speak as much as possible. The thing is in interactive activities within the communicative approach. The role of the teacher is to organise and guide the process of speaking. Communicative approach helps to create the atmosphere of real-life situation in which students turn into speaking companion.

Here is a number of rules the teacher should follow:

- Allow the students to choose the partner to feel comfortable and relaxed
- Group-work helps shy students to share opinions and ideas more freely as soon as they become one of the group. Students correct each other and are not afraid of making mistakes
- Topics and tusks should be level-related
- Each student takes part in the conversation
- Everyone gets the task according to abilities

The teacher is just the guide. The students may have an impression that they are independent though they need guidance and expect it. The clearer the instructions the easier the flow of speech in this cases the teacher uses a scheme (I. Kristiansen 1999:161) or mind map [9].

Circular talk, panel discussion and giving a presentation are great favour. When doing this kind of tasks the students consolidates his speaking abilities and becomes surer of him/her-self.

Here the list of books that contain some useful ideas and inspire to create.

- Opettajan reppu, Päivi Rinne, Tiia Tempakka
- Suomi-tytön kieli 1,2, suggestopedagogical method, Helinä Koivisto
- Otetaan selvää, Aira Haapakoski ja Päivi Leppänen

Giving presentations concerning culture (or any other subject) is fruitful. Group presentations bring sufficient results. It is wise to have a panel discussion right after presentation. There is a condition – the topic should be interesting.

Time has shown that the better planned the spontaneous speaking the better students complete the task. The role of the teacher is to guide the speaking and

[9] A mind map is a diagram used to visually organise information. A mind map is often created around a single concept, drawn as an image in the centre of a blank landscape page, to which associated representations of ideas such as images, words and parts of words are added. Major ideas are connected directly to the central concept, and other ideas branch out from those.

make sure that everyone takes his/her chance to speak. Unguided speaking is less effective and more chaotic.

One should not hesitate to choose any kind of speaking task that exists under one circumstance – it must be level appropriate. The tasks can be text-based:

- Reading poems with the following discussion and shearing of associations
- Watching movies – pre- and post-watching discussions (The week of Finnish films is regularly held in Saint-Petersburg.)
- Watching educatory videos
- Literature discussions
- Speaking exercises in text books
- Using authentic materials like maps, ads, periodicals and web resources

It is a good sign when students ask to continue discussion and are not afraid to talk. Consider the task successful. People say that in order to speak correctly and fluently you should have some experience of doing it wrong.

It is needless to say that the teacher might encounter with some problems if:

- Unfriendly atmosphere in the group
- Students feel shy and unwilling to do the task
- Lack of knowledge due to laziness
- The task is unclear
- The most active and articulate student doesn't give a chance the other to speak
- In such kind of situation the role of the teacher is significant.

Teacher as the example is an effective way to help students not to lose motivation.

Students should realise that one cannot stop learning; and his teacher is no exception. He/she constantly learns new things, idioms and words. It is necessary because the teacher is not a native speaker.

The main goal is to show that studying is exciting and overwhelming. The teacher is not the ultimate truth on the contrary. The teacher also learns new words or new meanings, corrects his/her mistakes and explains it to students. *Errare humnnum est*; but when the teacher and his students solve the problem together they become closer in their cooperation and ambition to get better results.

It is helpful to show that the teacher is always ready to learn just like his/her students. Be positive, friendly and perceptive and the students will follow you lead.

Motivation is a two-way process. The teacher needs motivation too. It is easy to lose it – stressful job, tiredness, truancies, indifference of some students and what not. One of the ways to refresh motivation is to work in co-operation with native speaking colleagues.

Programme named Tandem as the way to arouse motivation.

Impressive results can be obtained by means of the programme named Tandem. In 2006 publishing house Verlag E. Weber Eisenstadt launched the series of books called "Together is much better!". Edited by A. Berdichevsky[10] meant for German-Russian, -Hungarian, -Polish, -Croat, -Check as well as -Finnish and -English tandems for groups of levels A2 and C1. The name of the programmes may differ from university to university, but the idea stays the same. Two people or groups teach each other in the process of speaking. A.N. Schoukin [11] believes that 'the main goal of tandem is to pick up language while talking face-to-face or virtually with other language speaker about him/her-self, his/her country and culture and other topics of interest. Students become more motivated and interested in language on completion of the programme Tandem.

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Cross-cultural Integrated Research in Teaching Intercultural Communication

Grishina Natalia, Easton Susan

This study examines impact of an Intercultural class assignment which required students to communicate across international boundaries between Russia and the United States. Students recorded their reactions to the experience and expressed enthusiasm and new insights as a result of these encounters. This report offers a qualitative analysis exploring the themes of intercultural communication while providing an overview of this enriching assignment.

Introduction.

The authors involved to the project are from different countries. One of the author is from the US and another one is from Russia. They both taught Intercultural Communication with an emphasis on teaching students about business protocol in other countries. The idea was to involve students to participate in a cultural project.

The logistics were somewhat complex because each university had different calendars and time zone needed to be coordinated. The Russian students spoke English, while the US students did not speak Russian. The US students all worked full time in addition to attending classes, and many of the US students were parents of young children.

To introduce the assignment, the Russian professor joined the class by Skype to introduce herself and to respond to questions. Students in each class were randomly paired with a counterpart in the other country. US students were asked to provide Skype addresses and were given the email addresses of Russian students and asked to initiate contact.

In their individual courses, the students had studied various intercultural communication theories and had been exposed to information on customs. The instructions of this assignment were to discuss protocols and etiquette for doing business in the other's country.

Theoretical Rational of Cultural Communication.

Two theoretical frameworks are discussed in this paper as ways of enriching the understanding gained from this experience. First, the students briefly reflected on Hofestede's (Hofstede, 1991) dimensions to present expectations of cultural norms from the two countries. Then, we discussed the choice of technology used by students through the lens of the media richness theory.

In the Discussion section we will compare the expectations from a theoretical perspective with our results from this study.

When comparing cultures it is essential to have a uniform framework. In this project Geert Hofstede's dimensions (Hofstede, 2014) are used as one of the theoretical basis for analyzing and comparing culture as a whole and at the level of business organizations. The dimensions considered by the students are the following: Power Distance, Collectivism versus Individualism, Masculinity versus Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-term orientation versus Sort-term orientation (Hofstede, 1991).

The students also look closer to communication and management styles, levels of formality, timing and scheduling (Hall and Hall, 1990)

Media Richness / Media choice.

Media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1984; Lengel & Daft, 1988) offers a perspective on the appropriate media choices individuals select for their communication. Media richness follows a continuum from high richness (i.e. face to face) to low richness (i.e. bulletin boards). In general, the most effective choice of media is that which matches the intended outcome for a specific message. For example, exchanges that are more complex, ambiguous or potentially sensitive are more effective when using richer media because it conveys both the data and relationship component of the message.

Shapiro, Buttner, and Barry (1994) confirmed the concepts of the media richness theory regarding the adequacy of a communication medium to provide enough cues (such as emotional intensity and nonverbal behavior) to match the intention of the message. Media richness theory proposes that the speed of feedback and the level of personal focus are factors in the choice of media. Timmerman and Harrison (2005) suggest that “from this perspective the use of email sends a mixed symbolic message: potentially more timely but also less personal” (p. 382). Media richness theory informs this study as a way of confirming or disconfirming the choices students made for their interaction.

Methods.

US students were enrolled in a class on Intercultural Communication and were mid-way through the semester. The university is a 4-year, private liberal arts institution. Students were primarily non-traditional students and as such had careers in addition to attending classes. In the US class, participation was voluntary – part of virtual C/NC assignment and 80% agreed to participate although only 50% completed the entire assignment.

Russian students:

- *2 male and 6 female*
- *Average Age 20.7*
- *Full time students*

US students:

- *1 male and 7 females*
- *Average age 34.8*
- *All students worked full-time and attended college part time*

Data Collection

In total, twelve students comprised eight paired conversation partners of Russian and US students.

Students submitted reflections papers of 1-3 pages in length. Two US students who participated in the communication did not submit the final papers regardless of repeated requests and the class itself was finished so there was limited contact with US students beyond email which did not receive a response.

Data Analysis

The two authors exchanged students' reflection papers and worked independently to determine themes that emerged. They shared input and wrote first drafts separately that were then exchanged for additional input.

Results.

Media and technology

The above analysis suggests that when the authors communicated across geographic boundaries, they used email to coordinate a convenient time and then used Skype to speak in real time, have access to video for non-verbal cues and tone of voice. Although we anticipated students would use Skype to communicate, and follow our process, they made a variety of choices for their communication. Specifically, of the total of eight matched pairs, three pairs used Skype, two used email, and one used FaceBook. Of those using Skype, only one use the video feature, the other two pairs used text through Skype allowing a asynchronous chat exchange (no tone of voice or non-verbal cues).

- *USF1 I initially contacted Olga via email last Saturday during class. She responded the next day, asking if we would be able to communicate through facebook and that she was having problems with her internet. She referred to her ability to message through facebook would be viable through her "smartphone." I agreed and asked her if I could friend her on facebook. It was actually kind of nice to be able to look through her photos and her page to get a sense of who I was speaking with. We also had the ability to message each other as it was convenient and sent questions back and forth. We have been communicating almost every day.*

- *USF3 - Social media is very popular in Russia and Ukontakte (translation : In Contact) is their equivalent of Facebook. Although, she indicated she does have a Facebook account and asked if I do.*

- *RF2 - … there were troubles with technological side (there was not sound in Skype), but we overcame it.*

- *USF3 - we decided to use regular email to communicate, over about a 3 day period. Initially, we tried to set up a meeting to Skype but because of time differences and schedule conflicts we had to keep rescheduling, then Kristina got sick and lost her voice so we decided to go with email since we had been doing so all week already*

- *USF3 I initially contacted Ksenia via email twice, but did not get a response to my emails. She then emailed me with a new email address, other than what was posted on the list we received. She indicated she had been having issues with her email. We agreed to Skype on Sunday at 8:00pm Russia time. I have a desktop computer that does not have a webcam so we were just going to talk via Skype. Well, she could not hear me, even though I heard her just fine, so, we wrote back and forth through Skype. She was disappointed that we could not actually speak with each other, but she was then ok with the fact that we were still actually communicating.*

The variety of media and technology choices were made to communicate: e-mailing, Skype oral conversation and typing, FaceBook. It can bring us to a conclusion that technologies and different ways of their usage can be used to create assignments and social relations across boundaries.

Cultural Perspective

Communication across cultural barriers can be described and analyzed from numerous angles. In this paper we are focusing on individual traits and competencies understanding the Importance of not forming an understanding of the whole with one example. We are just looking for some patterns and trends to give a dynamic view on the creation of social relations within and between national boundaries.

- *USF1 - She liked to hear that my sister was very interested in her culture.*

- *USF1 - She wanted to know if this was normal for us to have interactions with students from other countries and I told her that this my first experience.*

- *RF1 – USF1 said to me that her sister loves Russian culture and that she has already been to Russia back in the 80's. And … said she herself wants to go to Russia. I think it's great that there are people in the world who* *are not afraid of different stereotypes about Russia and the Russians and want to come and visit Russia.*

- *USM1 - Re:[use of humor] . I asked her what I shouldn't do when visiting Russia. She replied with "don't talk to strange looking people, if anything happens to stay calm and don't ride the subway on Monday mornings☺.*

- *USM1 - I did ask if America was liked and she said it was 50/50 as the older generation that lived in the Soviet Union still had issues with us. I asked if she would ever want to visit America and she joyously replied yes…*

- *RF3 - He was very polite and punctual; he wrote me 4 or 5 letters before we finally could get to talk. We discussed some other topics except for politics, for example art. I was a bit surprised when he said that Americans are not so much into Art and culture….*

To conclude, I can give some thoughts about Americans that I've got after this conversation:

- *RF2 - Americans know how to make business and they like it, work plays a huge role in their lives*

- *RF2 - Americans don't find family as important as Russians*

- *RF2 - American's knowledge about surrounding world and culture is quite poor and they know it, but don't make any effort to change it*

- *RF2 - Americans are open people and they can easily talk to you about anything if they see some kind of profit in it*

- *USF2 - Gender roles are mostly observed in older generations, but they are dissipating with the younger generation.*

- *USF2 - Business practices in the private sector are becoming more westernized depending on the age group. She said there are still some old school managers.*

- *USF2 - Our emails were somewhat formal in structure; they started with a greeting, paragraphs, and closing. The tone of our emails was more informal. One interesting fact about certainty or uncertainty is that she asked me to email her some questions; so, she can be prepared, but this may have* *nothing to do with it. Maybe, she was just thinking of how to respond in English, although her English is very proficient.*

- *RF4 - To tell the truth I was a little nervous waiting for our Skype-meeting, expecting some kind of a boring formal conversation. Nevertheless, my interlocutor turned out to be a very interesting, friendly and delightful woman.*

- *RF4 - (USF2) confirmed that Americans themselves are very individualistic, sometimes can be arrogant. They are also quite judgmental and may jump into conclusions before they hear all the facts and they are not very compassionate. But at the same time, relations are quite informal, whether it is business or socialization. But she also let me know that one has to consider that attitudes, customs, tendencies, and culture in United States in general can be very different from one state to another.*

- *USF3 - FR2 indicated that there is a lot of* ***bureaucracy*** *in trying to set up a business in Russia. But, if you have a lot of money, you can own a business much easier. The Russian Foreign Ministry tries to attract foreign specialists to set up businesses in Russia, so it is easier to establish a business in Russia if you are from another country. (she) stated that power and wealth are very much connected. "If you have wealth you have power." Russia has a very authoritarian type of power in business. The boss is empowered to make the decisions and the workers show deference to high level management. They have very high uncertainty avoidance, and operate with formal policies and procedures. Employees adhere to protocol.*

- *USF3 - I asked (her) what her thoughts were of the United States and doing business in the United States and her response was "United Sates is very powerful and doing business in the United States is easier than the Russian Federation."*

- *RF2 - It was very hard to describe some special features of running business in Russia, because I don't work. (She) used terminology and it was also difficult to understand, but very interesting.*

- *USF 3 - I asked how (she) would describe Russian culture, as collectivistic or individualistic, to which she said it would be somewhere in between. She was somewhat vague, but said that generally they tend to work* *as part of a group, and in the classroom setting students do more individual work because many of their classes are lecture and do not require working in groups. I was very surprised to hear that she has over 10 classes and she is basically in class most of the day, which is why she says it can be very hard to have a job; here in America we tend to work and make everything else fit into our schedules.*

- *USF3 - Kristina seemed very excited about the idea of talking with me and learning about American culture to an extent, however it kind of felt like it took a lot of work to get information about Russia and I had to lead the conversation, which I was fine with, but was concerned about neglecting any of her questions or thoughts that she did not say. I also tried to share some information about myself and asked if she could do the same and she really did not say much about herself which I can understand to a degree, but I was a little disappointed.*
- *USF3 For me having a better idea of who I am communicating with enhances the conversation. In reflection, I do think that I was more willing to talk about both the good and not so good aspects of our culture, where as I believe Kristina gave me one positive side.*
- *RF5 - Americans are a pretty diverse population because of a great number of immigrants. She said that traditionally Americans are more individualistic because people are held accountable to the actions of individual rather than as a group. And in business all of Americans like to take credits for individual successes and not sharing them with the group. But, on the other hand, there're many influences from Asian immigrants and South American immigrants who prefer a more collectivist approach.*

Aging

In this assignment the average age of Russian students is 20.7 and American students is 34.8. The range of the age groups is one of the indicators to be taken into account. Perception theories are based on the concepts of the primary image, the perceptual image, the image representation of unconscious inference. Primary image - a set of impressions formed without reminiscences, and past experience, containing what follows from the immediate sensations. Perceptual image refers to the perception, accompanied by relating reacting sensations and past experience. (Helmholtz). Most of the American students have working experience but participated Russian students have not. It influences the perception of the information they get while communicating.

Education and careers

- *USF1 She was very surprised to find out that I was 38, with a child who worked full time and went to school almost full time. She wanted to know if this was the norm of college students here in America. I explained to her that most people go to school right out of high school but there a quite a few people that go back later in life and finish. It was also interesting to find out from Olga, that in Russia, they don't use a credit system in college. They go by classes and they don't get to choose them, they are chosen for them. She said that most students do not have jobs because they will have to miss class. She said that she only has one friend that has a job in the evenings at a cafe. She said she is taking 14 classes right now and she is in school from approximately 10 to 4 or 6 every day. This is the amount of time each student spends in class a week for four years.*

- *RF1- USF1 told me that she had a decent job but to move up she had to complete her education and get a bachelor degree…. (she) was very surprised that our educational systems differed so much.*
- *RF1 - (USF1) told me … a lot of people in America don't know what is going on in the world; they know only what's going on in the US, their own state or their town/city*
- *RF5 - Firstly, we were talking about Russian and American educational systems and compared them with each other. Now I can draw a conclusion that American education is quite different. Typically, college students go to a class for 45 minutes to 1,5 hours and 2 or 3 times a week, and usually they take 4 to 5 classes term. So it's not so intensive as it's in Russian Universities. And as I know now many American courses require a lot of group work and projects to promote the idea of being a part of team and understanding the dynamics of communication with others in a work context.*

Reaction to Assignment

- *USF1 - We talked a little bit about the importance of having this type of experience and she agreed that is important these days.*

- *RF1 - … it has been a great experience for me to talk to a person from another country and another culture.*
- *RF4 - …such intercultural conversations are really helpful and cognitive. Due to communication with representatives of another country or culture, it is possible to learn more, to widen one's outlook, and to gain new relations...*
- *USF3 Overall, I enjoyed the conversation and am very happy to have had the opportunity to communicate with someone from another country, very far away.*

Discussion.

In this article, we presented the research that is based on the Intercultural class assignment which required students to communicate across international boundaries. The results of the above insights can be discussed in relation to the following lesson learned by the authors:

Any students involved in learning Intercultural communication or Intercultural Business Communication must be involved in the process itself to get internal and external experiences of communicating across boundaries.

Both of the lecturers do the same course in different countries. It is one of the way to organize and manage the process of communication and analyzing results more efficient.

The assignment is the real experience to communicate and discuss different aspects of intercultural communication. The students communicate and get experience together with theoretical knowledge.

The students learn how to communicate and that is the objective of any communicative course. Students who participated loved it and were very enthusiastic.

This project broke stereotypes. It reinforces the key principles that are taught in the framework of the course. If students get below the media and it is a chance to see that people are very different that the images we are exposed to about other cultures.

There is a connection at the humanitarian level that exceeds expectations and becomes life-changing.

Concluding remarks.

This chapter has offered one of the pedagogical practices in teaching Intercultural communication. This sample is convenient but generalizable. Voluntary participation helps students to be free in communicating and giving reflections with the experience. In spite of the limited business experience of the students to focus on the assignment so much of the "doing business" comments are embedded in the cultural section. The English language used in this project for writing responses provides opportunity to share all information between students and lecturers. We are planning to continue Valuable experience for reinforcing concepts taught in Intercultural class and from a liberal arts perspective. All the engaged had to work against logistics (time/media/level of language use) and yet all the participants said it was valuable.

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Practical Implications of the Thesis Process in Bachelor and Master Level

Ikävalko Minna

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Writing the thesis plays a very important role in the university studies and this process completes the several years of studies by producing a large research project. During this project a student will combine the knowledge, information and skills acquired from different courses, projects and assignments. Depending on the study programme, the thesis consists of 15 ECTS or 30 ECTS. In this article the focus is mainly on the programmes of International Business (Bachelor level) and International Business Management (Master level).

1.2. Objectives of the Study

This article has several objectives. The main purpose and the first objective is to give understanding of the thesis process at the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences. There are different ways to complete the thesis in different universities and faculties but this article is describing the process within the studies of Business Administration (in the Faculty of Business and Culture) at the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences. The second objective is to point out the different requirements concerning the Bachelor level and Master level. And, the third and the last objective is to explain and describe how business companies and different organizations might be involved in the thesis process.

2. Thesis Process on Bachelor Level

Students studying in the International Business bachelor programme start the thesis process during the third year of studies. They attend the special thesis process lectures and they also study how to produce academic reports. During the thesis process lectures students are informed how to choose the thesis topic, how to search material (books, articles, previous studies) and how to write a thesis proposal.

In the thesis process students are also required to participate in thesis seminars. The written thesis proposal will be presented in the seminar, and each student also acts as an opponent in other student's thesis seminar. Students are also required to attend several seminars as an audience.

According to the degree regulations of the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences (2012), Bachelor's thesis for the UAS degree is "a broad course of a study for the preparation of the students in planning and researching areas for development, and working as an expert in their field of study".

A thesis usually consists of theoretical and empirical parts. It may include only one of those, but traditionally it is a combination of both. In the theory part the student will discuss the thesis topic from the theoretical point of view; what kind of studies has been published before, which concepts and/or theoretical models explain the phenomenon under study. In the empirical part the phenomenon is studied by making questionnaires, interviews or observations in the companies. The purpose is either to test the theory or build the new one.

Students have different options in choosing the thesis topic. The chosen topic might be interesting to the student, and studying it may give more experience and knowledge for the future. If the student chooses the topic according to his own interest, then usually the empirical part consists of information acquired from randomly selected companies or other respondents.

If the student gets the commission from the company, it means that the student writes the thesis for the company. The topic is selected by the company and usually it is connected to something which is really needed in the company at that moment. For example the marketing actions, advertising plan, customer satisfaction survey, or market research. In this case the company (or the contact person in the company) works actively with the student and helps to gather the information from the company and/or from the existing customers. As a result, company gets useful information which they might utilize in their future actions.

A commissioned topic from the company might cause some problems concerning the publicity. It is recommended that all the theses and research reports should be public at the universities. This is based on the basic requirement of science and research; all the research should be public in order to create general discussion. In Finland the national internet library Theseus includes all the studies from the universities of applied sciences. In case the company is not willing to publish all the information acquired in the study, or the name of the company will not be published, the student will write two versions of the thesis: public and original (including all the information).

Sometimes students participate in the R&D projects that the university organizes with external finance. Often several companies or other organizations are involved in these kinds of projects and students' work is usually to gather background information or study a certain specific narrow field of the topic. These kind of projects or commissioned thesis topics from companies give students a better understanding of real business life and its' requirements and responsibilities. The students also get a good experience and sometimes companies have offered a job after the thesis project.

2.1. Example of Bachelor's Thesis

The Saimaa University of Applied Sciences participated as a partner in the national project called Rocket. The purpose of the project was to develop ways to support local SME companies in their internationalization and innovation processes. The target group was especially companies from the field of engineering and machinery. Several universities were involved in the project, which was partly financed by external money, and each university had their own responsibilities and sub-objectives in the project. Every university had contacted local companies and invited them to join the project.

Students from faculties of technology and also from business administration participated in the thesis project which purpose was to study the subcontractor network in the Baltic countries. The case company operated in the field of machinery and their future purpose is to find out possibilities to co-operate with Baltic companies and make long-term subcontractor relationships.

Students completed a questionnaire according to the company's requirements and collected information from 24 companies in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The questionnaire included several questions concerning the machinery in the companies, special facilities, capacity and capability to produce certain products, quality management, customer references and also geographical details (how to organize the transportation etc.). Also the capability of exporting and co-operating with foreign companies was under research.

The companies were ranked according to their answers and suitability for being a subcontractor for the case company. As a conclusion students made a recommendation list for the case company that actually contacted several of the researched companies in the Baltic countries.

By participating in the national project and working with the local company gave students a good understanding of the requirements in the real business environment. They acquired experience and knowledge on how business companies are planning their strategies and what kind of information is needed when making important decisions for the future of the company.

3. Thesis Process on the Master Level

The Master's programme of International Business Management takes 2.5 years to complete and it is based on blended learning methods including both face-to-face sessions and independent e-learning online enabling flexibility for students. As the students are studying while working, the Master's thesis is usually carried out as a development project related to actual issues and challenges in the industry, individual companies or organizations. Students are encouraged to write their assignments and finally the thesis for the company or organization they are working at.

The thesis process starts during the first study year. Students participate in the thesis lectures and they also study a course of research methods. During the course students read different scientific articles and write analyses of them, also they need to analyze an already published Master's Thesis in order to understand of the requirements of the process.

At the Master’s level students are required to show their capability of doing research and using different research methods, and also to understand different methodologies. Theoretical background of the studied phenomenon should be strong, even though the empirical part concentrates on the real development project in the business company.

At the Master’s level students also write an extensive thesis proposal which will be presented in a thesis seminar. Students also act as opponents for other students, and participate in thesis seminars as an audience. Finally the thesis process is concluded by presenting the final thesis report in the seminar before graduation.

3.1. Example of Master’s Thesis

The Master thesis was a part of a large development project in a case company where the student was working while studying at the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences. The company is a leader in power and automation technologies that enable utility and industry customers to improve performance while lowering environmental impact. The case company operates in around 100 countries.

The purpose of the Master’s thesis was to document and analyze the process in an outbound logistics development project; first to define the actions for completing the project (Phase 1) and secondly to plan how to develop the outbound logistics further (Phase 2). Outbound logistics functions include packing, storing and transportation of the finished products and handling the export documents and booking the transportation from forwarding agents.

The main goal of the development project was to release space from the factory by reformulating outbound logistics, i.e. the processes of different departments had to be unified. Before the official launch of the project the current (different) processes were described by using process flowcharts. After doing that a special project team planned the future processes with a ‘to-be-process’ flowchart. The company also uses an ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system, and this system was modified to support the new processes. While proceeding in the development project the student selected and presented the model for managing the project, and also discussed the project organization.

Also the problems related to software were studied and the solution was provided.

Phase 1 of the project was finished quite successfully in the company. It was noticed that systematic planning and implementation are essential in managing a development project. The thesis included also recommendations and suggestions for the future development of the project, Phase 2. The master student presented a model for consolidating the shipments outside the factory.

This Master's thesis is a good example of a development project in a company solving practical problems. The process, when students carry out the different course assignments and finally thesis in their working environment, develops their expertise, knowledge and experience in different real business problems. Usually these tasks and possible problems are part of their everyday work, and students are given suitable tools to solve them by professional lecturers in the Master Programme.

4. Conclusions.

The purpose of this article was to discuss the thesis process at the Bachelor and Master levels, as well as give some practical implications of writing the thesis in cooperation with a business company. The thesis process concludes the studies and the student is able to use his knowledge and practice the expertise in the certain field. The topic is usually related to the major field of studies, e.g. international business, marketing, accountancy or business law.

It is recommended for teachers and students to participate in different R&D-projects at the university and that way get possibilities to work with business companies and organizations. This kind of cooperation gives students possibilities to write the thesis for the company; to plan a specific issue or to solve a real problem. This gives students a good experience and knowledge on a certain field of business. Also references and connections are acquired and it may help the student later on to get a working place after graduation.

At the Master's level the student is usually involved in a development project in his own working environment. Writing the thesis in this kind of a project may give a different and broader view for the everyday work and also new challenges for the student (employee). The student learns to understand what kind of new knowledge is needed and how to acquire this knowledge and apply it in the project. Usually the projects take a long time, and by participating in them the student is able to show his capability and get new opportunities perhaps for the future.

For business companies and organizations cooperation with universities and students gives possibilities to get updated information, solutions for the practical problems and connections to future experts and professionals. The thesis process gives a good possibility for this kind of cooperation.

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Experiences of Team Coaching at Saimaa University of Applied Sciences

Juvonen Pasi

Introduction

The world has become more and more complex in recent decades. Continuous change has altered or even recreated rules of business in several domains, and new revenue logics are developed rapidly. Mergers and acquisitions are common business operations so the business environment is in on ongoing state of change. The ubiquitous IT, rise of social media, and digital tools for marketing and sales are offering a totally different playing field for the young people entering their university level studies in these years. These ongoing changes in the economy will also require changes in the field of education. The rapid change requires abilities to learn rapidly (De Gaus 1997; Ollila & Saukkomaa 2013). Instead of focusing only on content, we also have to equip our students with meta-level skills such as learning to learn.

The author has been working in different roles at Saimaa University of Applied Sciences (Saimia) for almost twenty years has been lucky enough to experiment with plenty of different methods for teaching and learning. In addition, several research and development (R&D) projects have offered new viewpoints from which to analyze the role of education in the current turbulent environment.

When looking back, these thoughts of education and how it might be organized have matured during the recent ten years as a result of collaboration with several colleagues and cooperation with organizations. This article represents some experiences about team coaching at the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences.

Cooperatives and teams as a learning context for students

In recent years team entrepreneurship and cooperatives owned by students have slowly been established as a study path at Saimia. The study path has been applied to practice both in the IT Degree Programme and the Degree Programme in Business Administration with students who choose to specialize in marketing. In practice, students who decide to continue their studies as team entrepreneurs (teampreneurs) will establish a cooperative and continue their studies almost purely by operating as a team. One of the teachers will act as a team coach focusing on helping the team to mature and to achieve their performance goals.

Elements of learning for teampreneurs

Teampreneurs study their first academic year as normal students enrolling in conventional courses including mathematics, basics of IT and languages. During their first academic the students will select their study path. Those who decide to continue as teampreneurs will follow a different curriculum in the next academic years. Their learning consists mainly of the elements represented in Table 1.

Elements of learning	**Description**
Studying literature - theory	Reading books about different professional themes, participating in professional seminars and / or fairs.
Learning by doing	Applying theory to practice within customer projects.
Training / tryouts	Twice a week lasting usually four hours, dialogue on relevant topics such as projects, professional development, team development, and reflection on what has been learnt from books (book dialogue) and projects.

Table 1. How teampreneurs study at the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences.

Double goal of team development and team performance

Team development

When a set of individuals are put together with an intention to form a group, there are several invisible forces affecting the situation. These forces are called with a common term, group dynamics (cf. Levi 2007; Johnson & Johnson 2003;

Katzenbach & Smith 1993, 2001) and they suggest that there are always two aspects of a group dynamic. A working group is the aspect of a group which is related to the group's primary task. Another aspect is the basic assumption group, which can be divided to three main types: 1) dependency 2) fight or flight 3) pairing.

Dependency means that the group is dependent on its leader, team coach, or a competent group member and is not able to perform if the "champion" is not present. This phenomenon is very typical with learning groups, which are used to being led by a teacher or tutor. In *fight or flight* situations, team members act as they would if they had a real enemy (they even may have one) within or outside the team. In flight situations, team members tend to avoid any tasks and use their energy for secondary issues. *Pairing* means situations where team members form pairs for interaction, and the interaction itself seems to be the most important issue for the team members. By understanding the phenomena of group dynamics a team coach is able to help the team to grow out of these premature stages of team development.

In the literature (cf. Tuckman 1965; Tuckman & Jensen 1977; Forrester & Drexler 1999), the process of team development is usually described as a neat linear process where stages follow each other even or almost sequentially. The most common model of team development consists of five stages: 1) forming 2) storming 3) norming 4) performing, and 5) adjourning.

Based on the author's current understanding of team development within several different contexts, the processes of team development and group dynamics seem to be rather cyclic than linear. Certain phenomena repeat themselves and one will face situations (such as storming and norming) again and again, but both the team coach and the team members are always little bit better prepared to solve the current issues. So, it is not whether there will be crisis or not, but it is rather how to resolve them and move on with a stronger team.

Team performance

Every team has a primary task, a reason why it exists. It could be a simple reason such as completing a specific task or a complex one like offering all information to everyone (as Google is said to have done). Though the team development is an important part of team coaching, and several methods to foster team development are used to help team to mature, all this has also to serve the teams primary goals. Whatever the teams' performance goals are, the team is supposed to achieve them – at least try its best to do it. The team coach's role here is to enforce both the agreed upon rules of conduct and to encourage the achievement of the performance objectives.

A team coach tries to build circumstances for others to succeed. It is not always sunshine, because learning can now and then be annoying and irritating, and team members can feel stressed with the situation. Learning by doing requires trying new things most of the time. Making mistakes and learning from them via reflection sounds like a good process in textbooks, but it requires quite a lot of courage and patience to put it into practice.

Learning in the team context requires a culture of discipline and at the same time enough freedom for team members to choose in which projects to show their willingness to perform and show professional development. To encourage teampreneurs to better performance or keep the pace of a good performance, a team coach is able make several actions. The most essential actions are presented in Table 2.

Action	**Description**
Frequently show and discuss the performance data	When performance data (volume of projects and workload, books that have been read and abstracts written based on them, participation in training sessions) is publicly discussed it will increase positive interdependence among team members. Teampreneurs will see that there is clear connection with individual effort and performance.
Publicly notice and give positive feedback about the good performance of team members.	We usually get too little feedback overall, especially positive feedback is relatively rare. High performing teams (cf. Losada 1999; Losada & Heaphy 2004) have a culture of giving positive feedback. The positive feedback has to be justified, otherwise it will work against it purpose.
Cleary show that underperformance and /or violation of rules of conduct is not tolerated	Every team will make its own rules of conduct called team agreement where rules of behavior and performance goals are agreed upon. In cooperation with teams executive group (team leader, customer relationships manager, communications manager, and financial manager) the team coach will enforce the team agreement even when it raises opposition or anxiety. Teampreneurs need to know what they are expected to do and if they have achieved the expected results or not (cf. Kvist et al. 2004)

Exploring options & focusing energy	There are situations when teampreneurs need to expand their set of possible options of operating instead of spending their energy on something that may not be very productive. After first expanding possible options and then focusing on the most relevant, also called as a T-model (cf. Downey 2003), teampreneurs learn to explore a larger set of options for their operations.
Reflection	Both pre-action and post-action reviews are made. Every project has both learning objectives and content objectives. Success factors and pitfalls are discussed and the knowledge will be utilized in the upcoming projects.

Table 2. Coach's actions to encourage performance or keep the pace of a good performance.

If underperformance of a team member is not noticed by the team coach, it would mean that it would be acceptable to underperform because there seems to be no consequences for it. Though it is not nice to enforce the agreed upon rules of conduct in practice, there exists no shortcut to developing the culture of discipline. Discipline in this context means that we learn to take care of what we have promised to take care of. Sound easy, doesn't it? However, in practice this requires a lot of discussions, dialogue, and disputes to seed the ideas of self-leadership and personal responsibility for learning to teampreneurs.

In any team, some teampreneurs will show responsible behavior quickly while others require much more time and nurturing. In worst cases, when there are no other options available (no results, no interest to gain any), there are administrative procedures which will guide such a teampreneur to pursue education by other, more appropriate methods.

Inside a coach's head – thoughts of team coaching

A team coach works all the time with mental models (cf. Argyris & Schön 1996), attitudes and motivation (cf. Senge 1996) of individuals. These mental models either encourage us to operate and achieve, or inhibit our actions. Like Jorma Ollila has argued (Cf. Ollila & Saukkomaa 2013) "human beings are the only animals who build their own cage." This chapter lists thoughts about team coaching and some justifications for them.

Some basic assumptions

A team coach should be an advocate of theory Y rather than theory X (cf. McGregor 1960; Sahin 2012). Briefly, theory X suggests that people are lazy and they have to be controlled, and so on. Theory Y is obviously the opposite. It suggests that people like to achieve and perform when offered the proper conditions and leadership to do it. Advocating theory Y doesn't mean that underperformance would not be discussed, it rather suggests that reasons behind it should be revealed and removed instead of increasing control mechanisms or sanctions. Both non-directive (listening, asking open-ended questions, summarizing) and directive (providing options, suggesting, giving direct advice) methods are needed in team coaching (cf. Downey 2003).

Serious play with creativity and innovativeness

Everyone has potential, and everyone is creative. Creativity is a process by which individuals or teams produce novel and useful ideas (cf. Hardagon & Beckhy 1996; Amabile 1998; Carleton et al. 2013). Team coaching includes many methods and tools for how to facilitate divergent thinking, combine, substitute, scale and force odd combinations, and visualizing the results (cf. Sibbet 2011). It is more about cultivating the creativity than discussing whether individuals have it or not. According to Robinson (cf. Robinson 2001), creativity is not a purely personal process. Many creative processes draw from the ideas and stimulation of other people. Creativity flourishes in an atmosphere where original thinking and innovation are encouraged and stimulated. It fades in an atmosphere where dialogue and interaction are stifled.

Team coaches deal continuously with team members' creativity. When a team development process starts, everything is new and for every cooperative business, operations start from scratch. The circumstances are fruitful to explore and experiment. There is not much need to unlearn stone-carved practices and every team is able to build practices, roles and responsibilities and customer relationships of their own. Marketing is, above all, a way of thinking (cf. Grönroos 2010).

Nowadays change is rapid, and organizations who are able to learn and adapt at a fast pace will be able to succeed. Learning rapidly requires intrinsic motivation for learning and methods for doing it. When these cornerstones are present, any team can challenge the status quo of operating and implementing new practices, methods, or processes about how to solve its customers' needs.

Components of individual and team creativity

Robinson suggested (cf. Robinson 2001) that creativity skills consist of: 1) domain-relevant skills 2) creativity-relevant skills, and 3) intrinsic task motivation. First two components of creativity deal with what a person is capable of doing and the third component deals with what a person is willing to do. It seems obvious that the first two sets of skills can be achieved when the third component exists or is encouraged by team coaching.

This previous view is supported also by Hamel and Green (cf. Hamel and Green 2007) who suggest that obedience and diligence can nowadays be found anywhere, even with very low cost. The competition is going on for those who are creative and have passion for what they are doing. In his more recent book (cf. Hamel 2012) Hamel continues by arguing that the process of turning inspiration into value takes time, proceeding as it does through iterative cycles of experimenting, learning, selecting, and codifying. This is the very same process presented by Nonaka et al. (cf. Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995; Nonaka & Toyama 2005) as a knowledge creation process of a knowledge-creating company. These theories are the cornerstones of the team entrepreneurship study path and have gained wide support from innovation and business literature.

Team building

In an ideal world there would be an abundance of highly talented and highly motivated individuals equipped with various personalities supplementing each other. Teams could be put together without any previous constraints of politics by selecting the most talented (eligibility) and / or suitable (role fit) individuals. However, this is not usually the case. For a team coach operating with learning teams, a more appropriate starting point is to see what you have and then start to develop the team from there. This may sound simple or even rude, but it is actually a quite realistic approach. Like many sports team coaches have always said, "the best team is the one playing now" and there is no need to grieve for something you don't have. Rather, you must focus on those you have. It is also an extremely important message to discuss with the team members. If team members feel themselves as leftovers, no remarkable results should be expected. There are always visible and hidden potential and strengths available among team members (cf. Ristikangas and Ristikangas 2010). A team coach has to be willing to recognize them.

The team role test (cf. Belbin 2003) is utilized in team coaching when team members familiarize themselves with each other. Belbin's nine team roles (eight in the original version of the test) offer a simple enough framework for discussing how personalities, previous experiences, current values and motivation differ.

On Dialogue

Dialogue (cf. Isaacs 1999) is the most essential method used in training sessions. The basic behaviors – which are at the same time elements of a real dialogue – are: 1) listening 2) speaking your own voice 3) respecting 4) suspending judgment. These behaviors are described in Table 3.

Element	**Description**
Listening	To really listen, not only wait for others to end so as to be able to give our own opinion. Dialogue is not about who is winning or losing, but is instead an exercise of thinking together. Another benefit for truly listening is to realize that someone else will say the opinion you had in your mind and by that way offers you the possibility to support or even build more based on what was said.
Speaking your own mind	In a dialogue every opinion is equal regardless of its presenter. To be honest in what we say requires courage and it has to be practiced and encouraged. By being honest, we build circumstances for trust to develop. Mutual trust will raise dialogue to a more generative level.
Respecting	We are not able to understand any other individual entirely. Even when someone strongly disagrees with our thoughts, s/he has full right to do so. Even though, we are able to learn from the individual. When someone is annoying us, it usually reminds of some character of us we would not like to see or remember. This interference may serve as and an important passage to some other topic or dialogue.
Suspending judgment	Suspending assumptions and judgment is challenging. We tend to hear an argument and immediately jump to conclusions, even though the chain of our reasoning is usually far from solid. Instead of rushing into conclusions on what another person may have meant and why, we should wait and try to verify our understanding by asking further questions. There will be time for conclusions later.

Table 3. Basic behaviors of dialogue

Naturally team coaches are usually more experienced on the subjects they coach (cf. Huttunen 2003). During a dialogue, the team coach has to avoid being too directive (giving direct advice, telling what do to next) and rather use more non-directive methods (listening, asking open ended questions, paraphrasing). The differences in experience will be more balanced in the long run when teampreneurs read literature and gain experience through dialogue and from the customer projects.

In dialogue, the phenomena of group dynamics are strongly present. In a typical team there are members who enjoy presenting their opinions in public and also those who dislike it. By practicing listening during a dialogue, those who are used to speaking out will be forced to give more space to other participants. At the same time, those who are not used to presenting their opinions will have their opportunity to speak up. Both types of team members will be tenderly pushed into their uncomfortable zone, where most of the learning will happen. At the same time when experience with dialogue increases, participants' self-esteem and self-efficacy will increase. These both are essential building blocks for building mutual trust between team members. Building trust is the most essential building block of good leadership (cf. Nissinen 2004).

Before a real dialogue will emerge, time and practice are needed. Usually teams start having discussions about questions such as "Where are we now?", "What should I / we do next?", and "How should we organize our operations?" With support from the team coach, teampreneurs will also discuss and form leading thoughts (values, mission, and vision) for their team. Descriptions (theory, sharing stories, making action plans) are important but do not empower competent action. They do not teach tacit knowledge. People engaging in relevant practices produce the action and gain the tacit knowledge (cf. Denning & Dunham 2010). Therefore, there will be insatiable need for action taken on the basis of action plans.

Summary and discussion

Team entrepreneurship is taking its first steps at Saimaa University of Applied Sciences, but the culture of team coaching in this context is also still young. The issues discussed concerning team coaching in this article are not new and they have already been widely discussed in several textbooks and articles. However, applying team entrepreneurship to practice in a new context always requires considerable effort. There will be times when the faith and hope of gaining results may be at a low level. As part of the learning process, team coaches will face anxiety, storming within the team, denial of responsibility, and other forms of resistance to change among team members. These will be probable, and they will inevitably come before significant performance results start to appear. The results are never guaranteed, and even when a period of good performance comes the team coach has to be prepared for the next crisis because complacency within a team may - and usually will – follow leading to the next crisis both in performance and team development.

How then might we offer future teams better circumstances for operations? There are some issues that should be considered. When will students make the decision about how they choose to continue their studies? Those who choose to continue as teampreneurs have to be well aware of both the possibilities and the challenges in this study path. This issue is already in quite good shape but there is always room for improvement. By attracting students with intrinsic task motivation, the best positive starting point for professional growth will be guaranteed. In the case of the best prospective students, short interviews by team coaches would be good to gain some understanding of why students want to choose team entrepreneurship as their study path.

Another issue to strengthen the culture of teampreneurship at Saimaa University of Applied Sciences is to make the performance data of the teams visible to all. This will help comparisons between teams at Saimaa University of Applied Sciences and also with teams at other Universities of Applied Sciences such as Tiimiakatemia and Proacademy. This task is currently “in process”. Open performance data might awaken positive competition between teams.

It usually takes a few months before a new team starts to gain continuous performance results. Meanwhile they are ramping up a lot of complex – and for an outsider usually more or less invisible - processes concerning team development and group dynamics, roles and responsibilities within a team, a set of new learning methods which are different than most of the team members are used to, and self-leadership issues. After these processes are in place and running there is a potential to gain more than could be gained by more conventional education. The rest is up to the dynamics within the team and between the team and the team coach. To be able to learn continuously is an essential set of skills for any student nowadays. Those who have chosen to study as teampreneurs have an excellent opportunity to explore and experiment different ways of organizing their personal, team, and organizational level learning in real circumstances within real customer projects.

The last issue to consider is our mission with the teampreneurship study path in the future? Is it to provide a different way to study marketing? Or is it maybe to locally foster academic entrepreneurship? Do we treat student owned cooperatives as greenhouses, something to play with while studying marketing? Or do we treat cooperatives and their owners as teampreneurs who have showed courage to take some risks and challenged themselves to learn by trial-and-error? Answering these questions will offer a more solid base to design both the team coaching processes, timeline needed for it, and the processes needed to guarantee required professional development of teampreneurs. The author warmly welcomes any comments, discussion and criticism concerning team coaching. Share your experiences by contacting me!

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Flexibility of International Educational Programs

Krasnoshchekov Victor, Kovalenko Tatjana

The notion of flexibility of the educational program is not defined in the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" [1], however, in a textbook devoted to above Federal Law explanations and posted on the official website, it is stated: "Educational programs of the new generation are modular. Their advantage is flexibility: if the professional requirements change, they can update some modules replace other" [2]. In all the sources studied by the authors, undefinable concept of flexibility program is always connected to the modular principle of its construction. Can cause for example the monograph [3], in which, among other things, a detailed description of sources in a modular formation programs is shown.

Under the module authors of the monograph [3] understand "autonomous organizational and methodological framework of the discipline, which includes didactic purposes, logically complete unit of learning material (aligned with the intrasubject and interdisciplinary connections), guidance (including educational materials) and control system [3, p. 7]. This approach is reflected in the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" [1], where the concept of a module everywhere without exception occurs together with the notion of discipline as part of its logical conclusion.

In foreign sources cited in [3], other approaches to the definition of the module are listed. For obvious reasons, these approaches are close to reviewers involved in the design and implementation of international educational programs related to the field of non-degree education, and therefore not deterministic requirements of Russian Federal state educational standards.

Under the module, we mean a structure comprising a complex of disciplines (complex parts disciplines) ensure interdisciplinary connections, and having some autonomy in the sense of methodological purposes. In the future, the authors will address the issue of flexibility and the associated module's concept with regard to international short-term educational programs (ISTEP) only.

International Short-Term Education Program (ISTEP) is the complex of organizational and methodological measures, time-bound from 1 week to 1 semester (or 2 semesters) directed to achieve these goals (to develop of value orientations of students and to improve their overall, social and professional competences) by solving a number of tasks with the involvement of Russian and foreign teachers, as well as Russian and foreign students, and with implementation of specially designed, realized and corrected pedagogical techniques, and ending, as a rule, the issuance of certificates installed on university forms of non-degree education [4, p. 113].

Despite differences in the details, you can focus on the following general block ISTEP invariant structure, built on the basis of the implementation of its principles [4, p. 121] (Fig. 1).

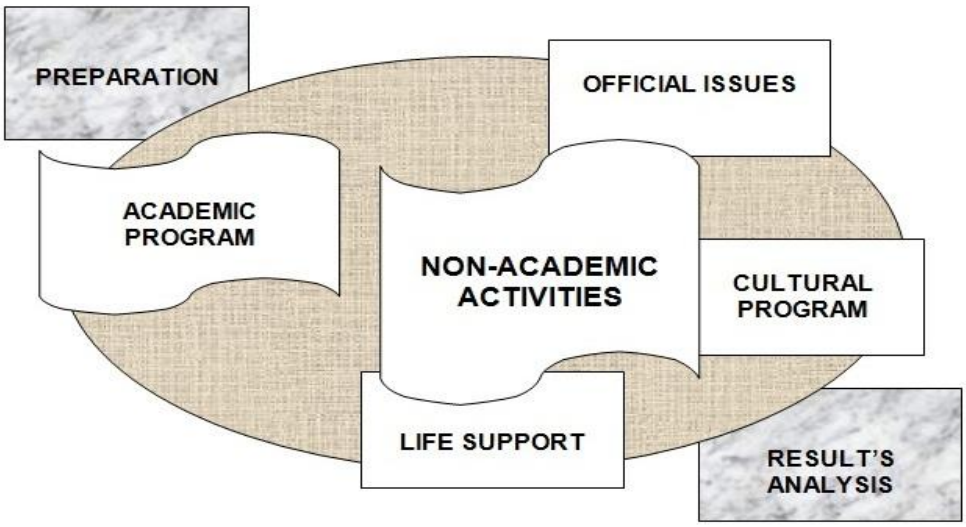

Fig. 1. Structure of the international short-term educational program

ISTEP includes three stages: preparation, execution and analysis of results. Key stage of the program is divided into two interrelated parts: the academic unit and non-academic unit. In turn, the non-academic unit is divided into three parts: the official events, cultural programs and events in the sustenance of the program participants. Having all blocks structure necessarily their specific content, the ratio of the volume and complexity of the cost will vary with the design and implementation of ISTEP.

Consider a case in which the University implemented in parallel by one or more ISTEP, one-month or semester. At the same time there is a request, usually initiated by foreign partners, to carry out other educational programs, having a shorter period - 1 or 2 weeks. Newly organized program is called “intensive module” [5,6]. A natural way to implement it is to join non-academic activities of the both programs (Fig. 2).

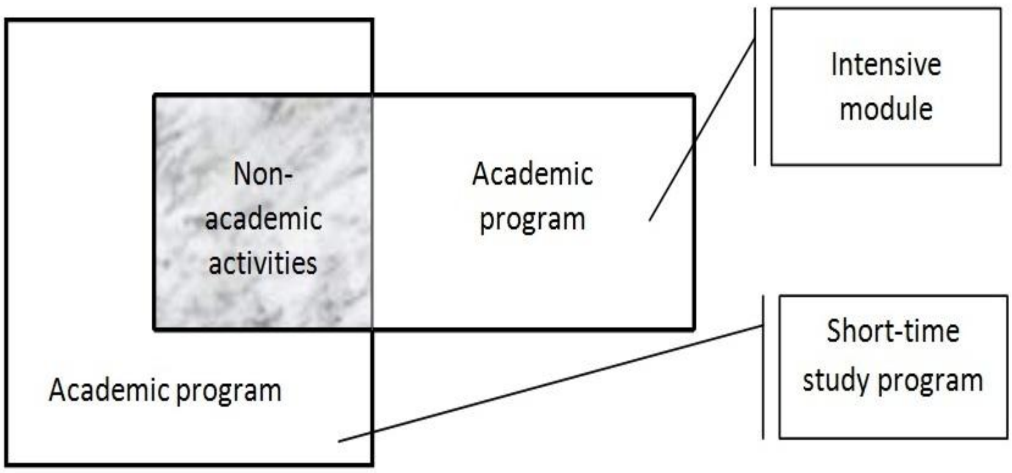

Fig. 2. Traditional way of implementing of intensive module

The traditional way of implementation of intensive module is the least cost in terms of administrative burden, however, and it is the least attractive in economic terms, since it is possible that the same courses may be taught in parallel.

For various reasons (organizational, time-saving, financial) student - Russian or foreign, doesn-t have a possibility to participate in the whole program. In the same time student seeks to accede to the program for a shorter period . Foreign partners may apply to University with the same wishes. Then when planning ISTEP the next academic year the administration of short-term programs seeks deeper integration modules within analysis of applications. So, not only non-academic activity modules are united, but also some structural units constituting both short-term academic programs. Such a scheme for the construction of educational programs has been studied by the author on probation in Cass Business School of City University of London [7]. It is noteworthy that by virtue of his status author was both a student of some courses and a teacher of the other training courses under the same intensive module. The degrees of possible integration of intensive module into international program are shown in Fig. 3.

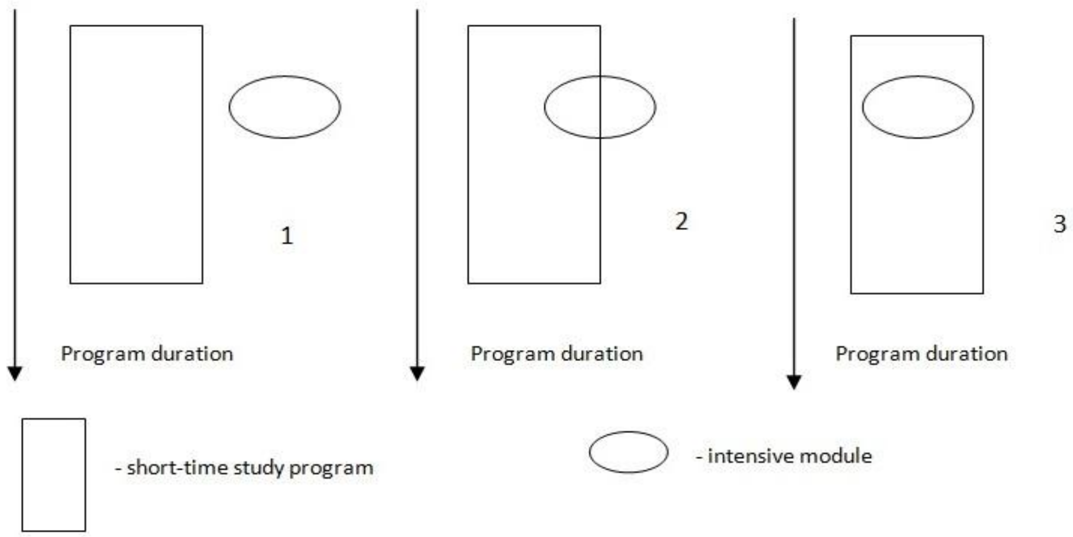

Fig. 3. Degrees of intensive module integration

Also, the case is possible with simultaneous integration of ISTEP and several intensive modules (Fig. 4).

Should make three final points.

1. Integration of one, or especially more extensive modules leads to a significant increase in load management, both at the stage of preparing the program, and at the stage of implementation. In preparing the program the administration with the teachers must work out content and structure of courses in detais, also they must allocate relatively independent units forming the parts of the intensity of modules. They must work out not only the content of each lecture and of each study visit, but also a forms of control, both for the entire course, and for units included in the intensive modules.

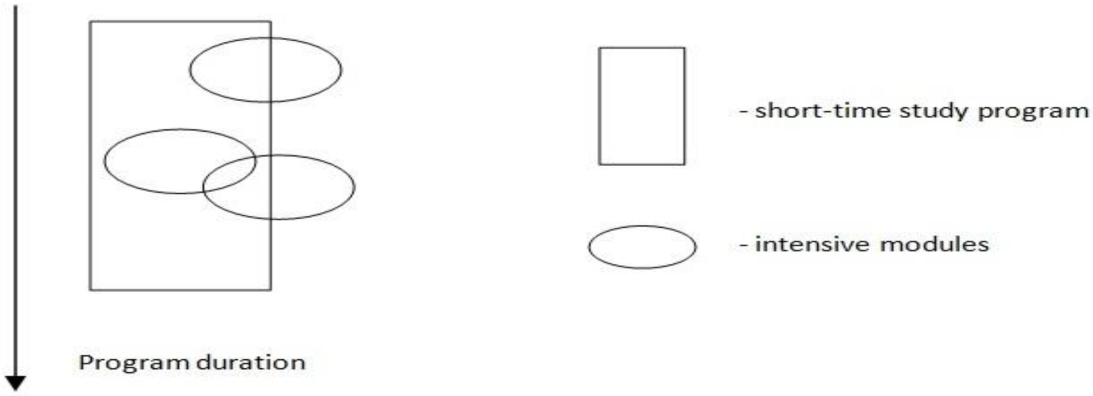

Fig. 4. Integration of multiple intensive modules

2. Integrable intensive modules can be of different nature [6]. An example is the course «Inventive Thinking», which was part of the Summer School in 2011, held in Saint-Petersburg State Polytechnic University (SPbSPU). The basis of classes were organized in accordance with the technologies and methods of TRIZ (Theory of Inventive Problem Solving), which becomes more and more important with the introduction of the knowledge economy paradigm.

Duration of the Summer School 2011 was 4 weeks. The students listened to two lectures in English and participated in one study visit on discipline «Inventive Thinking» per week. In addition, students can choose from a range of summer school another course built according to the same principles. Such a structure of the organization of courses of the Summer School of SPbSPU practiced since 2003, and has proven effective [4, p. 151-179, 8].

Furthermore, the intensive module with the duration of 10 days and with a load of 4 hours per day was implemented for businessmen. Contents of the course «Inventive Thinking» were distributed so that the main burden fell on the semantic classes through an intensive module. Timetable was drafted so that students who choose additional courses could also visit them during the intensive module. Study visits were not conducted for businessmen. Businessmen have received certificates of advanced training, issued jointly by SPbSPU and "Algorithm" Ltd, specializing in TRIZ technology, and having high reputation in foreign companies and their divisions, dealing with innovative developments.

Finally, for 3 days on the same area, an international conference on TRIZ, jointly organized by SPbSPU and "Algorithm" Ltd. Both students and businessmen participate in all conference events. They met with new ideas and techniques with practical application of TRIZ, made useful contacts. Some Russian students then continued to engage in TRIZ within students research activities. The scheme of such a program can be correlated with Fig. 4.

3. Integration intensive modules in international educational programs gives a definite synergistic effect. To the greatest extent this effect is seen in the integration of different modules in the program structure, as shown by the example of a program based on TRIZ technology.

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Innovative Methods and Some Forms of Learning Used for the Regional Department Students Training Experience

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Necessity and types of pedagogical innovations

The necessity of some innovative methods and forms of learning activities implementation in the main processes of “Foreign Regional Study” direction students’ preparation and training system is mostly dictated by didactic reasons. Y.K. Babanskiy proposed and substantiated the principle of different methods and means composition according to the tasks and content. [1, p. 173-174] It is possible to base this theory upon the didactic principle of necessary learning terms creation. [1, p. 175].

Some University obligations targeted at innovative educational methods and forms of learning implementation are fixed in the Higher School regulatory documents of R.F. F.S.H.P.E., master’s degree direction 032000 for “Foreign Regional Study” learners. They suggest that “the University should arrange the innovative learning methods implementation that develops the team working skills, intercultural communication skills, leadership qualities (interactive lectures delivery, group discussions and project work conducting, business cases analysis. This process should be done in the frame of role games, trainings, and computer simulation” [2]. Russian Federation F.S.H.P.E. targeted at the bachelor’s degree training 032000 for Foreign Regional Studies specialty defines “the wide use of active and interactive forms of training during the time of education (computer simulations, role and business games, special situation examination, psychological and other types of trainings)” [3].

The global target of innovative methods and implementation of their modern forms at the University is connected with the quality upgrading of the preparation period. Besides, it is possible to set the following system of values:

- the revitalization of students learning and intellectual activity, that in its turn leads to enhanced vocational training;
- the raise of students motivation to the learning process;
- mastering the skills of situations' analysis achieved by the students;
- testing the skills of work with information, including the ability to request some extra information;
- suggesting different approaches to the action plans' development, focusing on final target achievements;
- accepting optimal solution based on the individual and group situation analysis;
- obtaining the skills of clear and precise points of views delivery in oral and written forms, being able to defend the opinion in a persuasive manner;
- developing the skills of different opinions' critical assessment skills , self-examination, self-discipline and self- evaluation.

Pedagogical **innovations can be divided into innovative principles and approaches** to the learning process organization, **innovative methods of pedagogical interaction, and innovative forms and methods of educational activity** [4].

Innovative principles and approaches cover the following: primacy of quality, focus on a student, focus on practice, focus on international educational environment, modular organization, and information technologies One can add a synchronous approach to individual learning plan's creation [5].

The innovative forms and methods of pedagogical interaction realize some ideas of a personal-active subject of subject pedagogies. [6, p. 308] The traditional educational interaction of lecturers and students is supplemented or replaced by a professional interaction, mentoring and coaching. For example, during the mutual project work the use of the coaching technique is natural; in this case a teacher plays the role of a coach, and is in fact the business training manager for the students – who are the project participants.

All in all, the **innovative forms and methods of learning activity** are known and have been described. Three of them can be united by the innovative learning material organization and innovative forms of control: case-study method, project study method, and portfolio method. Other three forms are characterized by innovative forms of conducting classes: training, interactive lectures, on-line lectures, and their modifications. The lectures of guest professors are popular in American and European universities and are the integral part of many learning courses. However, these lectures demand good amount of preparation for holistic principles of material delivery compliance. Teaching visits play some vital role among the innovative lectures' delivery forms and learning methods.

The implementation of pedagogical innovations in the Regional - Study Learners preparation. The “Foreign Regional Studies” directions for bachelors and masters degrees training possess some characteristics that make the implementation of innovative forms and methods in the learning activity not only necessary but also possible.

Firstly, this is a **wide sphere** of alumni-bachelors professional activity defined by F.S.H.P.E. In the direction of 032000 ”Foreign Regional Study” [3]:

- organizational and communicative activity targeted at diplomatic, international and other contacts with foreign countries and regions as well as some work with government authorities, Institutions and organizations on the territory of Russian Federation with the corresponding countries and regions representatives collaborations;

- informational-analytical activity connected with the tendencies of political systems economic development in foreign countries and regions investigation work, their political, military, trade-economic, and cultural ties relations of Russian Federation , together with some international activity of foreign and regional organizations;

- editorial and publishing activity, connected with the problems in foreign countries and regions, and their media coverage, periodicals ,as well as socio-political ,scientific and popular literature;

- cultural-educational activity in the frame of cultural exchange and humanitarian interaction influence, connected with libraries, museums, and funds systematization, organizations of exhibitions, presentations, auctions and other types of activity in the area of culture;

- scientific - research and teaching activity in the area of applied problems of foreign countries and regions development study, with the study of foreign languages, history, politics, economy, demography, religion, culture of the peoples inhabited the region

Just the same in depth are the spheres of Regional Studies students Master's degree professional activities [2]. They cover according to F.S.S, the same directions with more detailed functions descriptions.

The enumerated directions of activity let the University fully realize the F.S.H.P.E. statements about the organization in the frames of educational process "meetings with the representatives of Russian and foreign companies, collaboration with state and public organizations" [3].Needless to say that these types of classes are not difficult to be held in Saint-Petersburg and Moscow where there are a few obstacles for such classes to be conducted. According to the authors point of view these statements of F.S.H.P.E. should be supported by such innovative form of activity as a visit in the frame of learning-teaching form of activity.

Secondly, it is necessary to point out the **advanced knowledge of foreign languages**, in particular English language, which is typical for most students of the "Foreign Regional Study" department. This factor allows:

1) the teaching department to organize lectures delivered by guest-specialists, i.e. teachers, companies representatives as well as the officials, for example, diplomats, and Foreign Consulates workers. Students can listen to the guests – lecturers without any interpreters, and participate in the face-to-face communication with them. Some Russian experience shows that the students of other departments are not ready to perceive the lectures delivered by professors-specialists in foreign languages. The help of the interpreters can often limit the volume of available information, the lectures can lose their interactive character;

2) the students to participate in International Educational programs at their University and abroad . The participation in the joint programs even in the home University widens the culture of students, helps them to accept some positive life values (multicultural behavior, patriotism), and develop some general as well as professional competencies [3];

3) the students to treat the historical heritage and cultural values of peoples that inhabit Russia, as well as foreign culture with great respect and care, to perceive social and cultural peculiarities with tolerance and understanding (ОК-1);

– to master the speaking culture, as well as the professional and academic etiquette knowledge (ОК-2);

– to be fluent in written and oral communication, using the international foreign language, which could be different from the regional language studied.

– These communication skills should be advanced on social and business level. (ОК-3);

– to follow the learning and professional discipline, to be personally liable for the results in educational and professional activity (ОК-16).

Thirdly, the humanitarian character of education, the absence of laboratory works continuous cycle, which is connected with complicated and unique equipment use, gives some **possibilities of flexible educational forms implementation**. This flexibility is linked with the organization process.

The example of these organizations can be the realization of some joint educational projects, for example “Tandem”. Two “Tandem projects” were planned for 2013 at Saint-Petersburg State Polytechnical University. The first project was held with Haaga-Helija University (Finland), the second one – with the Gotfrid Ljabnits University (Germany). The students who usually participate in the first project study at the Bachelor’s degree of “Foreign Regional Studies” department, ”Nordic Countries of Europe” specialization. The group of Finnish students, who studied Russian participated in a week class with Russian students of the” Regional Study” department, those who took the Finnish language.

These types of classes are usually delivered by both Russian and Finnish teachers. It is better to say that the teachers are the kind of moderators who define the topics of discussions and frame the communicative and investigation activity and collaboration. Despite the fact that the participation of Finnish students is not mentioned in the educational plan of "Foreign Regional Studies" department, this "Tandem" program participation in reality plays more important role in the professional language development and ethno-cultural competencies' formation of Russian students than the classes given in more traditional forms.

Interactive classes with multicultural component

The innovative forms of conducting classes in multicultural classrooms can be targeted at some active use of multicultural abilities of international students. The aim of these classes can be the preparation of Russian students for different forms of academic mobility participation, their more intensive involvement in the international educational process, for example, foreign University study, together with the deep subjects' competency creations.

Another aim of interactive classes is to create some valuable personal qualities, which are included in the individual social competency of a person, and under some terms and consequences can become the elements of professional competencies. It can be some willingness to participate in multicultural communication and the ability to conduct the intercultural communication. Besides, the realization of interactive classes is targeted at other positive individual qualities transformation. For example, the students during these classes gain such important in the modern world quality as multicultural perception. It raises their self-identification and fosters their patriotism.

First of all, it is necessary to define the group of disciplines, that are the vital and natural part of cross-cultural communication training.

Firstly, they are classes of cross-cultural communication, psychology, and pedagogic, together with cultural studies, international relations, global economy, and international business. The use of multicultural students and teachers can be of great importance for the precise efficiency of these classes.

The interactive factor is important for educational tasks disclosure, as the immediate students assessment of teachers and other ethnic groups representatives is needed. The interactive classes organization with 3-level multicultural components is possible. (Table 1.)

Table 1. The levels of intercultural classes conduct with multicultural aspects

Levels	Teachers activity	Students of different ethnic groups activity	Conclusions
1	During the classes the examples connected with the ethnic peculiarities are given (economic, cultural and psychological) according to the students in the classroom ethnicity.	Participate in the role of a referent group, i.e. show an agreement or disagreement, comment on the information or correct the ideas received from the teacher.	**Low level of multicultural use factor**
2	Gives the tasks connected with ethnicity aspects' demonstration in advance. Participates as the discussions moderator and organizes the students' talks.	Prepare the home assignment, short presentations and participate in discussions, defend their view point. They often turn to their ethnic representatives for help during the classes.	**Medium level of multicultural use factor**
3	Forms the teams for conducting the projects with multicultural aspects in advance (mono - cultural or multicultural). Controls the project realization. Gives the project evaluation and summarizes the activity, preparation and delivery levels, using multicultural competence of participants.	Realize the project work, using the multicultural competencies together with their development. They make presentations, defend the project, answer the questions, some multicultural aspect can be included. They compare the multicultural and above-ethnical aspects of the project.	**High level of multicultural use factor**

It is possible to make conclusions about multicultural aspects of interactive classes realizations:

1. students subject competencies are mastered.
2. intercultural competencies are developed
3. national identity level of different students ethnic groups rises, patriotism fosters.

The examples of the discussed pedagogical technologies' realization can be the participation of American students in the course of International economic relations classes included in the "World Economy" department of Saint-Petersburg State Polytechnical University Educational plan. The innovative short-term educational programs devoted to the international business training, which were held in London Kaas University City business school [8] in the frame of Continued Professional Development (C.P.D.) project for Russian teachers can be seen as another example of further innovative collaboration. Several conclusions can be done on this base of innovative technologies experience implementation.

Firstly, the pedagogic targets can be fully realized when the classes are structured regarding to multicultural audience. The highest evaluation grade was given to interactive classes connected with cross-cultural business psychology. The students and teaching staff alike participated in these classes as reference groups.

Secondly, it is necessary for the International programs to single out those students for whom the political-cultural education can give visible benefits for their professional competencies creation and enhancement. Thus, it was noticed that the highest satisfaction level from International program participation was shared by the international business students. These students were motivated to master their competencies in the international business sphere. The students gave the highest evaluation grade to the interactive classes, group work and project work.

Thirdly, the highest evaluation grades were given by all ethnic groups representatives to the courses, and to the lecturers who used to the full extent of their power the interactive components during their classes delivery. Thus, the low grades were given to the courses of finance, where the lecturers used interactive components at least.

Fourthly, it is important to held the interactive lessons, which are based on the values of tolerance and multi-culture .For example, one of the lecturers gave some direct comparisons of the program participants ethnic groups characteristics, with the target to point out the accordance to the British standard. Even such involuntary and, maybe unintentional tolerant behavior diminution led to lower overall rating of her pedagogical qualities characteristics. At the same time the content of her course was evaluated higher than the average courses grades.

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Learning Marketing by Doing – Team Learning in Saimaa UAS Marketing Studies

Lehto Ville, Hänninen Jyri, Lumme Mirka

The concept of learning and the role of the teacher

The traditional operational models of the educational institutions were created in the world where the amount of information in a specific field was limited enough for a person to know all the relevant issues and aspects related to it. In this world the knowledge transfer based teaching was a suitable and effective way. The knowledgeable person could pass the information on by giving a lecture.

Due to technological and related social and economic developments, the field of marketing is changing at such a fast rate that it is hard for anyone to keep up with all the relevant knowledge. The change also makes much of the existing knowledge outdated or irrelevant. In a normal 3.5 year education, at least some of the things learnt during the 1st year become outdated before graduation. So what's the point of studying and teaching? That's the question that spurred the desire to make dramatic changes in the marketing studies in Saimaa University of Applied Sciences (Saimia). The answer was to change the point of view from the knowledge transfer to learners' knowledge creation abilities, which enables them to live in a state of change (Ollila & Saukkomaa 2013). In practice, the learning is taken into real working life through a company that the students establish. They do projects for real companies and earn money during their studies.

The change in the concept of learning leads also to remarkable changes in the role of the teacher. The former source of knowledge must transform into a facilitator of the learning process. At the same time the student has to change from the passive receiver of information to an active knowledge creator. For a person whose identity and concept of self has long been based on being “the one who knows”, taking the role of a facilitator or “coach”, as they called in team learning, is not necessarily an easy step to take.

The knowledge theory of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995, p. 169) provides the framework for the knowledge creation in team learning. Nonaka and Takeuchi distinguish between the concepts of explicit and implicit knowledge and emphasize the importance of the interaction between these different forms. Figure 1 illustrates the learning process.

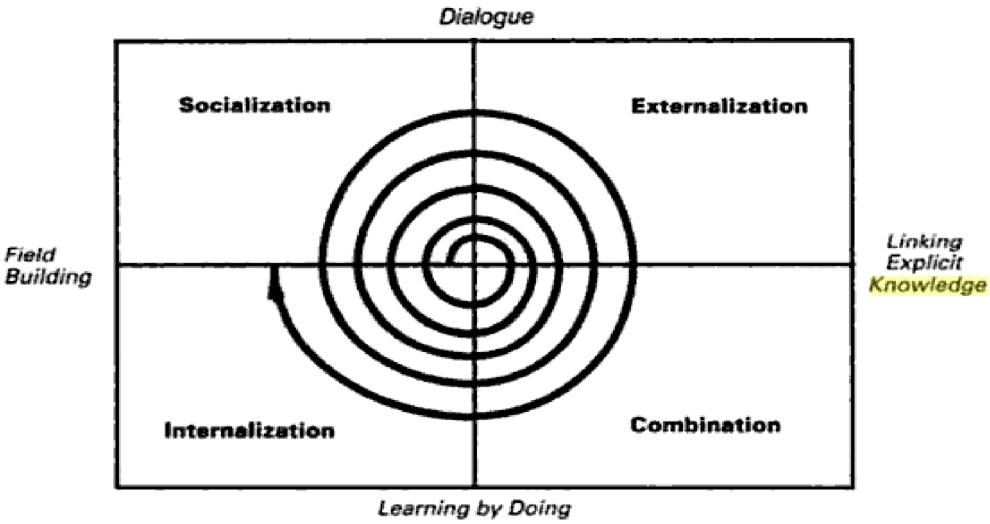

Figure 1. Learning spiral (adopted from Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995, p. 169).

Knowledge creation is based on the four forms of learning: combining and linking (explicit to explicit), internalization by doing (explicit to implicit), socialization (implicit to implicit) and externalization (implicit to explicit). The learning methods are a combination of tools that cover all these forms. The main responsibility of the teacher or facilitating coach is to take care of this interaction between all the forms (ibid.).

Learning methods

All the students use individual and group methods in Saimia marketing studies. The idea of the methods is to combine theoretical, social and practical skills during studies and everyday work. The expertise comes out by bringing together professional literature, seminars, courses, business projects and various kinds of group methods.

The most important individual methods are

- essays, learning agreement and development discussion

The most important group methods are

- exercises, dialogue sessions and innovations

Individual methods

Essays

Reading books and writing the essays are the essential theoretical working methods in marketing studies. The essays give a theoretical framework when learning marketing by doing. The student writes an essay from every book or article. The essays contains many elements, including: new ideas from the book, observations of business projects the students have done, criticism and reflection from a student's personal point of view. All the books should have a link to the actual business project.

Learning Agreement and Development Discussion

The learning agreement is the tool for the skill and motivational recognition of the student. The learning agreement is a contract collaboratively developed by the student and the coach. The role of the student is essential. The learning agreement includes the learning activities the student is expected to accomplish during studies. The coach and the student update the learning agreement two times a year.

The student must answer five questions:

- Where have I been? (history)
- Where am I now? (present)
- Where am I going? (goals)
- How do I get there? (means)
- How do I know I am? (measurement)

Based on learning agreement, every student has a development discussion two times a year. The student and the coach evaluate together how all the goals have been achieved. It will help the student to plan future studies. It is possible to re-evaluate targets if the student has new development goals.

Group methods

Projects

Understanding visible knowledge and information actualized by making projects. The team entrepreneurs respond to the offer requests and make practical projects for the companies. When expertise grows, the team entrepreneurs learn to productize their skills. The purpose of the projects is to develop the personal skills and expertise of the student. The explicit knowledge of theories is turned to individual implicit knowledge through learning by doing (Denning & Dunham 2010).

The team entrepreneurs choose projects by themselves. The coach supports the team to evaluate what projects are best for the student and in finding and creating personal objectives. “A team coach tries to build circumstances for others to succeed.” (Juvonen 2014)

Dialogue sessions

All the teams gather together three times a week. The teams share all the information and ideas that are important and concern the whole team. The teams can discuss about business projects, new ideas and social relationships. It is also important to talk about and share feelings. The atmosphere must be confidential. The confidential atmosphere is created through interaction and common deeds. During exercises, implicit knowledge comes out through dialogue.

The whole team must participate in exercises and the coach leads it. The role of the coach is to conduct a conversation, ask the right questions and take care that all the important marketing and business themes come out during conversation. The pedagogical idea is that the role of the coach decreases and the role of the students grow when interaction skills and expertise develop during studies. The students learn to find answers by themselves.

Innovations

Innovations make externalization of implicit knowledge. Innovations are a collective proof about expertise of the team. Innovations are customer driven team works. The project time varies from 4 to 24 hours. Team entrepreneurs create a solution during agreed time for the company’s problem and make a presentation for the customer. The team discovers several different solutions for the company. The representative of the company evaluates the presentation and how beneficial it is for the company.

The students must be determined and concentrated because of the limited project time. Innovations are also a test of how teamwork operates in practice.

Curriculum

The curriculum has a strong impact both on the students' weekly timetables and the contents of what they actually learn. In team learning, the key factor from both points of view is flexibility. As the relevant contents of marketing are constantly changing, also the curriculum must be flexible enough to enable the inclusion of the best contemporary content. On the level of the weekly timetables, flexibility is needed to match the implementation of the projects with the needs of the hectic business life. When companies express the need for a project, the suitable time is normally “right now”. The required communication and meetings with the companies can't be planned beforehand and the students and project teams need the power to decide about their own weekly schedules.

In order to keep up with change, the specific courses are replaced with more general themes of marketing:

1. Knowing the customer and business environment
2. Innovation, productizing and branding
3. Creating profitable customer relationships
4. Entrepreneurship, leadership and management

The first theme covers the areas such as marketing research, consumer behaviour, competitor analysis, business environment analysis, segmentation and targeting. The point is to understand the world where you and your company live.

Within the second theme the students familiarize themselves with the theory of pricing, methods of innovation, tools of productizing and the area of brand building and brand management. The point here is to create the value.

The third theme deals with the marketing communication, value networks and networking, customer relationship management, personal selling and sales management. The point is to create value exchange.

The fourth theme combines the self-management, team leadership and project management with the organizational development and strategic planning. The point is to create an effective organization.

The students are free to choose the specific contents inside the themes. Through the development discussions, the coach and student ensure that the relevant basic understanding of each area is reached, while the students are free to build special expertise in those themes and contexts they like.

The general themes can be applied in any business context (international, internet, clean tech, etc.) and it is up to the students to choose the fields they perceive as the most important. Naturally, combining the theoretical context with the type of projects is the most effective and useful option.

Learning environment

Instead of a traditional classroom, the teams work in an office. Each team gets a room for their use and they decide themselves about the appropriate furnishing and decorations. They can use the money they earn from the projects to acquire needed devices, software etc. There is also a separate room for the dialogue sessions. The interaction is facilitated by a circle of chairs where all the participants are able to see each other. The communication is free without any tables between the people. In the dialogue room there is also a computer and a projector so that the sessions can be complemented with e.g. short presentations.

The team itself forms a learning environment. It’s a great place to practice giving and receiving feedback skills. The feedback from fellow students is also an important source of the individual development. In teams, the students learn in practice about personal working styles, strengths and weaknesses. Through the interaction, the development of the idea is also enhanced when the different viewpoints can be combined and evaluated together.

Most of the learning takes place in local business environments. Students learn in practice how to communicate with the companies either face to face or using different communication tools. They also get experience about how to behave and dress in business negotiations. At the moment of graduation, again compared to classroom teaching, they know well the codes of conduct of working life.

Practical experiences from student point of view

CEO or Team Leader

Every team gets to decide what kind of titles they need and what the people responsible have to do. At the moment, each team has a CEO or a Team leader, a Finance Manager and several Project Managers. The existence of a CEO or a Team Leader is necessary for the team. The role is to be a leader, but at the same time an equal team member.

Mirka Lumme is a member of the “Ideaosuuskunta Loiste”(Loiste) co-operative. The co-operative was established in Saimaa University of Applied Sciences in the spring of 2012. The team has 16 members. In Loiste, the CEO leads weekly meetings where all the company’s practical issues are discussed. She is also responsible for the company’s internal communication.

Mirka worked as the CEO in the spring of 2013. Before that she hadn’t been a leader or even thought that she could be good at leading. Encouraged by the coach, Mirka ventured into this new area of knowledge. To her surprise, she received positive feedback from the team and the management began to be really interesting. Mirka thinks being a leader is challenging, but at the same time really rewarding. In eight months she learned a lot about leadership and the meaning of employee skills. She also came to know her own skills and boundaries better. In Mirka’s opinion the best thing in team learning is to get practical experience and self-confidence. These are certainly useful for many situations in the future.

Project manager

Every project has to have a Project Manager who leads the project group. Each student has to work as a Project Manager at least once during the studies.

The Project Manager is responsible for the progress and the success of the project. The project manager is not, however, the only one responsible. The project group has to make sure that they do their jobs well, and they have to help Project Manager, because after all they are a team.

Mirka worked as Project Manager in Loiste's biggest project, Lappeenranta GP, a "Grand Prix" for electric or muscle-powered vehicles, in the spring of 2013. The scale of the event was big and it was implemented in co-operation with Saimaa University of Applied Sciences, Lappeenranta University of Technology and the City of Lappeenranta. It was a big challenge for her, because she had not been a manager before that. The project was comprehensive and included many tasks. Together with the project group and support of the team, they handled it brilliantly. Mirka thinks that being the Project Manager in this project was the greatest learning experience in her studies. She got many useful contacts and learned new things, for example how the safety plan is done for an event and how to create functional arguments for a sales situation.

Finance Manager

The Finance Manager is responsible for the company's financial issues, and will take care of invoicing and paying the bills. Loiste has externalized bookkeeping to an accounting service, so the finance manager will also cooperate with service provider accountant. The Finance Manager also has to keep the team informed about money issues.

Marika Issakainen has been Loiste's Finance Manager since October 2013. During this time Marika has learned to read profit and loss statements and balance sheets. Working with the company's money is a challenging task. Marika told that it has been stressful to be in charge of company's money, but at the same time she has learned a lot about taking responsibility and being diligent. After all, Marika thinks that it has been interesting and educational to be the Finance Manager.

Conclusion

The rapid change of the technological and sociocultural environment calls for new approaches in the ways marketing is studied and learnt. In Saimaa University of Applied Sciences, the traditional knowledge transfer based system has been replaced by team learning methods and the focus is on the knowledge creation capabilities of the students.

The new operational model consists of new learning methods, curriculum and environment. The new way of learning requires students' active participation and the tools used can be categorised for individual and group methods. The flexible curriculum enables the inclusion of the latest developments and makes it possible to focus on specific fields of professional expertise. The learning environment is based on the interaction between the students, coach and the professionals of the local business life.

In practice the students establish a company and they must organize themselves like companies do in real business life. The students get the experience of applying the theoretical ideas in real projects and they learn to take responsibility in running a real company.

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Methods of Teaching English to Overseas Students at Institute of Internetional Relations

Malkina Irina

I have been teaching English at the department of international relations for five years. The level of English of overseas students varies greatly from culture to culture. That is why they all have to undergo tests to asses their capabilities. Those whose level of English is equal to that of Russian students are taught alongside Russian students. The rest of the students are beginners and elementary students. I have always found it a challenge to teach English to such students as I am a non-native speaker and I can not offer explanations in the student’s mother tongue because our students come from China Africa, Latin America and Asia. I teach them in small group so that I am able to asses how everyone has understood the topic of the lesson. Elementary course lasts for a year. I have always tried to make my university classes enjoyable for the students as they are under considerable pressure to perform as well as Russian students on numerous subjects, such as social studies, world literature, economics, political studies, which are taught in Russian, and what is more, they have to study another foreign language of the chosen region as most students choose regional studies as major subject. With so little knowledge of Russian (they have been studying Russian for a year before they start our program), they find it extremely difficult to study in their first year at our university. They come to my classes tired and oppressed, and I think it my duty to make every class as amusing as theatrical performance. I provide them with handouts and visual aids. As I face misunderstanding, body language and gestures are also used making them at ease. From my own experience I know that beginners are happy when they understand questions and are able to answer them, so oral communication is a key to advantageous learning of English. Once my students understand English well enough to communicate a bit, I put them into groups or pairs to read communicate and converse. The more they practice, the better they get at using the English language. He goal is less to get them to learn the rules of English grammar and more to get them to be able to write read and speak a foreign language. By the end of the first year my overseas student must be able to tell the time, to direct people in the street, to express their desires in restaurants, shops, at the hairdressers` and other services. According to the first year program by the end of the year they are supposed to have learned six English tenses, adjectives and adverbs so they must be able to speak about their future plans, to retell a fairy tale, to describe people, things and events. During the first year I assess my students once a fortnight. The more tests they write, the more comfortable they feel speaking and writing English.

In their second year at university my students start preintermidiate and in the second term intermediate program that includes basic grammar, i.e. all English tenses in active and passive, conditionals, reported speech and modal verbs. My students read extracts from novels and short stories by American and British writers. By the end of the second year my students are supposed to be speaking about lifestyle of the country of their origin, thus exchanging their cultural differences, to discuss everyday problems for example choosing, renting and buying real estate, everyday news, crucial events and natural disasters. That is why students are required to watch media giants (BBC, CNN) to report briefly on what`s going on in the world.

The third year is the most crucial as the students begin studying business English and continue studying general English. Business English is easier to teach and understand as we all live in business world. This article is concerned with general English as it is still a challenge for both students and a teacher. As a teacher I have to cover a wide range of issues which are essential for intercultural communications and international relations. My program consists of eleven units. Each unit includes reading, speaking and writing parts. The reading part is followed by vocabulary list, vocabulary practice and grammar. Students must translate from Russian into English and visa versa using vocabulary of the unit. In the speaking part all students have to make an oral presentation on the given topic related to the main theme of the unit. In the writing part student must write an essay. Among the topics studied during the year there are: relationships between men and women, secondary and higher education in developing and developed countries, employment and unemployment, people being overworked in the modern world, health problem connected to our lifestyle and bad habits, e.g., explosion of obesity and drug abuse, different theories how to make our lives better like “system thinking”. Then grammar includes gerund, participle, and modal verbs, infinitive, etc.

At advanced level (the fourth year at university) there is an enormous amount of vocabulary to learn. I prefer books which focus on areas of vocabulary that are useful in a wide range of the situations: agreeing and disagreeing frequency, problems and solutions, starting and ending. I use materials that treat collocations as well as what grammatical structure we use with certain words. The topics we study range from science, art, policy to technological breakthroughs.

At this level all teachers face the same problems. First, most students think they know everything while they don`t. Secondly, how teachers can get them to use more sophisticated language when writing and speaking. Third, how we can teach them in a way that isn`t boring for them? According to many teachers there are plenty of materials for beginners and as you go on there are fewer and fewer. Finally it comes to two main points I guess it comes to two main points of focus: how to get them to do better and faster the things they know how to do already, how to get to do the new things. There are plenty of ways to achieve these goals: watching films and reviewing them, writing real letters through Amnesty International Green Peace. Unfortunately there are a lot of political prisoners all over the world and a lot of cases of dishonest practices used by famous companies. You could stimulate your students by setting up student magazines where every student has his or her own page. You could organize dispute on global problems with native speakers. The most popular dispute in my practice was a view exchange meeting the motion of which was “Democracy isn`t the best form of the government”. All these activities can help to find out areas of grammar to practice more.

In conclusion, I’d like to point out that, in spite of all difficulties, I consider it enjoyable to teach overseas students and I hope I have aroused in them interest to study English at proficiency level as English provides access to the vast world of entertainment and information.

Spanish for Russian Students

Malysheva Elena

The aim of Language teacher is to give his/her students excellent knowledge of such skills as Writing, Reading, Speaking and Listening. The last two aspects are rather difficult for students and having fifteen year experience in teaching from zero level till B2 I would like to talk about different ways of making your lessons more vivid and funny.

Spanish Reading is rather simple: it takes students only two lessons to learn all letter combinations, diphthongs and triphthongs and read correctly for ever, so at the very first lesson students can read (with their teacher's help) and use simple dialogs as the first step of Speaking. Although there is not much difference in Russian and Spanish pronunciation, some sounds need a special practice, also students have to pay attention to the fact that there is no reduction of sounds in Spanish. It is a pity but I have not managed to find pronunciation exercises for zero level and A1, so as the first step for preparing face muscles for unusual movements students just repeat after the announcer words like numbers, months, days of the weak etc and then sing them on modern tunes, grammar is also practiced with help of Spanish songs like 'La Bamba' to remember forms of the verb *ser* and 'Veo veo' for *ver*, such constructions as estar + Participio and estar + Gerundio are in the world famous song 'Quizas', students take part in such activity with great enthusiasm.

Watching educational films like "Extra" helps with practicing intonation, at zero level students also watch cinema classic like "La reyna de Chantecler" (The queen of Chantecler) as the actors in such films speak in well articulated Spanish and students are able to understand some dialogs.

For further practicing Speaking and Listening skills students play Russian Lotto, Russian variant of a famous game Bingo, it is a special set of wooden pieces with numbers from 1 to 90 and special cards with numbers. A student takes a number piece from a special bag and announces number without showing it to others students. They are supposed to look at their carts and check if they have this number, then it turn of another student to announce. As a rule first time the game fails as students say numbers wrong or can not understand their group mates, so they ask to repeat game at the next lesson to be better prepared.

Grammar at zero level is not complicated, but appears a problem which should not be with Russian students: they don not put in plural each part of word combination as they do in Russian and are supposed to do in Spanish… they use plural only for nouns as they have been taught at English lessons at school, so they spend their time doing orally simple exercise: an article, noun and adjective all in plural, again and again repeating the same mistakes.

At the end of zero level period when students have already known enough useful fraises such as ¿Como te llamas? and ¿Cuantos años tienes? (What is your name? and How old are you?) “A Popstar” game is very useful. Groups of six students are asked to write down five personal questions, then one of them sits on a separate standing chair that is a popstar, others are journalists, so each ask question number one. Then second student sits on the chair and question two is asked. This exercise as a rule is a big fun, as questions sometimes are rather unusual.

The beginning of level A1 is a kind of shock for students as exercises become more and more difficult. As ninety per cent of a group are Russian speaking students, it is possible to read and translate into Russian, then answer questions about an adopted text and make backward translation (foreign students do not do translation into Russian). Another useful exercise is to think a question about the text and then ask it one of group mates, but I have to drop this type of activity as in eighteen students group it takes too much time.

To practice different grammar aspects students are divided into two groups, students of one group read in turn questions or phrases from grammar exercises, the students of other group have to remember the fraise and answer correctly making necessary changing, for example ¿Vas al cine? – Ya he ido al cine (‘Are you going to the cinema?’ – ‘I have already been in the cinema’). This exercise takes about twenty minutes, but it is a good practice of Listening, Speaking and Grammar all together.

At level A1 students start to learn vocabulary in family word groups like appearance, furniture, clothes etc, to help them revise new words there is an interesting exercise: I show them a picture of a small girl and they say in Spanish that she can be a sister, a daughter, a niece, a granddaughter and a cousin, an old woman can be a grandmother, a mother–in-low etc.

Furniture words are also revised with help of pictures, if students fail to name all pieces first time, they are shown pictures again, sometimes again, then they are asked to make a simple composition, for example put a picture of lamp between a pictures of an armchair and a wardrobe, in order to other students say what they can see, that helps revise prepositions as well.

Gaining as much vocabulary as possible is a very important point in studying language at any level, but Russian students are rather leaded, so if you do not tell them to learn certain words, they will not do this by themselves, and even being said, half of them will not do this. The methodic of teaching is step to step so to keep all students on the same level and not to lose pace during the lesson because students can not understand a sentence, I use a rather merciless method: after each topic students are given a list of fifty words and a week to study them. The vocabulary dictation is held in form of competition: a word is said in Russian and a student, who translates it quicker then the others, gets a wooden stick as a point. Five points mean that a student has passed this dictation. This competition is rather difficult as for fifty words there are eighteen students, those who do not get necessary points have to pass this dictation again individually.

Having spent so much enforcement on Speaking and Vocabulary students found out that their weak point in studying Spanish has become Writing. In reality Spanish writing has certain number of rules with no exception and just a bit of attention helps to write correctly. The most common mistakes, as in Russian there are not such symbols, are dropping reverse question and exclamation marks at the beginning of a sentence, “forgetting” tilde over *ñ,* what offends native speakers, and not putting necessary stress mark over a vowel, what can change the meaning of a sentence. Writing simple dictations become a frustrating process as students do a lot of “stupid” mistakes, but just a little practice helps to remember necessary rules.

As students reach level A2 tasks become more complicated, as a home work they answer questions about a topic and then make their own stories about their working day, their childhood or cheating the exams at school etc., that exercise helps to practice Speaking and ‘hidden’ Writing (as students’ notes are never checked).

To make classes more vivid, as students become tired and bored at the middle of the second semester, I start using media more frequently. The first step is when students watch a cartoon and try to say what is happening at the screen at the moment, as a rule they fail to do this but they managed to name some objects they can see. As homework they are asked to prepare comments to a two minute cartoon, commercial or a part of a film, some of them fail even homemade exercise, but most choose funny cartoons and make funny comments as well, so the last thirty minutes of a class are looked forward.

At the third semester students start B1 level, the activities and exercises differ from those they are used to do. The main point is that instead of text books for Russian speaking students are used Spanish courses for foreign students, in which all explanation is made in Spanish. To get better results four lessons a week are divided into Speaking with native speaker, two ‘Sueña’ dedicated lessons with Grammar part and Business Spanish.

A native speaker explains everything without using any Russian word and students discuss different topics also only in Spanish, at the beginning that seems very difficult. To ‘warm up’ students are shown pictures of a group of people, they give description of people’s appearance, name and describe items of clothes, then they say what people are doing, have been doing and try to guess what they are going to do. Further they do the same exercises with short videos, so students have to give description with great velocity.

As the next step students read short stories and try to guess relationship of characters.

When students feel more confident they start discuss different topics: they tell their group-mates about events in their life such as a wedding, taking part in a students' concert or problems at their part-time job, group-mates give their opinion and a piece of advice.

At the end of semester they discuss word's events such as Eurovision and difference in Russian and other countries' cultures, customs of different nationalities.

After every lesson they are asked to write down their opinion and thoughts about the subject, these works are checked with using colourful pens: green colour means that sentences looks 'Spanish', black means that information should be given in different way, red means that Spaniards never say in this way.

The way of learning Grammar also differs from one used at previous levels: as students have already known all essential grammar, they start revise it using Grammar for Foreign Students book, which is written in vivid, modern language full of Spoken Language expressions. In order not to waist time at lessons students do grammar exercises at home looking up new words and expressions, during classes they check their answers and get necessary explanation if fail.

The most difficult Grammar topics at this level are Imperative and *Subjuntive*. Unlike in English where to make an imperative sentence you need only an infinitive without *to,* in Spanish you have to know a lot of rules and exceptions. To practice them students play a game called 'Alive pictures', they are divided into three groups, a well known picture is shown to one group and students of this group put the second group in postures like in the picture using only orders, the third group guesses the picture.

Classes dedicated to course 'Sueña' help to systemize knowledge of grammar and practice such aspects as Reading, Translating and Speaking.

Mentoring – Essential Part of Leadership and Management Training

Nikkanen Samuli

Mentoring is a learning relationship in which the mentor helps the mentee to develop by identifying and releasing the potential the mentee has inside. The relationship is always based on free will and mentors and mentees are doing it voluntarily. Mentoring relationship is confidential and it is one of the main issues that makes the relationship successful.

The Saimaa University of Applied Science organizes a leadership and management program for students from different faculties every year. This extensive program of 30 ECTs' covers leadership and management topics from self-leadership, human resources management, knowledge management, and the leadership of organizations. A very important part of the program is the mentoring in which the student is privileged to follow the seasoned master of leadership – her mentor.

We have studied the pros and cons of mentoring by interviewing several business people who have either acted as a mentor or a mentee. *A mentor* is a helper who provides his knowledge and life experience for a less experienced person called *mentee*. A mentor does not have to be older than the mentee but he needs to have some experience or knowledge that is useful for the mentee and that is worth sharing. *A mentee* is normally a less experienced person than a mentor and may be a rookie in the working life. A mentee might be in a situation where he is not developing anymore and requires encouragement and help to develop and to proceed in his career. A mentee should have life – and work experience so that he can actually create a successful and interactive mentoring relationship with the mentor. The results of the study will be published in their entirety in a Bachelor's Thesis report. This article will summarize the main topics of the study.

What is Mentoring?

The relationship between the *mentor* and *mentee* is always based on free will and voluntariness. Mentoring relationship is confidential, which makes the relationship successful. Desirable results can be achieved when a mentor and a mentee meet regularly, share knowledge and perspectives and engage with each other and with the process (Connor & Pokora 2007).

The best case scenario is that two persons from totally different life situations connect and they both learn during the mentorship and find new perspectives about life, work and themselves. Relationships vary; some mentorships are based on friendship and the other have more professional elements (Shea et al. 2001). Figure 1 shows the four types of mentoring relationships.

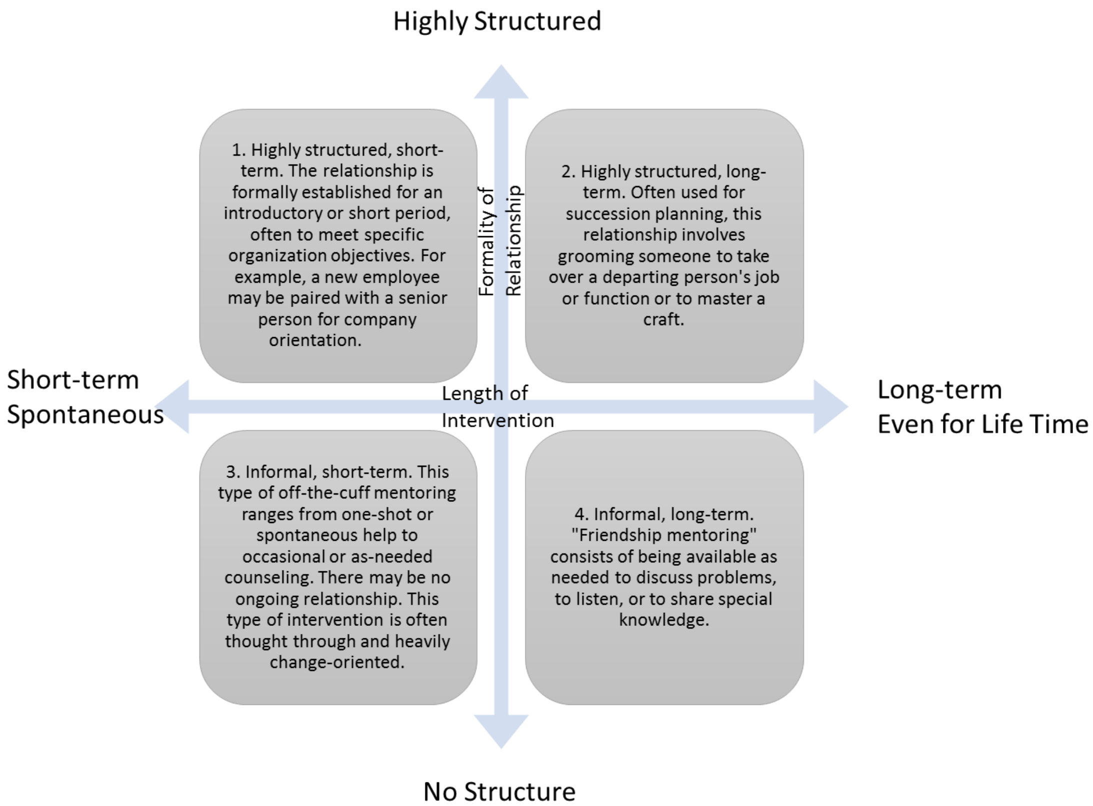

Figure 1. Four types of mentoring relationships (Shea et al. 2001).

In her book *Mentoring Advantage: Creating the Next Generation of Leaders,* Florence Stone describes the three stages of mentoring.

- The first stage is all about creating a trustful relationship between the mentee and the mentor. Since it means much more than just clarifying the goals and agreeing on the development goals, it may take a lot of time. This phase could be called “the honey moon” of mentorship. The mentee highly respects the mentor and the mentor sees the mentee as a person pleasant to work with and easy to coach. Positive feelings meet the positive expectations. Sometimes a mentoring relationship is not so fortunate but that is why this first stage is there to test expectations against reality.

- During the second stage the mentor and the mentee start to discover the benefits and results from the mentorship. That is why Stone calls this stage “the cultivation period”. The change in the mentee’s behavior can be seen and the whole relationship is more relaxed. The scheduled meetings might change into spontaneous meetings with a cup of coffee. Both sides get internal satisfaction from successful mentorship. Doubts may, however, arise at this stage. The mentee might get a promotion or a new job and he can start thinking whether the mentoring relationship is still worthy or not. Whatever the reasons are, usually it is at this second stage when either or both start thinking if their needs are fully satisfied. In case of dissatisfaction, it is important to be able to talk about the status of the mentorship and both participants’ expectations.

- At the third stage the mentor and the mentee may find themselves moving apart. Both of them start having their own agendas and even though the meetings continue, the themes of the discussions are far from the original issues with which they started the mentoring in the first place. In many cases neither of the participants knows how it would be appropriate to end the mentorship. To be able to separate with positive feelings, it is important to agree on the end of the mentorship already in the beginning, as weird as it sounds. With common rules it is easy to appeal to them when the time comes to end the relationship. Also an open atmosphere and sincere discussions during the mentoring are the key for a positive ending (Stone 2004).

Effective Mentoring

Shea, Woodbury and Pittsley write in their book *Mentoring: How to Develop Successful Mentor Behaviors* about seven types of items that make mentoring effective and that significantly encourage the mentee's growth. The items are: shifting context, listening, identifying feelings, productive confrontation, providing appropriate information, delegating authority and giving permission and encouraging exploration of options (Shea et al. 2001).

- *Shifting context* is one sort of a mind game in which the mentor helps the mentee to imagine a certain situation or feeling that he hopes to achieve in the future

- *Listening,* and especially *respectful listening,* is one of the most important actions that a mentor can do in a mentorship. *"Respectful listening is the ability to become absorbed in what another person is saying about a problem, treating that person's words as confidential communication, and not injecting your own subjective views, opinions, or suggestions."*

- *Identifying feelings* is an important part of the discussion because words only tell one portion of the story. Feelings reveal what the speaker really thinks about the subject or the problem and if the mentor does not detect the mentee's feelings, he might miss the most important part of the message (ibid.).

- In the *Productive confrontation* the mentor should form the sentences in "I" form instead of "You" form. It means that the mentor should suggest an improvement from his point of view so that the message comes directly from him; e.g. "I am a bit worried that he might not understand what you are planning to achieve with this".

- *Providing appropriate information* means relevant information that helps the mentee to resolve a problem but does not resolve it for him. Also a good method is to give the mentee a right direction where he can find the information so the research will be done by the mentee.

- Other valuable aspects of mentoring are *Delegating authority and giving permission.* When a mentor gives authority to a mentee, it shows a great level of trust and that the mentor has confidence in the mentee's abilities. *Giving permission* is related to the mentee's childhood and other previous life experience. The mentee may have certain fears about the working environment, working life behavior, getting public recognition etc. As an experienced and respected person the mentor should encourage the mentee to work towards his dreams.

- The mentor should *Encourage exploration of options.* Many times we rely on the methods we have found functional and therefore we tend to forget to step outside from our comfort zone. In effective mentoring the mentor should suggest different actions for resolving a problem but to do it so that the mentee still has the power to decide the right path.

Outcomes of Mentoring to the Mentor

Mentoring is a relationship in which the mentee is not the only learner but the mentor learns too. Mentoring can be good for the mentor’s professional growth. In many cases the mentor and the mentee have differences in age, sex, occupation, personality and background. Mentoring persons with different personalities and backgrounds will improve the mentor’s coaching and leadership skills and when these abilities are used in the job environment, the job performance will develop. The mentee also have other job-specific skills that can help the mentor in his or her own work (Stone 2004).

In the mentorship the mentor may get a fresh perspective for his own performance since there is someone who questions what the mentor says and does. One of the interviewed mentors used to say that people often act like race horses with blinders, only able to see straight but not to the side nor behind. People often believe that their own principles and procedures are the best and are not willing to expand the view. A good mentor is forced to do this in the mentorship. Being critical about one’s own performance will make the mentor understand different opinions and find areas that could be developed (Stone 2004).

Developing other people, sharing own experience with them and helping them to discover the potential will be recognized by the mentor’s peers and superiors. Success in mentoring will be especially beneficial when the mentor is considered for a position with more authority. The mentor may also get additional tasks done with the help of the mentee. The best case scenario is when the mentee can actually learn from the work the mentor gives to him and at the same time the mentor’s workload decreases. Often the mentee is eager to do the work the mentor provides for him since he wants to compensate the mentor's time and help.

Mentor working in a certain company represents and shares that company's values in the mentorship. However, the mentor is also able to share his own values and when he sees the impact of his own beliefs in the mentee, it is a significant, mental reward for the mentor. When the mentorship has been going on for a while and the mentor and the mentee share a mutual trust, the mentee may provide information about the mentor's leadership, communication or supervising skills that can help the mentor to develop himself as a mentor.

Outcomes of the Mentoring to the Mentee

The most significant benefits that the mentee gains from the mentoring relationship are the job and career advice from the mentor as well as the increased self-confidence (Stone 2004). These items together are the key for several positive effects in the job environment. Mentees are likely to be promoted and they may get higher salaries due to the better knowledge of handling situations concerning promotion and salary. Better self-confidence, higher self-esteem, and discovered potential of the mentee will improve professional identity and professional competence. When the mentee recognizes these abilities in them it will be easier to convince the management and ask for a promotion or a pay raise (Johnson & Ridley 2004).

Persons who have been mentees are likely to be more satisfied with their careers since they have gotten valuable information about the working life and they have courage to do changes if necessary. Satisfaction with the work often reflects to the job performance and therefore the mentees will get greater acceptance in the organization. They also have less work stress and that has a positive influence in the mentees' personal life (Johnson & Ridley 2004).

Mentoring giving both positive and constructive feedback to the mentee will definitely help the mentee both in the working and personal life. The mentee may also benefit from the contacts that the mentor has helping him to advance in his career (Stone 2004).

If the mentoring takes place inside the organization the mentee will get detailed information about how the organization really works and the learning of the required tasks will be faster than without a mentor. This kind of in-house mentoring creates a win-win situation for all of the participants; also the organization will benefit from it enormously (Stone 2004).

People who have acted as mentees will most likely mentor others in the future (Johnson & Ridley 2004). It may have a great impact on the mentee's career if he shows willingness to start and develop a mentoring program within an organization due to the previous experiences in mentoring. It also shows a certain level of maturity if a person says he has participated in a mentorship program.

Discussion of the Results of the Research

Reasons to Become a Mentor

The research was done by Ms. Saara Hautala who is a student in the Leadership and Management Program mentioned before. When analyzing the answers she found that some questions revealed more variance than any other questions in the interview. One of these questions was about the reasons why to participate in mentoring. Quite many of the respondents' arguments based on the good image that they have about mentoring and they found it either reasonable or interesting and also believed in the method.

Another common reason to join the mentoring forces was the communication and interaction between the mentor and the mentee and the fact that the mentor has a great possibility to share his knowledge with the mentee. Only one respondent wanted to participate in the mentoring process due to the experiences in his previous jobs.

It was significant that in most of the answers words about communication and interaction appeared. Among the respondents it seemed to be the main reason to participate in mentoring.

Mentoring as a Tool of Mental Coaching

All the respondents praised the method and words like *useful method, excellent tool* and *very good* were used to describe mentoring. The main message that could be read from the answers was that everyone considered mentoring as an excellent method but their arguments about *why* it is so excellent varied. In fact, there were three main themes that appeared in the answers: silent knowledge, invention of new ideas and the chemistry between the mentor and the mentee.

When we studied the usefulness of mentoring respondents claimed that mentoring is a great tool for sharing silent, or tacit, knowledge. One of the interviewed persons added that with mentoring it is possible to share good policies and even teach body language.

In two of the answers creating new ideas and seeing things from another perspective were mentioned. One of the respondents said that mentoring is an excellent tool since new ideas can come up when the experience and knowledge of the mentor and the fresh ideas of the mentee are united and an experienced mentor can help to see things in a new, different way.

The third interesting issue came up when asking about the chemistry between the participants of mentoring. Some of the respondents said that mentoring is a great tool if the chemistry between the participants works and both of them understand the benefits that can result from the mentorship. The participants should also be open, willing to discuss and share mutual respect and trust with each other. Enough time should also be reserved for the meetings to be able to create a mentoring relationship that works well.

Silent knowledge appeared both in the mentors' answers and in the non-mentors' answers'. Silent knowledge is clearly appreciated and it is considered as a valuable part of the knowledge capital. For a young manager it can also provide a significant competitive advantage in the job market.

The Development Areas of the Future Managers

The main problem of young managers is obviously the lack of managerial experience. In the answers there were several issues that were associated with this matter and they are presented in Figure 4 below.

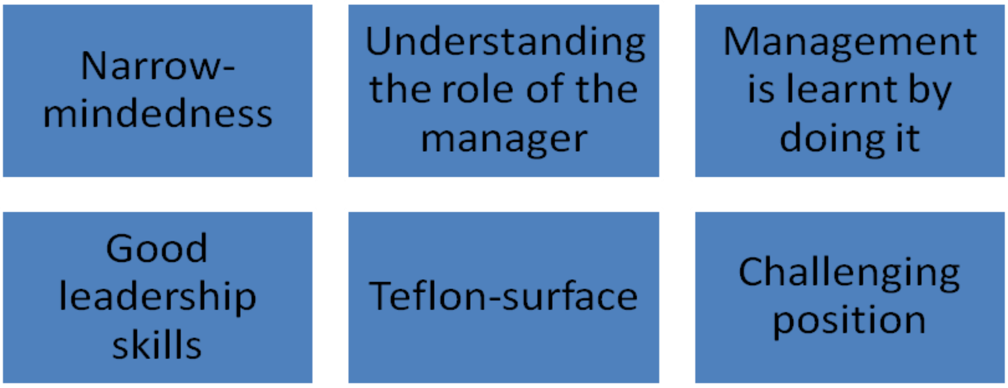

Figure 2. Key associations to the young managers' lack of managerial experience

The most dominant issue when talking about the lack of experience was that the young managers do not often understand what the manager's actual role is and what his tasks in the organization are. When interviewed one respondent said that the most important task of the manager is to lead and control the entirety and one can learn it only by doing it. Good leadership skills come with experience. According to the same respondent, young managers often miss the *teflon surface.* This means that they should learn to keep an appropriate distance to the employees. Another respondent stated that a challenging position may create a problem for an unexperienced young manager. As young managers are not experienced enough they tend to be narrow-minded and they do not know how to make forecasts broadly enough.

Young managers face lots of expectations and prejudice and it might be difficult to shake them off. The answers of the respondents revealed three main problems that the young managers have: lack of managerial experience, lack of self-confidence and ability to acquire the respect from other people. However, my opinion is that everything starts from the experience. When a young person gets more experience in managerial tasks, his self-confidence and knowledge will increase at the same time. Also it is understandable that an inexperienced manager will need more time to acquire the respect from the employees and colleagues but with time and experience it will get easier.

Positive effects of Mentoring

The impact that was mentioned most, was the increase in the young manager's self-confidence. Mentoring can also strengthen the managerial identity of the mentee.

In three of the answers appeared the fact that mentoring gives good direction and good advice but at the end the mentee will learn to think by himself. Mentoring will also provide support and encouragement to develop as a manager.

Increase in the following knowledge and skills was one positive effect that came out from the answers of three of the respondents:

- silent knowledge,
- communication skills,
- experience-based knowledge
- concrete knowledge about the company

A couple of the respondents stated that with mentoring the young manager may get new perspectives to life and also to being a human and being a manager.

Another positive effect is the ability to talk confidentially about the mentee's strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes young managers have to work in their discomfort zone and then it is important to remember that they not failing but the tasks might not be suitable for them. For many people it is difficult to recognize one's own strengths and weaknesses and mentoring is an excellent tool for that. Most people do not have the courage or possibility to ask these things directly from an expert. Often the best response comes from a person who does not know the mentee from inside out but knows how to look at the matter from the professional perspective. Also the mentee has to adopt a professional attitude and displeasing issues should not be taken personally. Figure 3 summarizes the positive effects of mentoring covered in this chapter.

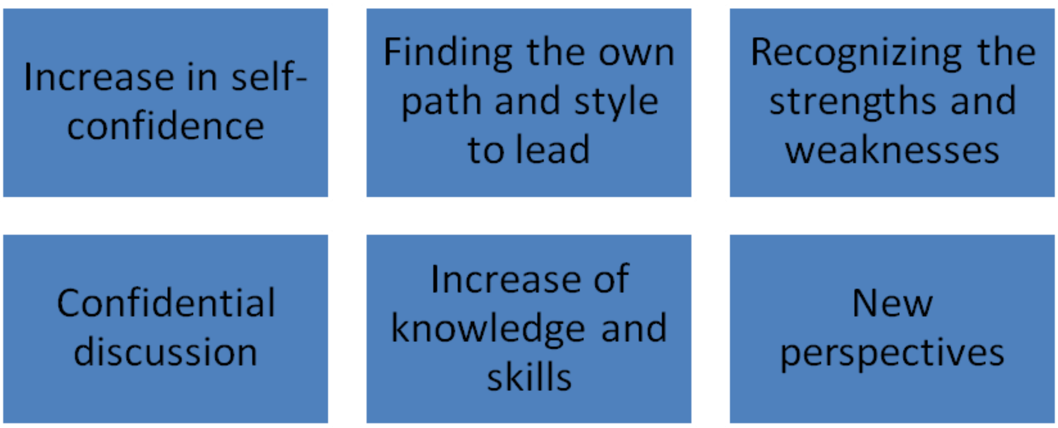

Figure 3. The positive effects of mentoring.

Use of Mentoring in the Leadership and Management Training

In her thesis report Ms. Hautala says: “It was nice to see that the findings of this study support my own experience of mentoring. I got a lot of self-confidence and new perspectives for working life during the mentorship. I am also more confident about the future, partly because of the increased self-confidence, more confident that I will find an interesting and challenging job even though the economic situation is quite difficult. I became interested in the mental coaching and this Bachelor’s thesis is one proof of that. Hopefully, I can utilize this motivation and interest in the future working life too. However, what I found the most important was the knowledge about the overall control of life: how to combine personal life and work so that the quality of life stays good and mental exhaustion will be avoided. My experience about mentoring was so positive that I will definitely participate in it again in the future if I get a chance.”

Negative Effects

Based on the answers there were clearly three different negative impacts that can come out of mentoring, The reasons for those effects can be seen in Figure 4.

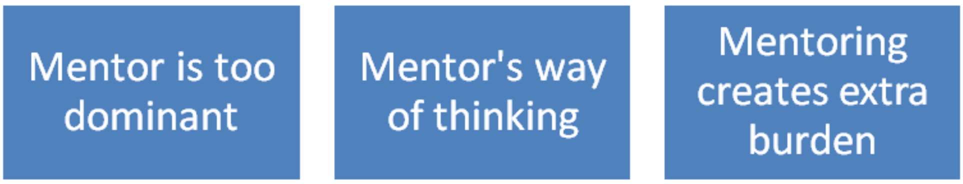

Figure 4. The reasons that cause negative effects in mentoring.

The mentor’s strong opinions may also cause the phenomenon that the mentee starts to copy the mentor’s thoughts and the whole managerial identity of the mentee might change. It is extremely important for a young manager to hold on to his own personality and not to copy anyone else’s management style or thoughts.

A respondent stated that people respect genuineness in the manager and they easily recognize if the manager is pretending to be something he actually is not. It is rare that someone who is in a challenging position could keep the act on for a long time. When the real personality comes out and people find out the truth, the young manager will have a lot of work to keep his credibility among the employees and his own superiors.

An in-house mentor can be subjective in certain issues and therefore a mentor outside of the company may be the best choice. It depends on the purpose of the mentorship but if the goal is the mentee's development and the company's operations are left out, then an objective view is preferable. Combining knowledge gotten from different people would help the young manager to create their own path.

The key factor of mentoring is the confidentiality and it cannot afford any doubts in the relationship. Chemistry between two people is something that can be evaluated from the very beginning of the relationship. If the participants of mentoring do not have working chemistry, they have to be brave and discuss it. It is something that should not be taken personally because some personalities do not get along as well as others. A professional attitude towards this helps a lot and when the decision is made early, bigger harms can be avoided. When people decide to participate in the mentoring program they need to keep in mind that chemistry is a big part of it and it cannot be forced.

As it can be seen from the answers, there are significantly more positive effects that mentoring has on a young manager than negative ones. The negative issues mentioned in this chapter can be transformed into positive resources and the participants should always remember to discuss things that bother them to avoid further consequences. In mentoring it is important to remember the professional attitude which helps when handling difficult matters. The mentee has a great responsibility of his own development and therefore he needs to be observant from the beginning of the relationship. After all, if neither of the participants sees any benefits coming out of the mentorship, there is no point continuing it.

Conclusions

This article summarizes the major findings that Ms. Saara Hautala reports in her Bachelor's thesis. The main research question in this thesis was to find out "*What effects does mentoring have on a young manager?"*

Impacts that appear in both theoretical and empirical findings are increased self-confidence, good advice, constructive discussion e.g. about the mentee's strengths and weaknesses and concrete knowledge or skills of a certain company's operations. Effects that appear only in the theoretical findings are increase in salary, promotion, career satisfaction, contacts gotten from the mentor and less work stress. It is important to remember that when one participates in a mentoring process it does not automatically mean that in a month he will get a raise. Mentoring may prepare the mentee for the future challenges that include better salary and more responsibility but it does not guarantee any of it. That is why the motive for starting a mentorship should not be the money but the eagerness to develop oneself and learn things that the books cannot teach from a more experienced person. This could be read from the interviewees' answers.

Effects that appear only in the respondents' answers are the possibility to a confidential discussion, finding their own path and getting new perspectives. Therefore the biggest difference between the theoretical and empirical findings is the number of external and internal results. The interviewees put emphasis on the mentee's development and internal effects whereas the outcomes found from the books often mention the external benefits such as salary, promotion and good contacts from the mentor.

The most critical negative effects that mentoring can cause are that the mentee starts to copy the thoughts and ideology of the mentor and forgets to develop their own managerial identity. This may happen if the mentor is too dominant and forces his ideas to the mentee. A mentee may also get a wrong image of managerial work if the mentor's way of thinking is old-fashioned or negative. Depending on the situation, some of the negative matters can be transformed to positive ones by creating constructive questions and discussion. A professional attitude must be remembered because one can never know the real reasons behind someone's ideology.

The study reflects strongly Ms. Hautalas own opinions about mentoring. The findings of the study are opinions of six different people and if the same questions were asked from other people, the results could be different. However, the results of the study are reliable because many of the empirical findings could be associated with the theory and Ms. Hautala had similar experiences from her own mentoring process. In her thesis Ms. Hautala was able to answer to all the research questions. I am on my behalf certain that the readers of her study report find it useful and become more interested in mentoring or even want to join mentoring forces.

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Pre-Assignments and the Inverted Classroom Model

Piiroinen Ikka, Peteri Juha

Three teachers of economics introduced the inverted classroom model over a decade ago. Lage et al. (2000) argued that the traditional teaching method, where the students participated first in the lectures and then did their homework, was beneficial only to certain learning styles. A major part of students would reach their best potential through experimenting, collaborating with other students or by independent knowledge construction. However taking all the various learning styles into account would multiply the contact time needed and is thus unrealistic in respect of institutional resources.

Lage et al. (2000) suggested that in order to reach all learners, teachers should invert the learning process by transferring the events that traditionally occur in the classroom to take place outside that environment and vice versa. This means that students prepare in advance for the contact time by getting familiarised with the subject in question. The teacher provides a menu of options to achieve this: it can happen, for example by multimedia technology, video lectures or the Internet. The contact time is used for discussion, workshops or those assignments that would traditionally be considered as homework.

Bergmann and Sams (2012) refined the inverted classroom model and renamed it flipped classroom. The authors use video recordings as pre-material and there are opinions that videos are the defining element of flipped classroom (Bishop & Verleger 2013). On the other hand, some argue that the video lecturing has gained too much attention and the focus should be on turning the students' role from passive receivers to active producers (Tucker 2012, Makice 2012). In any case, flipped classroom, flipped teaching or flipped learning is one of the most discussed pedagogical methods of the present time (Fitzpatrick 2012, Permaa & Veistola 2013).

The flipping method has also confronted criticisms. For example, it has been argued that the method is not time and cost effective because of the need to product new instructional material (Endfield 2013). Furthermore to date there is little scientific evidence of the pedagogical effectiveness of the method (Goodwin & Miller 2013).

Asko Kilpeläinen (MSc) teaches, among other things anatomy and physiology for nursing and physiotherapy students at Saimaa University of Applied Sciences (Saimia). Some years ago he faced a situation were he had to compress a large anatomy course in relatively short time frame. Kilpeläinen solved this problem by squeezing the core content into an exercise booklet and giving students pre-assignments to prepare before contact time. This worked so well the method was developed further.

Nowadays every course that Kilpeläinen teaches has main material on a web-based learning environment (Moodle). Exercise booklet, main lecture content and pre-assignments are in PDF-format and there are web links for example to YouTube animations. In addition, students use anatomy books and search for information by themselves. From Moodle students can see every pre-assignment and the timetable for the entire course so, if they choose, they can solve more assignments than is required for the next class session. For example, a four-credit (4 ECTS) Anatomy course has 15 two-hour sessions, which all have a pre-assignment. It is estimated that one assignment takes in average 30-60 minutes of homework. Assignment can be a one large one or consist of multiple subtasks.

Kilpeläinen monitors the fulfilment of the assignments by requiring the students to mark on a follow-up chart when the task is completed. Marking is justified if a student is confident that at least 80% of the assignment has been answered correctly. In the end of the course the marks are summed up and students can earn maximum 10% extra points to the final exam. If they fail the first exam, all extra points are withdrawn and cannot be added to the retest. This motivates students to do their best in the very first exam. Kilpeläinen ensures that the markings are done honestly by randomly asking students to explain to the whole class how they have resolved the tasks. Everything is done in positive spirit and other students can take part in the discussion and ask refinements or clarifications from teacher or from peers. In this system lecturing is minimised and students teach themselves and each others, and find relevant questions to solve. It has been very satisfactory to find that the teacher is not anymore having a monolog in front of the class. Instead the learning process is active, open and dialogic.

Four active stages of learning are found in Kilpeläinen’s system: 1) preparation for contact time by getting familiarised with the material and doing the assignments, 2) comparing the answers with other students before class, 3) active class discussion about the assignments and 4) preparation for the exams by revising the assignments. Often in the end of the course students print a blank version of the exercise booklet so they can revise for the exams.

It can be seen that Kilpeläinen’s system is related to the inverted classroom model in the sense that the course material is offered in advance to the students and the contact time is used for discussion. What differs from Lage et al. (2000) is that homework is still done at home. The inversion related to homework is that what traditionally would have been given after a lecture is now a pre-assignment. Kilpeläinen sees little sense in flipped model if the pre-material is strictly a video recording of a lecture. He argues that watching a video lecture is still a form of passive learning and directs attention to the teacher. Video lectures can even be inferior to live teaching because one cannot communicate with the video. It can also be difficult and slow to find the individually important parts of a recording in comparison to written material.

Niina Nurkka (PhD) is a senior lecturer in research methods, statistics, mathematics and medical calculations for nurses in Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programs at Saimia. Nurkka has similar experiences as Kilpeläinen. She also found out that the pre-material and the pre-assignments would be beneficial for learning. The first aim of those is that the students activate previously acquired knowledge related to the subject. Secondly, they start to construct a new comprehension of the topic. Thirdly going through the pre-assignments collaboratively in a class situation keeps the teacher on track of the students’ learning process.

Nurkka thinks that the pre-material and the pre-assignments help the students to put the new knowledge into context and formulate their thoughts. Students also have to take more responsibility for their own learning. The method changes the structure of the lesson: lecturer is not the only one speaking when students are required to participate in the discussion. According to Nurkka a teacher should be like a coach and “to coach students’ thinking”, which is perhaps more demanding but also more meaningful than the traditional lecturing method.

The pre-material and pre-assignment method requires teacher to formulate right kind of tasks so that the learning progression is facilitated and is visible to the teacher. Nurkka sees a lot of potential in web-based surveys and exams to monitor the process, not only by the lecturer but also by the students themselves. The Moodle environment, for example, has this kind of quiz construction feature. Turning the students to active thinkers and collaborators is demanding for the students and Niina admits that not everyone has the ability at the beginning.

Kiti Turunen and Leena Luukka have experience of the pre-assignments from a student’s perspective. They both agree that the method facilitates independent thinking and is a good way to reflect the learning process. It also gives direction and structure to studies. Turunen is of the opinion that the pre-assignments work especially well for theoretical subjects. From Luukka’s point of view the method could be implicated to all learning. On the other hand, both think that if the theory is rather complicated, as it often is in statistics, the pre-assignments can be too demanding to accomplish independently. Also a large volume of students can be challenging for a method, which requires active collaboration.

Conclusions

- Inverted classroom is a pedagogical method, which transfers the events that traditionally occur in the classroom to take place outside that environment and vice versa.

- The aims of pedagogical inversion are to facilitate different learning styles, turn students into active learners and collaborators and reduce focus on teacher.

- Pre-material and pre-assignments are one way to invert the learning process.

- Video lectures are just one way of distributing the pre-material and are perhaps less activating than written material.
- Inversion of classroom requires the lecture to plan carefully the whole course and is perhaps not suitable for some subjects and for some individuals.

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Teaching English in Russia: National Peculiarities

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Every country has its national peculiarities. They concern each and every aspect of life: culture and language, politics and economics, sport and leisure, cooking and eating as well as learning and teaching. Most of peculiarities are habitual and, though there are always logical reasons behind them, they are lost in the mists of time.

In this article we will have a look at some of national peculiarities of Russian students and what a teacher can do to get around them or at list lessen their influence on process of teaching and learning.

In the XX century Russia has come through series of great convulsions and challenges: World War I, October Revolution and Civil War, Industrialisation and de-kulakization, World War II, Cold War and Perestroika. All of this was reflected in Pedagogy and approaches to teaching. Social and political situation reflected on lives and perception of both students and teachers. The core idea of Soviet school was to create the united secondary labour polytechnic school so that every graduate could easily become the effective member of the soviet society. It implied universal education coverage and giving equal rights to study for all children of Russia. Moreover, these goals were achieved up to some extent, but not without side effects like over-ideologisation, narrowness of subjects of humanitarian circle, formalism and unjustified disconnection with national origins. On the other hand, we should not forget about strong points like consistency of studies, theory-science connection, insistence on high standards and effective system of teacher education.

Unfortunately, Soviet Russia and its citizens were isolated from the other world, which, in turn, meant no need in speaking skills but gave students many opportunities for studying grammar and polishing reading and interpreting skills. This influence was so strong that, as a result, modern students still pay very close attention to formal grammar and translations of words. They inevitably show remarkable love for their grammar and are ready to spend hours on end drilling it; but they are almost always are unwilling to say a sentence or two.

Although Soviet educational system used to be the most effective and harmonious one, it has left a very sad and invincible legislation. Students have almost irresistible horror of making mistakes and sharing their personal opinions. The main reason is the relic of the Soviet school – the role of the teacher. It was and, which is sad to say, still is authoritative. Up to now for a number of people getting education is not a mutual two-way process. On the contrary, the teacher and the student are on the opposite sides. The pedagogue is not an intermediary between all the amount of knowledge and a student, who obviously knows less; but the mentor is the only reliable source of it. He/She does not help to understand and process information; he/she makes to learn it parrot fashion. Under such conditions every mistake reduces the points and final grade as a result. No wonder the students are afraid of being mistaken.

Much and more has changed since dissolution of Soviet Union but some things stay the same. Young people are not so loaded with ideological nonsense, they do not need to be careful with what they say or do; and they still are the children and grandchildren of those who grew up in USSR. Their teachers and parents got education at that time. The society has probably changed but not the inner habits and behavioural models that are translated from grown-ups to children. Probably modern students are bold and independent but deep inside they are still afraid to be told off for a mistake or silly (as they think) question.

These things are not easy to fight, though they have to be thought or the person will have serious problems with learning. Especially when the language is the case. Because ‘language is the human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of **communication’**; and communication is ineffective when the speaker feels fear (of any kind).

There are also some not so academic definitions. Language is:

- A Process of Free Creation

"Language is a process of free creation; its laws and principles are fixed, but the manner in which the principles of generation are used is free and infinitely varied. Even the interpretation and use of words involves a process of free creation."
(Noam Chomsky [1])

- A Finite System

"Any language is necessarily a finite system applied with different degrees of creativity to an infinite variety of situations, and most of the words and phrases we use are 'prefabricated' in the sense that we don't coin new ones every time we speak."
(David Lodge [2], "Where It's At," *The State of the Language*, 1980)

Again, we see words 'free creation' and 'creativity'. It is the key. Creativity in its due turn is as a mind skill, equipping us to make any new idea in any area. Then creativity is essentially not a kind of knowledge or science but, it is a skill kind, may be improved through various methods (Hamid Rajaei [3] 2008).

According to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, 'any form of language use and learning could be described as follows:

Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of **competences**, both **general** and in particular **communicative language competences**. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various conditions and under various constraints to engage in language activities involving language processes to produce and/or receive texts in relation to themes in specific domains, activating those strategies which seem most appropriate for carrying out the tasks to be accomplished. The

[1] Avram Noam Chomsky (born Dec. 7, 1928) is an American linguist, philosopher, cognitive scientist, logician, political commentator and activist. Sometimes described as the "father of modern linguistics", Chomsky is also a major figure in analytic philosophy.

[2] David John Lodge (born Jan. 28, 1935), English novelist, literary critic, and editor known chiefly for his satiric novels about academic life.

[3] Hamid Rajaei Rizi (born on Mar. 21, 1968) is an Iranian Theologian, essayist, writer and TV producer.

monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences.'

- *Competences* are the sum of knowledge, skills and characteristics that allow a person to perform actions.

- *General competences* are those not specific to language, but which are called upon for actions of all kinds, including language activities.

- *Communicative language competences* are those which empower a person to act using specifically linguistic means.

- *Context* refers to the constellation of events and situational factors (physical and others), both internal and external to a person, in which acts of communication are embedded [4].

Yet again, we encounter the word *skills* among other things. Knowledge is significant. When one does not know words, clichés, grammar rules, culture and history of the country, he/she cannot talk at all; but when the skills are not well developed and are not trained enough, process of communication is restricted and artificial. In the description above the particular emphasis is put on both general and communicative language competences. It is sad to say that in most schools teachers pay special attention to communicative language competences forgetting about general ones. Moreover, they in every way show that making mistakes is wrong and silly. In some cases they make students believe that being mistaken is unnatural, though even ancient romans proclaimed 'Errare humnnum est.' The situation is typical due to the authoritative role of the teacher, as was mentioned earlier.

What should the role of teacher be? Teachers should not just transmit knowledge to students; they should instil in them a sense of their place in the larger world, and urge them to be active participants in it. That is what is usually forgotten in class – teachers (and in many cases students) live in two worlds, which never adjoin, – university and real world; but university is just the part of real world and not such a significant though very and very important one. The

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[4] COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR LANGUAGES: LEARNING, TEACHING, ASSESSMENT from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf

central idea for teacher is to remember that university and education is not the only meaning and purpose of life; and choose the role, and approach to teaching accordingly. Education is the tool, the key to open new doors in students' lives but not the aim as it is. People continue studies because they want better and more diverse life with more opportunities and chances; and not because getting education is a goal in itself.

The new role of the teacher requires changes in teachers' knowledge and classroom behaviours. The teacher must know how to:

- act as a classroom facilitator. They use appropriate resources and opportunities to create a learning environment that allows each child to construct his or her own knowledge. The teacher is in tune with her students and knows how to pace lessons and provide meaningful work that actively engages students in their learning.

- establish a safe, supportive, and positive learning environment for all students. This requires planning on the part of the teacher to avoid safety risks, to create room

arrangements that support learning, and to provide accessibility to students with special needs. The teacher is skilled in managing multiple learning experiences to create a positive and productive learning environment for all the students in the classroom. Classroom procedures and policies are an important part of creating a positive learning environment. The teacher evaluates and implements effective classroom management techniques in a consistent manner. He/She uses routines and procedures that maximize instructional time. Students know what is expected of them, and the teacher knows how to effectively handle disruptions so there is no adverse impact on students' instructional time.

- plan for the long-term and short-term.

- foster cooperation among students within the classroom. The teacher models and promotes democratic values and processes that are essential in the real world.

- encourage students’ curiosity and intrinsic motivation to learn. The teacher helps students become independent, creative, and critical thinkers by providing experiences that develop his/her students’ independent, critical and creative thinking and problem solving skills. The teacher provides enough time for students to complete tasks, and is clear about hi/her expectations. Students are actively involved in their own learning within a climate that respects their unique developmental needs and fosters positive expectations and mutual respect.

- make students feel valued. The teacher emphasizes cooperative group effort rather than individual competitive effort through collaborative projects and a team spirit.

- communicate effectively with students and colleagues. The teacher uses written, oral, and technological communication to establish a positive learning experience.

- use language to foster self-expression, identity development, and learning in her students.

- listen thoughtfully and responsively.

- foster cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity in his/her students. The teacher encourages students to learn about other cultures and instils in her students a respect for others and their differences [5].

Thus we see that to help students study more effectively and consciously the teacher not just transmits the knowledge and strictly asks to repeat them; but creates the environment in which the students feels the need to show and share the knowledge with others in the group, and to be creative and free in self-expression.

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How to Use Debates as a Teaching Tool

Riabova Anna

As English teachers, we are almost always on the looking for interesting ways to motivate our language learners. I guess that conditions which promote low anxiety levels and comfortable atmosphere in class allow improved learning on the part of students. When students enjoy and appreciate their class activities they learn more. Giving young people something new and useful for their future activities do wonders in giving up boredom and improving the language skills. Contemporary debates are becoming a popular way of teaching argumentation and presentation skills.

Many teachers believe that debating is something you do once, or a few times, and then it's done. Or, alternately, they never have debates in class at all - thinking that there's no time (thank you, pacing guide!), or that they don't have the necessary expertise.

When people say that there's nothing intrinsically good about debate, it's just like saying that there's nothing intrinsically good about writing a research paper. What some teachers consider good about writing a research paper is the way that the project exercises a complementary set of component skills, such as researching, summarizing, outlining, constructing a thesis statement, making subjects and verbs agree, and so forth – it's a convenient (if difficult) way to have students work on all of those different skills at the same time – the mental equivalent of cross training.

Debate works in the same way. Done correctly, it builds research competence, media literacy, reading comprehension, argument literacy (more on that one in just a second), evidence evaluation, summarization and outlining, public speaking, conflict resolution, civil discussion skills, critical thinking, and note taking. Done poorly, debate provides a mixed bag- people yelling at each other, students reading from scripts that they didn't write, and so forth. Students need the skills associated with debate first. And if they learn those, even if you don't have time to have a series of classroom debates, you'll still have taught the basics.

I think there are three essential, basic debate skills:

1. Argumentation
2. Refutation
3. Note taking

Note that public speaking and listening don't appear in this list. That's because listening is part of refutation and note taking, so I don't list it separately. I prefer to list the way it's operationalized. As for public speaking, I've found that students master speaking more effectively if they have the tools and content for their speeches - like most of us, they're more comfortable speaking if they know what to do, and speaking ability builds over time with debating. I think teaching content first is the best way to teach speaking, especially with students who are nervous about speaking (like most normal adults) or who don't speak English as their home language.

So, a few notes about each of these skills:

1. Argumentation. The easy way to teach this is to reinforce it across all lessons by teaching the ARE method. Students learn that an argument is an assertion, reasoning, and evidence. An assertion is a statement that something is so. Reasoning is the "because" part of an argument, and evidence is the "for example" part, that supports the reasoning. It's used to validate or support the reasoning.

2. Refutation. We teach a 4-step refutation model. Step one is "They say..." That's the part where you refer to the argument you're about to answer. Step two is "But..." That's where you make your counter. You can make a counter-assertion ("They say the Backstreet Boys are a good band, but they're not.") or attack the reasoning or evidence that's been offered ("They say that the Backstreet Boys are a good band because they're popular, but just because you're popular, that doesn't mean you're good.") Step three is "Because..." This

is the part where you offer reasoning (and evidence, if possible!) to support your counter-argument. Step four is "Therefore..." This is where you make your conclusion - essential summarization. Let's look at an example:

But you don't need to actually have debates in class to teach debating.

Because you can teach the skills associated with debate, like argumentation, in any unit.

Therefore there's plenty of time to teach debate in class.

It is so easy!

3. Note-taking. This bit is essential to debating as well as to success in school. But students aren't (let face it) very good at taking notes. As one of my colleagues has noted, teachers are always saying that students need to take notes, but there are very few situations in the tertiary school where students actually need to use the notes for something- even when the teacher says the notes will help on the test, they often don't. One of the many nice things about debate as a teaching strategy is that it creates an incentive system for students to take notes. The better their notes, the more they'll win. As you can see with the refutation method above, students are expected to refer specifically to the argument they're about to answer. They need to have it written down to answer it. As debates get more complex, with multiple students in the discussion, students need better skills to track arguments as they develop (or don't) in discussions and debates. So, they learn to be better note-takers.

Good teachers work to build a common vocabulary for instruction. But it's not always obvious how to do this. Recently, I have learned a great technique for teaching one element of common vocabulary for writing instruction. When students are developing writing skills, they often make the mistake of taking a writer-based perspective rather than a reading-based perspective. In other words, they're writing for themselves (no surprise, as many of our students have not yet had their own Copernican Revolution) - in shorthand, or with unclear connections between thoughts. The text makes perfect sense to the writer, but the reader struggles to make heads or tails of it. This is a problem for effective writing, so students need to understand the difference between reader-based writing and writer-based writing.

Once, I observed an ambitious young teacher struggling to engage a group of learners who weren't excited about the novel they were reading. The book was Bless Me, Ultima – a great book, to be sure, but one that about half of the students plainly did not like or find particularly engaging. After class, I met with the teacher to talk about strategies for engaging the students. We talked about some different tactics, but one that we decided to try was an exercise called "Good Book, Bad Book."

The idea is to have students make an argument about the book encouraging them to reflect on their impressions of the book so far from a "bigger picture" perspective. It's a simple exercise, but one works to engage students in discussion and debate about the merit of a particular text.

Now, this may seem like a dangerous strategy - but it's not as if you're putting the book up for a vote; rather, you're trying to get students to reflect on the characteristics of a good or bad book, and to have an informed opinion (For example, if a student thinks the book is boring, they have to produce evidence from the text to support their opinion).

I visited an English class some time ago where the students were learning English using debating. The teacher had broken up the students into small groups of seven, and everyone was talking at once. The teacher explained to me that the students were engaged in "tennis debates."

I've used this exercise on a number of occasions in my groups and it works well – the competition element creates interest for students, and you can even "seed" a bracket where students who win their table get to participate in another round against another team. Students that are eliminated from competition seem to really enjoy watching and refereeing subsequent games.

Basically, the teacher uses tennis debates either:

- As a review and practice opportunity for work students have been doing already on a given topic, in which case topics are chosen from the students' previous and preparatory work and notes on the issue; or

- As an opportunity to practice impromptu argument, choosing easy and fun topics like "Sega is better than Shakespeare," or "Superman is better than Batman."

Students are sorted into teams (either assigned or chosen; whatever you prefer), and each team is given a number. Teams go to the table, already set up, where their number is. Each team of three sits on one side of the table. A student designated as "referee" sits on the end of the table. Before the topic is announced, the referee flips a coin to decide which team will be pro and which will be con.

(ADVICE: Write simple topics for this, otherwise students will get too confused. That holds for all classroom debating exercises.)

When that's decided, announce the topic and write it on the board. Teams have 10 (or more, if you like) minutes to work together with their notes to come up with arguments for their side and answers to arguments the other side might make.

After the preparation period is over, the Pro side "serves" with an argument for their side. Con "returns" by refuting the argument. Pro "returns" by refuting that argument. And so on. Until someone drops the ball. (Advice: Often it helps to actually have a "ball" for each table so it's easier to keep track of who's talking)

A team is said to drop the ball when any of the following rules have been violated:

- Players must respond within 15 seconds.
- Players must not repeat a point that has already been made without adding anything new.
- Players must use A-R-E to construct their arguments.
- Players must use 4-Step Refutation when answering arguments from the other side.

These rules help to give everyone a way to practice making complete arguments and following refutation procedures.

Other rules include the following:

- A team can only score a point when they have “served” the ball and the other side drops the ball.
- If the team that serves drops the ball, the serve goes to the other side.
- The serve rotates between players. Once you’ve served, the next serve for your team goes to the player on your left.

It's a fun exercise. Students really like it, and it's a great way to do whole class debating without having to manage dozens of participants in a single debate.

A lot of teachers that I talk to are interested in doing more to integrate discussion of current events into their classrooms, but aren't sure how to do it. Some feel constrained by district-mandated pacing guides that squeeze out this kind of content, while others feel that they wouldn't even know where to start with such a project. Still others are concerned with the controversies that might be created by including particular current events in their classrooms.

Fortunately, like a lot of curriculum changes, this kind of move can be accomplished on an incremental basis, allowing teachers to experiment with different approaches. For example, teachers can integrate current events discussion into a unit plan, using examination of current events as a way to reflect on the past (as in a social studies or history classroom) or as a way to teach basic literacy skills through reading, writing, and speaking about nonfiction texts (as in a language arts classroom). Teachers can effectively use current and controversial events instruction to address a wide variety of standards and even mandated content, but this often means that they must work carefully and incrementally to integrate this new approach in their classrooms.

Part of the problem, particularly in the middle grades, is that the average student has very little information about the world, particularly about current events. Many adults find this frustrating and perplexing, and there is a temptation to therefore omit current and controversial events instruction entirely. This is a missed opportunity to teach the component parts of current events in a way that will help students understand not only the issue in question, but also other issues that they will encounter later in life.

Teachers can plan for current events instruction just like they might plan to teach a novel or any other content. What follows are five brief suggestions for planning, as well as some resources for finding information to use in class.

1. Select an issue. Try to choose current events that have meaningful connections to other course content – but, if you're just starting to integrate current events instruction into your classroom, start with current events that are not super-controversial. If you are determined to teach "flashpoint" type issues, such as gay marriage or stem cell research, it is best to start small so you have a handle on how to handle controversies as they arise in class. Be aware that including "flashpoint" type issues (anything having to do with religion, usually, or sexuality, but there are lots of issues that many might find scandalous to include in a classroom) in your classroom may create controversy or get you in trouble. Keep in mind that you're trying to teach students how to be effective democratic citizens, and that it's okay to start off with more manageable issues as "training wheels."

2. Break the issue into parts. Consider the component parts of the issue, and consider how you might effectively sequence those parts in a classroom to maximize understanding. Then you can sequence your unit appropriately and choose materials to assist in learning key concepts. For this, it helps to think like a middle school student. There are a lot of ideas about the world that adults take for granted, but which are pretty opaque to a young person.

3. Build a list of relevant vocabulary words associated with the issue. Don't forget to include vocabulary instruction as part of your current events instruction, just as you would any other instructional topics. Keep a running list from readings and research, and teach those words just as you would any other vocabulary words.

4. Pick readings that will be accessible and also challenging. For many teachers, this is one of the hardest parts of current events instruction. You'll have to read a lot of articles, chapters, and other materials in order to find readings that will represent a balanced and informed set of perspectives. But, the upside is that you'll only need a few readings (normally) to create a meaningful context for students to be able to discuss the issue. I think it's useful to teach students how to read a newspaper editorial as part of this process. In a

subsequent post, I'll talk more about how to teach editorials in class, and give some examples.

5. Have a culminating activity. There should be something that students do with their information about the event. This could be writing an informative or persuasive essay, working on a group presentation or project, engaging in roundtable discussions or debates, or any other ending activity. Perhaps students could write letters to the editor of a newspaper stating their position on an issue, or write responses to an editorial that they read, agreeing or disagreeing with the author.

To help, I've included this short list of some of my favorite websites for gathering information.

Sites for information about the world:

www.justicelearning.com
www.nationmaster.com (http://www.nationmaster.com/lps/intro.php)
www.understandingusa.com
http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/docnews.html
http://www.findlaw.com/
http://firstgov.gov/
http://youthink.worldbank.org/

The Great Debaters, a marvelous movie with Denzel Washington, demonstrates the power of debate as an educational tool to prepare students to be college-ready communicators. Aside from showing the drama and conflict of the times, it displays the rigorous training the debate team had to embrace in order to be prepared intellectually, to argue a point of view, to speak clearly and authoritatively, and to think critically on a moment's notice. Below are techniques that you can use in your classroom to make debate a college-readiness tool.

Technique #1: Four Corners. An effective debate mixer is the four corners method. The teacher displays a topic on the white board/overhead/interactive whiteboard and assigns a different position relative to that topic to each corner of the room. Students then choose to stand in the corner that best reflects their personal opinion on the matter. Once the corners have been chosen then the teacher gives the students five minutes to create their discussion platform for supporting their position. The debate, or pseudo-debate, begins with each team presenting their opening argument then in turn, each team has time for presenting evidence and rebuttals, and then the closing arguments.

Technique #2: Partner. In training for debates, some students are extremely shy and may work better with just one partner rather than a whole group. The process is the same as the four corner technique, but the debate is between two people, not the whole class.

Technique #3: Devil's Advocate. This is a twist on the debate positions preparation. Instead of supporting their own opinion and platform, the students will also try their best to throw kinks into their supporting argument, so that, in essence, instead of preparing just one argument "pro," they also have to prepare one "contra."

Technique #4: Worst-Case Scenario. This is another take-off of debate platform preparation. Students preparing to support their position look into the future at the worst possible thing that could happen as a result of the opposing argument, and prepare their defense from that point on.

Technique #5: Glass Half Empty or Full. This is a technique to help the students view the different perspectives and prepare for arguments from each. Students look at their platform from a positive point of view and from a pessimistic point of view.

Technique #6: Magic Wand. As discussed earlier, the magic wand can eliminate the constraints of reality. Also, the teacher can bestow wands that have certain limitations. For example, a wand may make people under 25 years of age, 20 percent smarter than they were before. The students would then have to adjust their platform argument to accommodate this peculiar restriction. The restrictive wands can work only for green eyes or other student characteristics, or only for those students from a particular class or teacher.

Hopefully, these will give you some ideas of how to make debates interesting and challenging in your classroom. In the process of preparing for the debate, you would have got to know and understand your peers better, been involved in delegation/sharing of tasks, researched issues, assimilated material, summarized points, improved your communication skills and sharpened your ability to see issues from various perspectives. The latter is especially true where you had to support a proposition you did not yourself believe in. You will also find out more about human nature and your own strengths and weaknesses as a result of working together with your peers. In the face of all these benefits, winning (the debate that is) is really not everything!

There's no debate about it! Debates are a great tool for engaging students and livening up classroom curriculum. Using debates in the classroom can help students grasp essential critical thinking and presentation skills. Among the skills classroom debates can foster are abstract thinking, citizenship and etiquette, clarity, organization, persuasion, public speaking, research, and teamwork and cooperation. And that's just the beginning!

Motivation, Expectations and Successive Practice

Anna Riabova

Most teachers accept that the boredom in the English language classroom must be avoided, and that motivation is a big issue, and making the lessons interesting and fun is utmost importance.

Most teachers would agree that teaching adults is easier than teaching children and in many ways it is true. Adults as a rule attend classes of their own free will, and have a reason for doing so as they pay money for the right to attend. But many adults had bad experience at school, where learning English was, at best, tedious – endless, dull grammar exercises and pointless repetition of barely understood sentences – and, at worst, a constant experience of failure, where any error in writing or speaking could be used against you when it came to getting a grade. I have known many adults who were quite afraid of trying to speak English as a result.

In our class of English with adults, I have always focused a lot on speaking activities. I am a great fan of opinion – gap activities .I usually write my own questionnaires for students, giving them issues and problems to discuss and debate in pairs and groups while wondering around the class offering encouragement .I tailor my questionnaires for specific groups to fit the interests of people.

My lessons were lively, and the students enjoyed them, or so they told me. For a long time, I was quite happy with that. (It kept me at work after all).Then I found myself wondering what the students were actually learning. They were getting lots of speaking practice, that's for sure, and many students told me that they felt more confident about speaking and they no longer hate English that can't be a bad thing. But I started to wonder if this "practice" and "confidence" was helping them to improve their English skills? I started to wonder if I was, in fact, more of an entertainer than a language teacher.

I started thinking on the questions. For example:

1. How can we stop "covering material" and start focusing on the potential for deep learning?

2. Are your learners capable of more?

Some of my recent reading was also giving me some food for thoughts. I read The Genius in All of Us, by David Shenk, who makes some observations about human intelligence and potential that are relevant and interesting to anyone involved in education. One of his principal arguments is that a person's intelligence is not fixed and not genetically determined.

An obvious conclusion to draw here is that if we demand more of our students, they will respond to the demand and develop more. But the question is, how exactly should we go about demanding more?

Shenk's book is influenced by Swedish psychologist, K. Anders Ericsson, who conducted extensive research into the backgrounds of people considered exceptionally talented. This research led him to the conclusion, that exceptional people are simply exceptionally talented, that the single most important factor in reaching a high level of skill or performance and the one that is common to all exceptional performers is practice. Lots of practice. Years of practice. People who demonstrate exceptional levels of performance are able to do so not so much because they have an innate, inbuilt, store of talent, but because they have an incredible work ethic and are willing to put in hours and hours of daily practice.

The American inventor, Thomas Edison coined the phrase "Genius is one per cent inspiration, ninety – nine per cent perspiration" and we all know the saying "practice makes perfect". So, it seems we have an obvious conclusion. In order to reach something, first and foremost, you need to practice for years and years.

What is particularly relevant to the discussion at hand is Ericsson's notion of deliberate practice. By this he meant that it is not enough to just practice.

Practice needs to be deliberately designed to improve performance and directionless practice is nothing more than a form of play and it does not directly aid to the improvement. For practice to be of any real use, it needs to be designed by a teacher/coach, taking into account the learner's pre-existing knowledge, and feedback, and guidance from a coach/teacher needs to accompany and follow up the practice. And it is more or less an endless cycle of repetition, further practice and, of course, further feedback and guidance.

For professional musicians and sportspeople, being able to consistently perform at a high level is part of the job description. To reach and maintain such a level requires not only dedication and work ethic, but also expert coaching/teaching. The coaches/teachers make their students work hard. They demand high. They expect a lot, but they give a lot too. They give a lot in term of expert knowledge, and in terms of what kind of practice their students should be engaging in. They give constant feedback, which is an essential element.

But there is another element, and it is a crucial one. It is the job of the teachers to decide when and how their charges should aim for the next level of performance. We the teachers have to decide how to support and help the learners. We need to decide when they need to be challenged and pushed to reach that new level.

And we need to understand that deliberate practice requires efforts and is not always enjoyable. The students don't need to be laughing from start to finish.

So what does all that mean for ELT and how does it fit in with the concept of Demand High Teaching? First of all there is no need to throw the baby out with the bathwater. I still consider that it is important to set up a positive learning environment, a classroom space where students feel safe to experiment with the language and it is acceptable to make mistakes.

The playwright Samuel Beckett said:

"Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter.
Try Again. Fail again. Fail better."

Now I see clearly that having fun should not be number one priority. If students, fee paying adults just want to have fun, they have plenty of other options available to them. Skills work, language focus, vocabulary and grammar exercises, all have a part to play.

A technique I have been working on is something I've called teaching with timeouts. After setting up an opinion gap or group discussion activity, I get into monitoring mode and wander around the class, notebook in hand, listening to the student's language and making notes. I have started calling "timeout" during the lesson and stopping the students to give some feedback. I have to confess that I take some childish pleasure in yelling "Timeout" in the manner of American football coach and making T signal with my hand.

After getting everyone's attention, there are several things I can do:

– Give some brief and relevant input on one or two language points which I think the students need.
– Focus on a pronunciation issue that I think is relevant, doing some brief but intensive drilling.
– Engage in some 'one-to –one 'work with a particular student.
– Remind the students, if necessary, of the Language points that the activity is supposed to be practicing.

The Timeout session should be brief, so that the students don't lose track the task in hand. I mean to make my timeouts intense moments of input, guidance, correction, drilling of grammar or pronunciation points.

The students can call a timeout when they have a question or an issue about either a task or the language focuses which would be of interest to the whole class. When students ask for help with specific language points, it seems to me that they are at a point in their learning curve when they are ready to deal with it, and is, therefore, an optimum learning moment.

I believe that it is important to emphasize that demanding more from students does not mean focusing on accuracy and correct forms. I don't recommend returning to the bad old days of audio-lingualism and grammar/translation. Successful communication, deeper understanding and awareness of the language is key.

For me, demanding is essentially an attitude. If we expect more from students, stretch them but provide the right guidance, they will achieve much more. I doesn't mean to merely giving them harder exercises. It is a case of setting an appropriate classroom level of challenge, and the level of challenge needs to be adjusted and monitored. To return to aforementioned David Shenk, the brain responds and grows according to the demands placed upon it. Low expectations result in minimum achievements. Unrealistic high expectations result in dissatisfaction and depression. The teacher should adjust the bar showing creativity and patience.

References

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Integration of Teaching and RDI Projects in the Teacher's Profession

Saarainen Timo

If the teachers take advantage of the latest research on teaching, and if the teaching is up-to-date in various forms, and the recent information can be transferred into the teaching, then the most recent RDI results can be simultaneously used for the benefit of the teacher, the school with its other staff, and of course, the students as well.

If the teacher limits the cooperation with the local business life and industry, it may reduce students' chances to participate in the networking. It may also influence in the future training and job opportunities around the schools business area.

In the Universities of Applied Sciences the teacher's job description in the near future is linked with the integration of teaching and RDI work. This connection should lead to up-to-date teaching and thus, demonstrate how the school's mission has been put into practice.

What kind of change is underway?

The Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) in Finland are under a reform process. The Ministry of Education of Finland is aiming that the University of Applied Sciences are internationally respected, independent and responsible. In addition to the educational mission, it is also expected that the Universities as local institutions participate when building regional competitiveness, employment and innovation.

Part of this reform process is also a new legislative framework and operational conditioning according to the ministry objectives.

The UAS have two tasks: To conduct the educational mission and to carry out the RDI work which supports regional development and employment. This work should be done in collaboration with the local businesses and industries as well as with other research and development organizations. Also other Finnish and foreign Universities as well as other educational institutions should participate in this cooperation.

New licenses for education in 2014 were given for 24 Universities of Applied Sciences, all of which apply the RDI activities with local emphasis, with a variety of resources and a variety of methods.

The financial resources in the educational institutions are directing the RDI activities. In the future, the external finance concentration leads to horizontal projects. Private financing is also necessary for the RDI projects, and is also built into the financial framework developed by the Ministry of Education.

For example, the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences started a new development project in early 2014. This project, from the Borders to the Shared Space - BOSS, is an almost 1.7 million euro RDI project. From other areas in Finland, seven Universities of Applied Sciences participate in its implementation. (This means 30% of all Finnish UAS). A key contributor to the project is the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The importance of private funding is important in the business life oriented projects. Saimaa University of Applied Sciences started another RDI project in 2014, aiming at internationalization of the Finnish concept of occupational health services. This two year RDI project will be jointly conducted by the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences, Lappeenranta University of Technology (LUT) and the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. The main objective is to build a business design platform for the businesses in the field of occupational health services.

In addition, in this nearly 600,000 euro project participate a number of private companies having production or other business operations in Russia. The private enterprises are funding this project by about 15%. The main sponsor of the project is the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovations (TEKES).

On the whole, according to *the Ministry of Education and Culture* of Finland, the share of external or private finance has been at the level of 10% in the last few years, and the research and development expenditure has exceeded the level of EUR 150 million.

The Finnish State provides now a total of EUR 800 million for professional higher education in year 2014. The RDI work may reach a maximum of 15% which makes a total of 120 million euros. It should be noted also, that the Ministry of Education is aiming at improving the effectiveness of professional higher education and decreasing the overall financing gradually by EUR 200 million.

A new funding model intensifies the integration development.

The introduction of the new financial model for 2014 in practice forces the Universities to become more efficient and more effective. This is because of the fact that the new financial model has an immediate impact on the total financing with limited resources available in future.

In the new financial model the Universities will receive 85 % of total funding through the delivery of education. The RDI may receive at most 15% of the total amount of the compensation.

The Ministry believes that the financial model enhances the Universities to actively develop the quality of work as well as to strengthen the stakeholder cooperation. Furthermore, the bigger share of acquisition of external finance for the RDI is one of the future objectives set by the Ministry.

From the point of view of the Universities, this means more effective use of resources in the RDI operations. Also the need for rapid growth in terms of volume and RDI quality will be emphasized. After all, it is pretty clear that bland RDI activities cannot collect the external funding, which is an essential element of the state funding in the future.

Furthermore, in the new financial contribution of 15% of RDI includes different weight factors as follows: The amount of external financing for RDI (and its acquisition), the number of higher level (Master’s) university degrees, the number of professional or scientific publications, artistic activities, etc. Also the teachers' international exchange participation is part of the scoring system.

The teachers' foreign experiences may be one way to build motivation in work. This could also lead to evaluation and development of teaching practices, as well as finding Best Practices in this field of profession. The higher university degrees could act as an important forum for the development of work life, since the biggest part of the higher degree students are working while studying. Publications and artistic activities could lead in the development of creativity at work.

If successful with the aforementioned performance indicators, the Universities may get a compensation of 15% of the attainable level. Similarly, if poorly organized and with the lack of functional activity and innovation, the schools may also be left behind on the compensation level.

If the annual turnover of the University moves around 25 million euros, there is a chance to get nearly 4 million euros in compensation based on the success of the RDI work. If the RDI has not proved successful, the decreasing RDI compensation also limits the compensation of the education work in future.

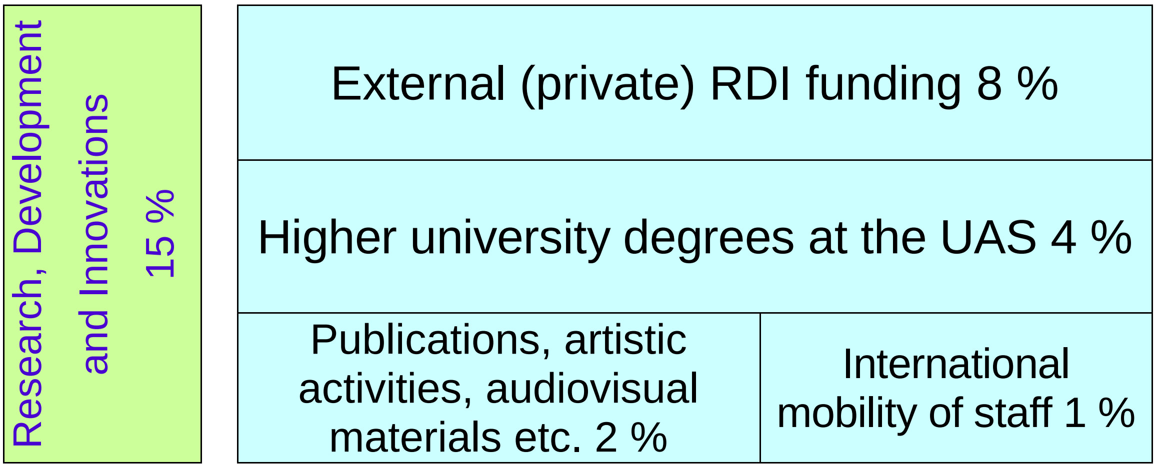

Figure 1: RDI and the breakdown of the financing factors in the new financial model in 2014. Adapted from: http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Koulutus/ammattikorkeakoulutus/ammattikorkeakoulu_uudistus/?lang=fi (Ref. 13.4.2014)

The Ministry of Education has highlighted the importance of combining good quality RDI work when the new financial model was developed. The Ministry of Education further stated, that the teaching should be based on scientific knowledge and up-to-date information from working life and factors affecting it.

Applied research in particular should be emphasized at the University of Applied Sciences. Intensive participation in the RDI work thus strengthens the school's know-how oriented profile among the Universities of Applied Sciences (OPM: a proposal for a financial model for the University of Applied Sciences starting from 2014).

The strong guidance of human resource development at the University of Applied Sciences is just now starting and this will be done through the new financial model. It will be controlled and further developed by the Ministry of Education. Improvement of teacher resources and partial participation in the RDI work and projects should be considered as a normal part of teacher work in the future.

The new funding model tightens the competition of available external RDI funding. When a project plan is successfully evaluated and it wins the competition for external funding, it brings many benefits for the winner. It should be reasonable to say that in getting the positive funding decisions, even the sponsors have noticed the high quality and innovations of the RDI which are conducted at the Universities of Applied Sciences. This belief should be channelled into the Universities of Applied Sciences intellectual property too.

If the teachers take advantage of the latest research on teaching, and if the teaching is up-to-date in various forms, and the recent information can be transferred into the teaching, then the most recent RDI results can be simultaneously used for the benefit of the teacher, the school with its other staff, and of course, the students as well.

This expected future trend should be considered with a positive attitude. In such cases, we are able to see that the research projects sponsored with external sources creates appreciation in the work and tasks of the Universities of Applied Sciences in general. In best cases, the Universities of Applied Sciences create new trends and developments in Best Practices in the field of RDI and its combination with teaching.

Thus, if external money actively supports the RDI activities, then shouldn't the teachers do the same and participate in project activities? This would mean that the teachers are using the latest RDI content from the top sources in their fields for education.

I believe that resource intensification will lead to a simple solution, where the teacher integrates the teaching and RDI project activities. However, there are currently resourcing limitations and we must ask how to develop the Best Practices which will help the teacher in the integration work.

I will look next at some of the approaches that could help the teacher to observe personal attitudes, when the integration of teaching and the RDI activities are discussed. This approach is closely linked to the teachers' time management and time planning. It may also help in positioning the current teacher's role in the RDI activities.

The Participant: The teacher participates in the RDI projects which are included in the portfolio of the Universities of Applied Sciences.

- The teacher brings to the project personal skills, and thus contributes to the achievement of the results set out in the project.
- The teacher develops personal professional skills by being an active player in the project, which represents the current development trends of the local and regional business life.
- The teacher brings spinoffs from the project to teaching, and thus combines these components of personal resource usability, bearing in mind that the project represents the current development trends in society
- The teacher participates within the framework of the project to networking with the local industry, after all, part of project financing is gathered from there.
- Interaction with the local business community through the projects can offer many new opportunities for teaching.

The Developer: Based on your own profession and expertise, the teacher develops new project ideas. Based on these development ideas the teacher creates project plans.

- Project planning is contributed to by the teacher’s professional skills and thus, the teacher promotes the development of innovative projects and their planning.

- The teacher develops personal professional skills, since a part of the innovative project design, their development, planning and mapping of financing options is creative and innovative work. All this develops the teacher's professional capabilities.

- The teacher's active interaction in the school as well as with the stakeholders offers significant development elements in the project activities.

- The teacher gets an opportunity to participate actively in the development of personal expertise, and to the development of the local businesses.

- The teacher brings spinoffs from the project back to teaching and thus enables the students’ participation in innovative RDI projects.

- Creation and development of projects in cooperation with the local industry deepens the interaction and thus facilitates future training and employment opportunities for the students.

The Implementer: The teacher coordinates your RDI projects and develops simultaneously personal project management skills.

- The teacher develops organizational skills as a project manager or project coordinator and is responsible for the implementation of the project plan.

- The teacher deepens the cooperation and interaction with the local economy and with other regional developers.

- The teacher will deepen his own knowledge for the management of EU-funded projects.

- The teacher manages the up-to-date information and provides case examples for teaching, for the teacher’s colleagues, and the different project work for the students at different capacity levels. In some cases, a project may require a preliminary study, in some other cases, the project offers the possibility for a thesis. At best, a new job in one of the participating partner companies may result from work by the Implementer.

- The attractiveness of the educational institution improves, and the teacher brings his own contribution to this development

The User: The teacher follows actively the school's RDI projects, and uses them in teaching.

- The teacher deepens personal professional skills, at the same time offering students actual information on innovative regional projects.
- The teacher deepens the students' understanding of the current development trends in the school's territory.
- The teacher provides the students opportunities to bring new perspectives to current projects.
- The teacher supports colleagues' project activities and promotes the interaction between the teachers.

The Random User: The teacher uses the schools RDI project portfolio randomly in teaching.

- The teacher is not using the RDI projects on a regular basis and not continuously, but the projects will be utilized for teaching occasionally.
- The teacher participates in the project activities randomly, perhaps thanks to a colleague or perhaps due to the interesting and hot topic.
- The teacher does not get RDI opportunities due to his line of work and/or the teaching subject.
- Situational usage of RDI projects and the results used in teaching is occasional.

The Outsider: The teacher does not make use of the schools RDI projects in teaching.

- The teacher does not use the possibilities of the RDI work in teaching, which may be the result of the field of expertise or lack of motivation.
- The teacher participates in the project activities only occasionally, perhaps thanks to a colleague's motivation or due to the timeliness of the subject.
- The teacher does not get motivated to develop his own profession because he does not participate in the innovative project activities.
- The teacher's limited cooperation with the local business life and industry may reduce students' chances to participate in the networking. It may also influence in the future training and job opportunities around the schools business area.

The above mentioned teacher's RDI levels of participation have some common features.

In my opinion the first and most important of them is the fact that the teacher is provided with an opportunity to develop and update his profession through the project activities.

Secondly, active monitoring and the participation in the RDI projects provides opportunities to promote regional development and the development of local businesses. The benefits affect not only the teacher, but also the students. For the teacher the networking with local business life becomes much easier. Simultaneously the teacher provides this opportunity for the students also. Students will have the access to interaction with local businesses and studying at the same time. This should be a great motivation factor for the students.

The third important factor is the teacher's chance to participate in the implementation of the school's educational objectives, and this has been done as the result of active development of the teacher's own work.

By active participation the teacher can use his own resources in a multi-disciplinary and more efficient manner. The teacher can also combine two future roles of the school: The teaching and the development of business life and industries in the region.

Practical benefits achievable

With a positive outlook, the terms set by the Ministry of Education's new funding model, may lead to the following considerations:

Financing factors	Positive outcomes
• Raising external finance for the schools RDI activities	• Promotes the teacher's networking • Providing opportunities for the students
• The number of higher university degrees (Master's) completed (most of the student are in working life simultaneously)	• Functions as a material forum for the development of working life • Benchmarking the adult professionals working life and life-long learning.
• Publications, artistic activities etc.	• Develops creativity and innovations in your own work
• International mobility of staff	• Work motivation is built by international job evaluation and development • Searching for the Best Practices into your profession.

Table 1. Positive outcomes breakdown through the financing factors in the financial model of 2014 by the Ministry of Education.

We are still in slow motion

When integrating the RDI activities into teaching at the Universities of Applied Sciences, the key question is the teacher's work plan. The work plan provides the framework for the integration of teacher's pedagogical and other responsibilities.

Currently the teacher's complain more about limited time resources as opposed to lack of work. Everyday life at school is guided by the time management problems and the need to perform teaching tasks with high quality. Thus, the teachers are focusing their interest and motivation into teaching performance.

Teacher's participation in the RDI work requires sufficient time resourcing throughout the year, if rapid progress is desired. Motivation improves at the same time.

All educational sectors may not be able to create innovative RDI projects, and that must be accepted. Perhaps now and then the innovations will lead into projects large enough to involve more disciplines.

Sometimes we just face timing and targeting problems, which are common in the short term. If the planning horizon and the teacher's resourcing framework is adequately future oriented, a good combination between teaching and the RDI activities is easily accessible.

The students and their suitability for participation in RDI projects should be considered on a case by case basis. The degree of difficulty may increase related to the competence of the students, or problems with language, for example, among our international students. Lack of motivation among teachers is often tied to the teacher's time management problems. Therefore the individual teacher's work plan is at the core when motivation is targeted. Management and the rest of the organization should provide a supportive function to help the teacher integrate teaching and RDI projects.

The teacher's profession is changing – shift your lectures into coaching

In Finland, the Finnish Government through the Ministry of Education has expressed their intention about how the teaching should be integrated with the RDI work at the Universities of Applied Sciences.

The key concept is financial. With the help of the financial management, the Ministry is aiming to get better efforts, and faster than before. The results of RDI work should be provided for the benefit of the rest of the society. It is also in their agenda that the teacher's profession should be developed into coaching of learning rather than lecturing.

In the Universities of Applied Sciences the teacher's job description in the near future is linked with the integration of teaching and RDI work. This connection should lead to up-to-date teaching and thus, demonstrate how the school's mission has been put into practice.

Similarly, the teacher will have the opportunity to work at the forefront in his field of discipline. The teacher utilizes the top RDI projects in his profession. He also understands that these projects have been evaluated and accepted by external sponsors and thus are representatives of the most important issues in the field.

I'd like to close my paper with my opinion how the teacher should have *his own agenda*. "*My personal teacher's agenda*" would define the personal development objectives as a teacher. Thus, in conceptualising "*my personal teacher's agenda*", future challenges as a teacher are easier to meet, and to merge the RDI work with the teacher's profession.

Program "Tandem" in St.Petersburg State Polytechnical University

Sablina Marina, Bulavenko Olga
Translaited by Anna Riabova

An exciting event has taken place at the Department of International Relations IIEP of St.Petersburg State Polytechnical University. A new effective program helping to study a foreign language has appeared in the spectrum of international cooperation programs of the Institute of International Educational Programs. Students of the Department of International Relations IIEP studying Finnish and students of the applied sciences University Haaga-Helia (Helsinki, Finland) studying Russian took part in the program. On the Russian part the program was organized by the Admission Department of St.-Petersburg State Polytechnical University.

The name of the program is "Tandem". The program is well enough known in the European educational sphere.

"The most precious aspects in the process of the tandem- program are activities of speaking and cross-cultural communication, which are authentic in this case. Such communication brings enjoyment which quickly eliminates fear of making mistakes, while a relaxed atmosphere allows students to immerse in a foreign language and culture, which stimulates the process of studying. The basis of the method is formed by means of a concept of cooperation pedagogy in which two people with different mother tongues meet to learn each other languages using a principle "speak the language of your partner"" [1]. At the Department of International Relations "Tandem" has been conducted for the first time. What is the idea of the program and why is it so effective in the opinion of participants? Within the scope of the tandem-method Doctor of education professor of Eisenstadt (Austria) Institute of International Economic Relations

A.L. Berdichevskiy created an intensive course for Austrian students studying Russian so that they could achieve a certified level A2. It should be noted that A.L. Berdichevskiy is one of the originators of the tandem-method introduction in Russia. Later in cooperation with a professor of Russian of the applied sciences University Haaga-Helia (Helsinki, Finland) Pirio Salenius the course named "It's still better together" was adapted for tandem-classes of Finnish and Russian students. The fact that the concept of cooperation pedagogy forms the basis of the course determines a social aspect of language study. The training topics of the course are developed on the basis of participants' needs and interests, which determines an individual aspect of language study.

Let's talk in brief about the tandem-method. It is a complementary form of studying a foreign language. In the opinion of A.N. Schukin, "the purpose of the tandem-method is to master your partner's mother tongue in a situation of real or virtual communication, to get knowledge of his or her personality and the culture of a target language country, and also to get information on different spheres of interest" [2, c. 110]. The method appeared in Germany at the end of the XX century and spread rather quickly in different countries due to its flexibility, which is one of its greatest advantages. It can be either used separately or included in a language course for a short or long period. It can be used between groups of students of two different language schools located in different countries or just between two people (the most common form is an individual tandem) [3]. In the process of the tandem-method a principle of bilingualism "Speak the language of your partner!" is used. That's why really productive activities of speaking and cross-cultural communication take place in the process, and students have a possibility for programming their following speech activities by themselves.

The process of training is divided into some thematic micro cycles. In each micro cycle there are three stages of activity:

- creation of tandem-groups;
- tandem- communication;
- presentation.

The first lesson in a group of Finnish students with a Russian teacher and a group of Russian students with a Finnish teacher was given separately in different classrooms. For two hours the students had to do some work on vocabulary related to the topic of the lesson. The teachers had prepared the material for the lesson independently of each other.

For the next two hours the students worked in triads. The participants are given cards to create a team. Each participant finds a partner whose card matches his or hers. The teachers give assignments orally. The Russian teacher consecutively interprets the speech of the Finnish teacher and vice versa. It should be noted that it is one of the tandem-method main conditions.

At the stage of communication in the process of the tandem-method a principle of mutual help and support is used. The participants work together using the same worksheet first in Russian and then in Finnish. The duration of the working process is assigned by the teacher. The role of the teacher at this stage is to provide momentary help to the students if they are in a difficult situation.

At the stage of presentation the languages are used in sequence. Each participant presents the results of his or her work. The teachers concentrate their attention only on linguistic mistakes which lead to misunderstanding. The participants often correct each other themselves eliminating the difficulty of mutual understanding.

The course "It's still better together" conducted in the Institute of International Educational Programs of St.Petersburg State Polytechnical University had to take 30 hours and to last five days. It had been planned to spend four hours per day on each of the following topics: "Do we know each other?", "From town to town", "Our weekdays", "Free time" and "Holidays". In addition, the following activities had been organized: watching films in Russian and Finnish; presentations on Finnish cities made by the Finnish students in Russian; presentations on Russian cities made by the Russian students in Finnish (2 hours per day). On the last fifth day after the lessons in a classroom there was an outer lesson in "Petergof " museum where the Russian and Finnish students were able to realize informal communication between them and swap their impressions of the program.

The ratio of the Russian participants to the Finnish ones was 2:1.

The teamwork started with handing out cards with pictures which helped the students to find their partners. After choosing the language for the first stage of work the teachers handed out worksheets with assignments. The duration of each stage was 30 minutes. One of the main principles of the tandem-method is to use only one language at each stage. The languages can't be mixed up. During the lessons the partner who was a native speaker worked as an expert. At the second stage the other language was used. At the third stage every student presented the result of his or her work in a target language – that is, a Finnish student spoke Russian and a Russian student spoke Finnish.

After the lessons the students watched a film with the help of some preliminary explanations. The meanings of some words, word combinations, phrases, which were difficult to understand, were explained to the students by their tandem-partners.

From a purely pedagogical point of view, "it is absolutely clear that regardless of the level of proficiency in a language the knowledge of individual components, e.g. separate words, sentences, sounds, can't be regarded as proficiency in a language as a means of communication. For the purposes of teaching regardless of methods and forms of teaching a language (from courses to a specialized institution of higher education, from a comprehensive school to a school with teaching some subjects in a foreign language) proficiency in a language should always be regarded as an ability to take part in real communication but not as the knowledge of individual language components" [4, 13; 5, 5-6].

Experience shows that the form of educational and cognitive work within the scope of the tandem-method has an undoubted advantage over traditional forms of teaching. It is proved by opinions expressed in written form by the Russian and Finnish students. When the participants were asked a question "What did you like most of all?" all of them mentioned a friendly attitude, mutual interest, relaxed atmosphere, the opportunity to work alternately in both languages, motivation for communication. When they were asked a question

"Did anything surprise you?" the students answered the following: "I was surprised that I understood practically everything", "I was glad that the Finnish certainly don't fit the invalid stereotype of the reserved people. They are really outgoing!", "I was impressed by sociability of the Finnish students and by enjoyable communication with them" and so on.

Both the students and the teachers of the Russian and Finnish universities have an opinion that the program has been a success.

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The Development of Work-Oriented Education for a Bachelor’s Degree in Accounting

Viinikainen Marianne

Background

Rapid changes in working life environments will affect skill requirements. Companies develop operations continuously and small-and medium-sized enterprises’ competitiveness requires regional development and cooperation. The mission of universities of applied science is to respond to the challenges of working-life by educating a skilled work force, providing research and development services, and developing work-oriented teaching methods.

Work-oriented teaching methods are the keys to development of students’ occupational skills, as well as cooperation and interaction skills. They will be introduced to their own field of work, as well as provided the opportunity to expand their contacts network, which will help them gain employment.

Traditionally, the working-life cooperation has meant work placements, theses subjects, and business visitors or visits. In the last few years, the development of working-life based Bachelor's degree education has moved to enlarge the learning environments to include enterprise based research, development, and innovation projects. At best, these combine the versatile skills of students, teachers, businesses, and the university’s RDI activities. Also in the development of the working-life cooperation, entrepreneurship has been strengthened.

Working-life cooperation of the universities of applied sciences and working life orientation have been studied since the early 1990s. The topic is found in professional literature, articles, dissertations, theses, project and development reports as well as in the publications of the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, there is still a lot of development work in the practice of work-oriented teaching. It is gratifying to find now that the development of work-oriented cooperation has gained an important role in development projects at universities of applied sciences.

The accounting field brings its own challenges in the practical implementation of working-life cooperation, including the fact that economic status is crucial to everyday business, but sharing that data with third parties is not always appealing. Another limiting factor is the absolute accuracy requirement of the information in financial accounting, and the related guidance and information validation that must be done with limited resources.

The starting point of working-life cooperation might be considered to be that the universities of applied sciences and professional organizations are interacting with those representatives who have the desire and competencies for promoting working-life cooperation.

Work-oriented requirements

The universities of applied sciences (UAS) and the employees are developing their own activities based on those given objectives. The first work-oriented targets for UAS education were received already at the beginning of 1991. The basis for the goal setting of the universities of applied sciences work orientation comes from the laws and ordinances approved by the Council of State regarding the functions of UAS, as well as objectives and priorities approved by the Ministry of Education. In addition to these, UAS have also their own targets and make their own strategic orientations.

According to the UAS law *“universities of applied sciences provide higher education based on the demands of working life and its development for the professional expert tasks. They support the individual professional growth and engaged in teaching as well as to serve the needs of the working life and the regional development and the region's economic structure reflecting the applied research and development work. In addition, the University of applied sciences are in cooperation with the business and industry, as well as with Finnish and foreign universities and with other educational institutions*". (L351/2003 1:4§, 1:5§.)

The duties of UAS teacher are also specified by law. The teacher's task is to "*develop in the field of education, taking into account the development of working life and become familiar with that, as well as handle tasks related to research and development and other tasks set by he University of applied sciences*" (A352/2003 6:24§).

The State Council approves the development plan for education and research for a certain number of years at a time, which includes the general development objectives of the universities of applied sciences. Based on these, the Ministry of Education and the UAS are negotiating the objectives. After this, each UAS shall draw up its own strategies in order to achieve these objectives and, if necessary, update the qualification rules and the curriculums of the different study programs.

Target setting has remained work-life oriented from the beginning: education for occupational skills in working life, research related to business and industry and participation in the regional working-life cooperation and its development.

The definition of the work-oriented UAS education can be defined simply from the legislation of the UAS law and ordinance. Generally, working life orientation is understood in different quarters in different ways, and the concept is not officially defined. The UAS working life orientation is measured by the State Audit Office using the following criteria: working life contacts of the staff, drafting and implementation of curriculums, students' working life co-operation and the UAS's activities in the planning and organizing. (The State Audit Office, 2009.)

The development stages of the project studies

The working-life based bachelor's curriculum development work of the degree program in accounting in Saimaa University of Applied Sciences (Saimia) started in 2009. Traditionally, accounting education and the course contents in Saimia is developed each year in small ways, but larger changes in educational content, methods, or working life cooperation had not been done for years.

The time was ripe for development. First of all, the degree program in marketing successfully piloted a cooperative method of teaching, in which students do all their professional studies based in working life projects in the cooperative enterprise. The management of our UAS wanted to extend the cooperative learning methods to the other degree programs. Secondly, a long-standing accounting lecturer was retiring in the fall of 2011 and we had, in any case, to examine the implementation of the lecturers' resources and education. At the same time, in the fall of 2011, we were moving to a shared campus with the Lappeenranta University of Technology (LUT) and we had to think about our own priorities and, of course, also the cooperation possibilities with LUT. The aim was to launch a new curriculum for the degree program in accounting for the academic year 2011. We started by doing a feasibility study on the development of working life oriented education in accounting.

<u>A Preliminary Study</u>

A feasibility study was completed in the spring of 2010 with the support of the European Social Fund and the provincial Government of Southern Finland through a partially financed project "Luotsi- cooperative and business networking”. The feasibility study report was called "Work-oriented accounting education development - Case Saimaa University of Applied Sciences, Unit of Business Administration, degree program in accounting" (Viinikainen, 2010). Next I will tell you about the objectives and results of the report and about the current status of the development work.

The feasibility study had three objectives. The first research target was to collect ideas for a working-life based bachelor's degree in accounting. In order to obtain an overall picture, other possibilities to practice working life oriented education than starting up a student-owned accounting cooperative were also examined. Student co-ops exist in almost all the UAS, but only a few of them produce accounting services. Other ideas were raised, including implementing projects during other accounting courses or implementing projects in separate courses, co-operative action led by the university, using business models like project, practice or partner business models, an accounting office for the school, the development of the RDI activities together with other units of the UAS, as well as a subcontract agreement or cooperation with an external accounting office.

Working life oriented accounting education in Saimia took place mainly during the internships, thesis writing, and business guests or visits. Preparing projects for the local companies as part of the accounting education took place only a few times each year. Working life co-operation was also not evenly spread among the accounting teachers. The difference is explained by the fact that only 2 of the 5 teachers taught students who were getting an accounting degree, while the others taught accounting to students getting other degrees.

The second aim of the feasibility study was to identify what sort of accounting projects the Lappeenranta region's companies would be ready to prepare with the UAS accounting students and teachers. This was researched using interviews. Almost all (93%) of those surveyed in15 companies were interested in accounting projects. The greatest interest was in the management accounting area. In particular, the following areas were important: Reporting tools (53%), investment and project planning (47%) as well as the quality development projects (53%). Total number of potential projects came to 45, i.e. an average of three per company. It was also hoped that the UAS would be an active partner, who inquires about the companies' needs as well as telling about the services.

The last study objective was to generate concrete ideas of the development and implementation of a working-life based accounting education in the future. From these ideas were derived 13 paths, which I now do not introduce in detail. I can say, however, that a key role in the working-life oriented education are teachers' working time and resource planning and teachers' skills development, as well as the working-life oriented curriculums and networking over the organizational boundaries.

The accounting team has been working with these themes, and at the moment the following developments have taken place: 1) each accounting lecturer teaches accounting degree students. 2) Work time for RDI projects is reserved for interested teachers. 3) Accounting teachers are meeting regularly to consider various development projects in accounting education. 4) The contact information of the local accounting offices is collected into a common database. 5) The accounting curriculum content was updated to match current working-life needs. 6) A structural change was made in the curriculum allowing 16 credits of advanced studies to be chosen in the professional studies, either from financial accounting or management accounting and financing, or both. 7) Furthermore, we decided to develop a course of called “Implementing accounting projects”. I will now tell you more in detail about this and the related development work.

Piloting project studies

As I have already mentioned, accounting area is bringing some more challenges to the implementation of the working-life projects and the project working method is not necessarily fit to every accounting course. This came up in the feasibility study interview survey as well, where only a few financial accounting area projects came up.

We decided to pilot accounting project studies into the “Accounting tools” course, where the content included advanced Microsoft Office Excel skills for accountants, including also the basics of Visual Basic macros. During the course, students built budgeting tools for their imaginary companies as the main assignment in the course.

In piloting carried out in 2011, a single group of 3 students developed a real business project provided by the teacher. The project target was to plan and build a profitability calculation model in Excel for a workshop unit in a Hydraulics company. Other students in the class built the budgeting tools for their imaginary company, as in the past.

On the basis of the feedback received from the pilot project, the students continued the business project execution. In the year 2012 was the next “Accounting tools” course and then all the students who participated in the course, implemented a real business project with intense cooperation with the local companies. The projects were carried out in groups of 2 to 3 students, and the total was 9 projects, two of which were acquired by the students themselves.

The “Accounting tools” course was worth, however, only three credits (the equivalent of 80 hours of student work). During the course had to covered the extensive functionality of Excel, the Visual Basic Macro basics and to prepare the accounting project for local business and industry. We decided to share the content of this “Accounting tools” course between two separate, and required accounting courses: Excel and VBA and Implementing accounting project studies.

Implementing accounting projects course

Implementing accounting projects course took place for the first time in the autumn 2013. The aim of the project studies is to apply the skills learned in professional studies to the practice of professional accounting tasks. The starting point of the study is that the students acquire the projects themselves. However, of the 21 implemented or currently ongoing projects, only five students have found the projects on their own.

In practice, the project can be related to any tasks of the area of the accounting expert profession. It can be done with a company, association, educational institution or public administration. The company projects are free of charge, with no salary for students and no charge for the entrepreneurs. The students are working e.g. on the following projects: a restaurant's profitability reporting tool in Excel, the establishment of a limited liability company and the associated reporting, and acting as a financial manager for an event.

Students can prepare project studies for any stage of UAS studies. In order to get the credits from the project the student needs 1) to determine learning goals in a written project plan before starting the project, 2) to prepare and sign a cooperation agreement with the client, 3) to report the working time used in the project at the end of the study and 4) to write the final report on what has been learned and done during the project. The project plan and project report are approved by the supervising teacher. The aim was that the instructor is chosen for the project, according to the teachers' area of expertise. In practice, however, in the academic year 2013 – 2014, I supervised all of the projects. This is about to change in the academic year 2014 - 2015. Namely, according to the original target, the supervisor will be selected according to the interests and areas of knowledge, and also working hours will be allocated properly.

Students' experiences

The students have taken the project studies enthusiastically, but also a little tensely. Project studies may be for some students, the first real company contact and also the first accounting related business project. At the moment, there are more projects than students are willing to carry out. This causes problems when the teacher obtains a project and the entrepreneur expects the project realization. Then, the students do not want to carry out the project yet. Students may be busy with other studies or work, or their interest is more in another area of accounting and finance.

Next, two groups of second year accounting students tell about their own experiences of the Implementing Accounting Project studies. First, Maarit Pulkka and Jarno Taskinen will tell you about the project called "The reporting tool for Saimaan Talous ja Tieto Ltd." and secondly, Emilia Alatalo tells about preparing the accountancy and financial statements from the year 2013 for the “Martha” Association in Luumäki.

We stared with open-minds on a fairly challenging project. The project purpose was to create a reporting model on the basis of the profit and loss accounts and the balance sheet data from the bookkeeping system. The reporting template should be a user-friendly tool for corporate management, from which they can see at a glance the business profitability and financial condition, not only in numbers, but also using various forms of color illustrations charts.

The project was done to the accounting and information technology service provider, but the final user of the reporting tool was a company called “Imatran Lämpö Ltd”. The project started at the beginning of December 2013, when we were the first in contact with the company. We agreed with the contact person for the appointment where we mapped out their wishes in relation to the report model. Work began on the fact that we got from the company's actual and budgeted income statement and balance sheet data. Based on these, we started to evaluate suitable lookup functions in Excel, in order to ensure that the necessary information was obtained to the report model. We selected and calculated also suitable performance indicators.

It was a privilege to do quite typical management accounting application in early stage of our UAS study. The report template taught us to think about what income statement and balance sheet information is important and useful for company management. The Microsoft Office Excel program will in future be one of the most important and used working tools, so it was good to learn more about its use. (Maarit Pulkka and Jarno Taskinen)

My project was to prepare bookkeeping and financial statements for 2013 to the Martha Association in City of Luumäki. The project was made from the request of the association, since the accounting service costs took a large part of their assets. When I told the association of the upcoming project studies, they proposed this work to me.

I think the project was interesting and highly suitable to the UAS professional accounting studies. I got the benefit of the project studies because of the better knowledge I learned about the contents of the income statement and balance sheet.

I think the project studies are a good and important exercise for the working life. The students are applying already during the studies their theoretical knowledge to the real business cases. During the project work, students have a possibility to get their foot in the door of interesting companies. In this way they can have a better chance to get, for example, an internship contract with the company. There could be more working-life oriented education in UAS in order that the students would get more experience of practical accounting work during their studies. (Emilia Alatalo)

The ideas for the future

Developing working-life oriented bachelor's accounting education is a continuous work that responds to the quickly changing needs of the working environment as well as business and industry. Finally, I will present a few ideas how to develop further the project studies in the future. First, one way or another, we need to find students interested in carrying out the existing business project proposals. Consideration will also be given to a model, in which the project is allocated to the student by the teacher. It is impossible for us to offer a credible accounting project workforce to the local business and industry and the third sector operators, if we are not able to provide students who are interested in the resulting projects.

Secondly, consideration should be given how the expert teachers, if necessary, could participate in the accounting project, and how their work-hour plans are made and how the actual working hours are reported and billed. This approach should be clearly modeled and priced, so that the service can be sold outside the UAS. Thirdly, consideration should be given to develop a customer interface system or an operating model, where the students and companies would interact. The students would have the possibility to provide, in accordance with their own interests, their contribution to work, and companies would have the possibility to place requests for needed services.

All in all, work-oriented accounting education and the deepening of the working-life cooperation in the Saimaa University of Applied Sciences requires a clearly defined functional model, beyond the organizational boundaries and commonly accepted practices, in order to achieve the common objectives. Work-oriented accounting education should not be left to chance.

Accounting Degree students Maarit Pulkka, Jarno Taskinen ja Emilia Alatalo

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Pedagogical Challenges in Promoting and Ensuring Learning Experience Via International Business Simulation Games

Viskari Kirsi

Introduction

Business studies are traditionally structured and implemented via focused topics, like marketing, accounting, logistics etc. In order to be able to make comprehensive business decisions you need to understand the dependencies of these areas, and there are not a lot of opportunities for practicing this. Business games have already for some time been used as a teaching tool, starting from traditional classroom solutions to today's internet-based business game software. Business games require different pedagogical solutions than traditional lecturing, and this creates also challenges for ensuring the learning.

This article discusses the usage of a web based business simulation game as the learning environment for international groups of business students, concentrating in the learning experience point of view. The theoretical part includes perspectives of virtual and blended learning environments, learning from peers and the challenges of virtual teams. In the empirical part the article discusses the experiences gained from several implemented courses and also the prospects for future enhancements.

Technology and structural aspects to business simulation games

Today's learning environment is not a physical space, but rather a combination of technologies, channels, methods, formats and situations. The terms blended learning describes this combination of former e-learning, classroom learning and other similar approaches. Today's students are also both demanding and appreciating more adaptable approaches, as many of them have already former degrees, working experience and can be part-time students. (Laari-Muinonen, 2008; Palloff, 2001; Kim et al., 2011)

Even in this era of the internet-native generation, the readiness to use technology-based learning aids, tools and systems is not self-evident. Also the user-interfaces of the tools and systems can either support the learner to adapt to them or in worst cases create extra challenge. Technology should not, however be emphasized, as the learning experience should also be supported with suitable methodological choices. (Laari-Muinonen, 2008; Ferris, 2005; Tunstall et al., 2010, Wood et al., 2009)

Simulation-based learning aims at developing skills for making decisions in less well defined real-life business situations, where dynamic behavioural skills are required. Practicing solving of dynamic problems requires constant monitoring and adjustment of actions in the changing situations. Simulations can enhance personal development, especially critical and strategic thinking skills needed in business decision making. (Wood et al., 2009; Adobor et al., 2006)

As learning process encodes information through working memory in order to create schemata in the long-term memory, simulations should be used so that the capacity of the working memory is not overloaded with over-complicated tasks in simulations. The structure of the simulation influences the cognitive load of the students, meaning the amount of input and output variables, level of dynamics and the relationships between the variables. Too complex structure with too many variables may overload the working memory of students and therefore decrease the students' ability to manage the simulation. Complexity of the simulation affects the effectiveness of learning in and from the simulation; too simple simulation may cause students not to take it seriously, and too complex simulation may prohibit students to see the connections between variables. (Wood et al., 2009, Adobor et al., 2006)

Methodological approaches and learning in simulations

Virtual and blended learning environments open dimensions for organizing group work and societal activities also in cases where the students are not physically in the same location. Interactivity and collaboration describe the educational process, but requires that the teacher manages these approaches and accepts the fact that learning can also take place between the students, the teacher and the whole environment. The students are increasingly integrated into the learning situations, and thus can gain a deeper learning experience. (Aggarwal, 2000; Palloff, 2001)

Teachers using simulation often take a constructivist approach, highlighting self-guided exploration and using minimal guidance. Research has shown that low guidance throughout the simulation provides better exploration results, although attention should be paid to giving higher level of guidance when students proceed to various levels or phases of the simulation. Learning outcomes from simulations can be categorized into motivation, problem solving (analytical thinking skills), transfer of knowledge, decision making and cross functional skills and increased retention of knowledge. Also adaptable learning and behavioural, attitudinal and knowledge change can be mentioned as learning outcome categories. (Wood et al., 2009, Clarke, 2009)

Simulations can contain critical incidents, which can be described as significant occurrences that can stimulate learning. Sudden rise of costs, changing demand and other similar situations are examples of these critical incidents. Student learning can be enhanced by planning the timing of critical incidents in the simulations, especially when combined with post-simulation debriefing and reflection. When using on online business simulation game, debriefing sessions can be organized face-to-face, and this blended learning approach can be especially fruitful with students who already possess working experience. (Lean et al., 2014)

Simulations require team dynamics and role-play

Learning in team work requires same skills and mind set as most of today’s employers in recruitment; social awareness, team-working ability and also self-discipline. Clear definitions and description of expectations helps the team members to specify their roles, rules and responsibilities. This in turn helps the team to design their tasks, timelines, working methods and communication methods. Special emphasis should be paid to creating a good working atmosphere for all team members; the teacher’s role is vital in this, especially with the least interactive members. (Ferris, 2005; Albalooshi, 2003)

Trust is a crucial demand in leading a team of experts in a temporary organization, and it should also be seen as the tool for building and managing good working relationships between the participants. This in turn creates a working environment where the participating people accept the common aim and work towards it. Communication, both formal and especially informal was seen as the most important activity for building trust in virtual teams. As trust can only be built during time, this should be emphasized in the very beginning of the project. (Brewer et. al, 2012; Oertig et al., 2006)

Having different kinds of people in the team can also cause conflicts. Emotional conflicts within the team can result from disagreement over goals – personal or group level, or interpersonal differences. These conflicts have a tendency of enlarging and therefore affecting the whole team's cooperation, performance and also learning results. Solving conflicts is time away from productive work, and conflicts can also decrease other members' ability to accept others' ideas. (Adobor et al., 2006)

The virtual team is productive only if all members give their input. Keeping the team communication alive is more difficult when the team is not physically together, especially if there are members, who don't feel like being a part of the team. In order to avoid these situations, team building activities and creation of social ties is imperative. A key task for the teacher is to increase the collective identity instead of encouraging the students to target for individual achievements. Game-based simulation tools attract students to participate and be active, but this is motivated by the perception of learning and the usefulness of the topics covered. They also force students to act instead of being passive targets, and this has been found to result in higher learning. (Ferris, 2005; Tunstall et al., 2010)

It is a well-known fact that it is easier to cooperate with people one knows. When studying in a virtual team, it is important that the members get to know each other in more ways than just a name or a user id. This could be facilitated by face-to-face situations, but also with informal activities in the virtual communities, such as chats, discussion forums and voice-enabled meetings (Skype, Webex etc). It is important to consider the interaction between students, as the learner-learner communication is an important source of individual learning. (Ferris, 2005; Katernyak et al., 2009)

Supervising and feedback from the teacher

Supervising a virtual student group requires different kind of attention from the teacher than a group studying in a traditional classroom environment. Supervising is not only a task for the teacher, but also for each student for monitoring the progress of other students and teams. With continuous supervising the teacher also shows interest and consideration towards the students, their progress and achievements, motivating the students. Supervising should also be about cooperation of the teacher and the students instead of being a form of control. Systematic guidance from teachers in order to build a safe team-working environment are said to have a positive influence in knowledge development, (Ferris, 2005; Mason et al., 2008; Xu et al., 2010)

Quality instruction and teacher's activity in the forms of timely feedback, encouraging motivation and positive guidance is found to improve the social presence of the students, and as a result also improve learning satisfaction. Other teacher actions that have positive influence in social presence are such as motivating or forcing participation in discussions, especially in the beginning of the course, or using personal interaction like emails. (Kim et al., 2011)

As learning in simulations is an interactive process, feedback from the teacher cannot be over-emphasized. The feedback should encourage the hesitant students, guide students searching for the way to proceed and help the students feel they can complete their tasks. Successful feedback reduces

- the distance between the students and the teacher when it is not too formal and rigid
- mistrust and insecurity when it is supportive and positively-formed
- the feeling of remoteness and distance when it is frequent and prompt (Albalooshi, 2003)

In blended learning environment feedback should be seen as an interactive task to enhance learning. When using a student-oriented methodology with collective knowledge building, also the teacher is a learner. Another important issue to discuss is the feedback between students and teams. The teacher should encourage the team members to give feedback to the input of their fellow students in a constructive way. As the knowledge is built from the collective input, a discussion-oriented communication should be emphasized. (Mason et al., 2008)

Learning experience takeaways from several international business simulations

The empirical part of this article comes from on-line business simulations, which have been implemented during several years in strategic management courses. The simulation game consists of a virtual case company operating in global mobile phone markets, so the products are familiar and interesting for the students. Teams of 3-5 students form a company, and the teams compete against each other in a common, global market. Decisions are made in areas like demand (predictions), production, pricing, R&D, logistics and finance. The teams can see how their decisions influence their company's financial situation, but only after each game round is over, the outcome of that round is shown.

The software itself does not require complex technological skills, but the teachers should of course possess comprehensive knowledge of the business environment and its areas. Each implementation is different, as the results are directly related to the student teams' decisions. Therefore analytical skills to interpret profit and loss statements, balance sheets and key performance indicators are far more important for the teacher than an in-depth knowledge of the simulation parameters. Still, guiding the students to use the system should be emphasized in the beginning of the course.

Most of today's students are familiar with web based interfaces, but still the logic of the actual software requires some practicing. In the practicing phase it is important to emphasize the connections of the various decision-making areas to each other, for example with simple what-if rehearsals in organized sessions. Based on the implementations, this practice phase functions best in a computer classroom, physically together. With internet-based connections like Skype, Adobe Connect Pro or similar, the same steps can be taken, but with less interactivity options.

The classroom sessions also provide an opportunity for the students to get to know the game environment as a team and to know the other team members. This supports the literature findings, which show that the combination of face-to-face and virtual learning brings the best results. The contact sessions should also be used effectively for team building activities, thus providing basis for good collaboration and team dynamics. A good task supporting this is the definition, description and agreement of the virtual company's strategy.

As a game can never represent the real world perfectly, some compromises have to be accepted. Some decision-making areas may seem as oversimplified, while others may seem as overemphasized. The game in question is a strategic simulation game, so long-term decisions like R&D are highlighted more than daily operations. The variations of students' background education and experience brings both a challenge here as well as an opportunity; some students and teams might need more attention in areas that are not familiar for them, while the opportunity lies in the collaborative learning in teams with different knowledge based members.

One of the main takeaways from the implementations was that the students were able to work in multicultural teams effectively, when given the challenge and deadlines. The competitive aspect of the game gave additional motivation to some of the student teams. Having different level of activity within the groups gave the teachers a task of motivating the silent individuals and thereby ensuring an equal level of participation of all team members. Some teams worked via physically joint sessions, some only worked via the virtual platform. This did not seem to provide big differences in the results – bigger differences seemed to be between active and passive teams regarding collaborative working.

In multinational and physically dislocated implementations the main challenges were to establish the team working rules, motivation and spirit; having the different personalities to work towards the common goal. This was emphasized when there was a time zone difference inside the team; for example part of the team was located in Finland, part in Chile. Mixing the teams in the middle of the course by the teachers was not a welcome act according to the students, but in the feedback this was found a very educational, although irritating situation.

Some students claimed that their good work was enjoyed by newcomers who hadn't participated in it in earlier phases. Learning how to manage this "unfair" situation was shown in the final report as a personal learning experience.

Evaluation of the learning in business simulations is not an easy task. Winning the business game would be the straightforward approach, but the main learning experience is not included in the key performance indicators. The learning diaries, final reports or other similar concluding documents and presentations contain the components of learning, and should be emphasized in the course evaluation. Analytical description of the learning process, including areas such as personal development, team dynamics, ability to handle different opinions, ability to manage stress, critical and strategic thinking skills, forms the basis for evaluation.

Conclusions

Simulation is a widely-used learning environment is other disciplines than business as well. Pilot training, health care and other use cases are well-known. The common denominator in all these is that simulation provides an environment to learn complex tasks, activities and team-work in a way which would be too costly, dangerous or impossible in a real-life situation. Technology enables all this, but should always be used with carefully chosen pedagogical and methodological approaches.

The actual simulation forms the learning situation, but the actual learning experience can be gained by the students only with feedback, supervising and debriefing by the teacher and other students. Even though virtual teams and complex simulation tasks can cause stress to the students, the main feedback from the students after the course tells that winning or losing the business game is not important – the understanding of the impact of each decision to the big picture is the key.

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