

INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN THE NORDIC-RUSSIAN CONTEXT Project report

Marja-Liisa Kakkonen & Mikhail Nemilentsev (eds.)



MAMK

University of Applied Sciences

INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN THE NORDIC-RUSSIAN CONTEXT

Project report

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PREFACE

This publication introduces a Nordic-Russia (NORU) project which is entitled Innovative Entrepreneurship in Nordic-Russian context (Project number NCM-RU/10088). The main goal of the project was to strengthen the network of four higher educational institutions in Russia, Finland and Denmark. The specific objectives of the project were as follows: to promote students' skills to reflect on innovations, to enhance students' entrepreneurial mindset, to train students' understanding of value creation for customers/markets, and to increase entrepreneurial teaching competences of teachers. The main goal was aimed to be achieved by arranging multi-cultural learning events as the main activities of the project for teachers and students. The specific objectives were aimed to be achieved by training them through innovation pedagogy and creating entrepreneurial innovative, interdisciplinary study modules for the students. The project has received funding from Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) and the funding mainly covered the mobility costs of all activities during the project in 2013 – 2015.

This publication consists of two parts (A+B). The part A includes five articles related to the implementation, results and evaluation of the project. The first article describes the whole project and its main activities and the second article introduces the assessment of the seminars by the participants. The third and fourth articles present the achievement of the objectives from the perspectives of the participating teachers and students. Finally, the fifth article of the part A introduces the evaluation of the whole project.

The second part of the publication, part B, includes articles written by the Finnish, Danish and Russian professors, lecturers and staff members. The articles deal with entrepreneurship education, creativity, practical training, and cultural differences. All the articles are based on the concrete insights gained from the NORU project. The articles are arranged in the following order:

first come the articles focusing on several activities of the NORU project. The subsequent articles present one activity of the NORU project and after that the articles, which deal with more general aspects of entrepreneurship education and innovativeness in higher education with the links to the overall NORU project are presented. All in all, it is assumed that this publication describes the whole project, its activities and content in a very concrete way, and therefore it is a good document both for the participants of the project and for those who consider implementing a same kind of project in the near future.

Mikkeli in August, 2015

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PART A

**– IMPLEMENTATION, RESULTS AND
EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT**

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DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT: INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN NORDIC-RUSSIAN CONTEXT

Marja-Liisa Kakkonen

INTRODUCTION

The main goal of the project was to strengthen the network among the partners as well as to strengthen the co-operation between the higher education institutions involved and with their industry partners in Russia and Nordic countries. The specific objectives of the project were to promote students' skills to reflect on innovations and to enhance their entrepreneurial mindset, to train students' understanding of value creation for customers and markets, and to increase the entrepreneurial teaching competences of teachers. The project started in July 2013 and ended in June 2015.

The added value of the project was that the network of partners, Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences (Mamk), St. Petersburg State Forest Technical University (FTU), St. Petersburg State Technological University of Plant Polymers (PPU) and Tietgen Business College (EAL), has a diversity of approaches in the entrepreneurship education, and they were willing to share their practices with each other, and learn and create more together. Denmark and Finland represent a long history in entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. Russia, in turn, contributes a new and fresh drive in entrepreneurship which has increased rapidly especially during the last two decades. By combining these different approaches and development phases in entrepreneurship education and innovation training, the project created added value and provided new learning opportunities for all the partners in the network. In addition, the Finnish partner was used to working with the Danish partner as well as with the Russian partners. The new dimension of the collaboration was a joint Danish-Finnish-Russian team.

ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

The project consisted of seven main activities which were implemented as seminars in Mikkeli (Finland), Odense (Denmark) and in St. Petersburg (Russia) – two seminars in each place. In addition, Mamk as a coordinator hosted the final seminar for the academics involved in the project during the project in Mikkeli in May 2015.

All the partner universities sent altogether 71 teachers and staff members to take part in the project events: In addition, 39 students participated in the project seminars (i.e. activities) in the partner universities abroad.

The project funding covered the mobility costs, but not the salary expenses during the weeks. In other words, 71 weeks in 1,5 years of mobility of staff members is the equivalent of about one person's workload and salary in a year, which is a reasonable investment of the partner universities in the project. The duration of each seminar was three days altogether, but the participants arrived one day before and left on the following day after finishing the seminar. The project was implemented by arranging seven events (main activities) of which four were arranged only for teachers and staff members, and three were arranged for both teachers and students. This article describes all the activities of the project.

Kick off seminar in Mikkeli in August in 2013

The first event of the project included a workshop and a seminar with three intensive days at Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences in August 2013. The theme of the seminar was Bridging entrepreneurship education between Russia and Nordic countries. During the seminar the participants learnt different aspects related to entrepreneurship education in higher education, and they got familiar with each other better. In addition, two teachers were invited to give presentations on cultural aspects. Both of them are experts on inter-cultural communication. Other teachers from Finland, Denmark and Russia participated in these sessions of understanding cultural differences.

The first day included a workshop for the students, and one local company was involved as a partner in the student project. The students were invited to a 24-hour workshop (InnoCamp) for experiencing something new while learning by doing. They learned and worked intensively for a business-related project in order to generate new ideas and initiatives for a company. Two Finnish and one Danish teacher guided and supervised the students' work. In the evening, while students were taking part in the InnoCamp, teachers and staff members had a small cruise on the lake Saimaa. They visited, for example Astuvansalmi, a place which has rock paintings which are over 3000 years old.



PICTURE 1. Departure for a small cruise on the lake Saimaa (photo Marja-Liisa Kakkonen)

The second day consisted of a workshop on creativity and innovation for entrepreneurship professors. They shared the best practices and experiences on teaching and learning entrepreneurship. Also one well-known Finnish professor, Matti Koiranen, was invited to give a presentation related to the topic of Teaching entrepreneurship in higher education. In addition, one alumni of Mamk, Ville Majanen, was invited to give a presentation on Learning entrepreneurship in higher education. He has lived in Hong Kong since 2006 and established a couple of companies over there. He was invited to share his experiences of starting up a company and developing his businesses. In the evening, there was a joint social programme for the students and teachers.

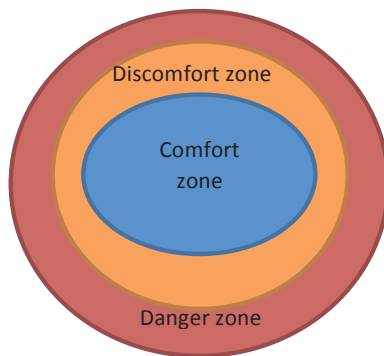
The third day was a seminar for all participants. It focused on different areas of innovation, entrepreneurship education and intercultural aspects in business. Students presented the outcomes in the last day of the seminar. On the third afternoon, there was a small-scale conference which was titled “Bridging entrepreneurship education between Finland and Russia”. It focused on the earlier co-operation activities between Mamk and the Russian partners. The conference papers were written before the project started in May and June. There were seven articles and they were published in the conference

proceedings. The book was delivered to all the participants of the conference and it was also published on-line. The articles of the book are also named in the list of references at the end of this article. Later, the good practices of this kick-off seminar of the project have been documented and written and published as articles. (Kakkonen 2014; Paasonen & Torniainen 2014a; Paasonen & Torniainen 2014b).

Teacher training seminar in Odense in January 2014

A teacher training session was arranged by the EAL Competence center in Odense, Denmark. It was organized in January 2014. The theme of the training was Innovation pedagogy. The first day included different exercises. For example, a ‘give and take’ exercise for teachers was carried out for setting up a constructive dialogue and making learning more attractive and effective. Another innovative method was presented in the outdoor environment: a game design was practically performed by all participants with the use of phones, ropes and facial masks. Environmental elements required for innovative activities were studied.

Further, in the “out of the comfort zone” exercise, the learning points were as follows: to experience a “learning track”/learning framework, where the facilitator lays out team building exercises with a learning objective in mind, but with the decision-making and clue-solving in the hands of the participants. Conclusion of the result happens by a comparison of the experienced learning points versus the planned learning points, as well as a discussion of solution strategies of the participating groups.



PICTURE 2: Learning occurs in the discomfort zone

The group was divided into two teams that are not competing, but working towards the same goal, as if they were in the same company. Both teams were supposed to complete the tasks using innovative solutions. A local teacher was a trainer in this try-out case. His task was to plan and secure this workshop, so that the team members (“students”) would work outside the comfort zone, but not go into the danger zone. He was controlling the situation and slightly changing the rules to avoid conflicts, frustration and going to the danger zone.

Furthermore, a teambuilding exercise was a good ice-breaker. Through such exercises (especially in a new group/class), team members are able to figure out the roles and hierarchy in a short time. It can also be used in an international students’ program. The teacher has a great opportunity to observe the dynamics of the group and see how they learn and which roles they assume. Such an exercise could also help to discover hidden skills and behavior, which is important not only in a school environment, but also in the business world. It is good to mix things up a little in order to diversify the classes. Furthermore, the subject is not determined and thus, the teacher has free hands to plan in this regard. This creative approach can be introduced in every school and can be diversified by adding angles to the same exercises. For instance, the teacher can choose a different leader for each task. Students would benefit the most from a combination of doing creative things and adding theories. It is not only in terms of their school/work life, but also on a level of personal development, by learning new skills, such as better communication.

The second day was a training for teachers using TIPI concept and applied methods of learning. This concept was devoted to creating a newer and a more innovative space for learning as well as teaching.

The TIPI concept is based on the idea of creating a new space that students do not know. It impacts the attitude towards learning. In the TIPI, students cannot sit in the back hidden behind the desk. They are “forced” to participate by sitting in a circle with other students and a teacher. That way everybody, more or less, get out of their comfort zone and learn to think outside of the box. For example, during a group work session later, a Finnish-Russian team created a new concept (TAMS) and a useful method for teaching. Afterwards, the method and its potential use was documented and published as an article (Kakkonen, Tereshkina, & Tereshchenko, 2014).



PICTURE 3. A relaxing learning exercise for teachers (Photo Marja-Liisa Kakkonen)

The third day started with a presentation of the case of the local ballet and modern dance enterprise. After the case description by the company representative, time was reserved for developing opportunities for the case company's activities in the St. Petersburg market and in Mikkeli. A presentation was made by Anders Vejen Andersen. The task was to try to come up with new innovative solutions for a ballet dance company, Ingrid Kristensen & Co., supposedly completely not connected with the schools. It was important to find a way to go out of the comfort zone. The goal was to bring science and research into a new context and use for society.

At the end, various learning styles was discussed and different student types and learning characters were identified. The teachers also tested their own teaching and learning styles. The teachers should reflect on their own learning styles, as they automatically teach the same way they learn themselves. Thus, it is essential to be aware of one's own learning style and take into account other people's preferences to make the learning process easier.

All in all, this workshop in Odense was a meaningful training for the participants. This training to use many teaching methods in a different way in teaching was a good learning experience for many participants. Afterwards Finnish participants wrote an article about their learning experiences during the seminar in Odense. (Kakkonen, Itkonen, Ollanketo, Honkonen & Heikkinen, 2014).

A Joint Workshop for students and teachers in Odense in April 2014

The main theme of the event was “Training innovative entrepreneurship in intercultural context” and it included a workshop and a seminar. One local company was involved. The workshop was organized in April 2014.

The first day started with an introduction of the concept and theory of LEGO Serious Play. A presentation of the Danish case company and practical rehearsal of the LEGO Serious Play methods were brought together in the student-teacher international teams. The students also had a planning of the group work for the next two days. On the first day the participants received different kinds of assignments in order to build solutions for various problems with the Lego bricks. According to this method the most important thing was to build them without thinking too much. Afterwards each member of the group introduced his or her solutions to the other group members. It was also important to listen to others when they presented their outcomes

The second day started with an introduction of the innovative learning environment by the Danish partner university and a work with other partners’ teaching and learning environments. Brief discussions, non-standard group exercises as well an international format of presentations took place. Student groups were separately divided into international teams where they brainstormed, honed and presented their ideas in a relation to the case company and its international innovation challenges. There were local supervisors in the student groups, and the guest teachers and staff members took part in different programmes.

On the third day of the seminar teachers got to experience the Danish Science Park and Stjernesketet where application of innovation design was demonstrated through the example of an extraordinarily new hospital. The cooperation of academics, municipalities and entrepreneurs was given an extra attention in the group and the individual work. The students honed their presentation skills and gave their final project presentation to the case company’s representatives. Reflections, summing up and feedback on the three-day learning and teaching exchange were provided.



PICTURE 4. LEGO serious play workshop was the main content of the seminar (Photo Marja-Liisa Kakkonen)

All in all, this workshop was a great experience to both the students and the teachers. From the teachers' point of view, especially the guidance and supervision of the students, and the use of innovative teaching methods in a multicultural student group were good experiences, which inspired the participants to write articles on them afterwards (Ahonen & Jalakanen 2014; Heikkinen & Nemilentsev 2014; Nemilentsev 2014).

Teacher training seminar in Mikkeli in September 2014

The seminar was a teacher training session which focused on the exchange of innovation methods of entrepreneurship training in the partner universities. It was organized in Mikkeli in September 2014. The main theme of this activity was Sharing of experiences in innovative entrepreneurship education in the partner universities.

Actually, the morning of the first seminar day consisted of two main topics: the annual report 2013 – 2014 was introduced and discussed, and the updated project plan was presented and discussed in detail. In the afternoon the focus was on the exchange of good practices related to innovative teaching methods of entrepreneurship training in the partner universities. The aim of the first

day was to discuss openly what has been achieved in the project so far as well as to share good practices among the participants. On the evening of the first day, there was a bowling session as a social programme in order to strengthen the relationships of the participants further.

The second day included the master classes delivered by Peter Strom-Henningsen and Mette Bonde. The topics were related to different theoretical and practical perspectives of entrepreneurship training. The aim was not only to provide new knowledge, but also to illustrate how to teach and support learning of challenges topics. Peter Strom-Henningsen wrote an article related to this topic in 2014.

Finally, the third day of the seminar included a workshop of academic writing and planning of a joint publication for the dissemination of the project's results. Some of the papers were only good initiatives while some were already drafts of the final papers. It was agreed that there will be 6-10 articles which will be published in the final publication of the project. The objective of this session was to improve academic writing skills of the participants. The workshop was useful for three reasons. First of all, the participants learnt a lot about practical skills related to academic writing. Secondly, the exercises were done in multicultural teams and therefore it also enhanced team working skills of the participants. Finally, since it was agreed together that the participants will write about their experiences of the project, it was a shared aim for them. It strengthened willingness and motivation for the co-operation, and thus, it also strengthened the network of the partners involved.

Teacher training seminar in St. Petersburg in October 2014

Two Russian partner universities – St. Petersburg State Forest Technical University, Faculty of Economics and Management (FTU), and St. Petersburg State Technological University of Plant Polymers, Faculty of Economics and Management (PPU) organised a teacher training activity in late October in 2014. The theme of the training was Intercultural Communication. During a three-day seminar, founding blocks of intercultural communication and principles of innovative entrepreneurship education were discussed. Partners from Finland and Denmark became familiar with aspects of business culture in Russia, and particularly development needs of the Russian economy. They socialized during daily and evening cultural activities, and strengthened partner networking by learning Russian, Finnish and Danish standards of entrepreneurship education. The first and second days were organized by FTU, while the last day was organized by PPU.

On the first day, the guests gathered in the Hall of the Scientific Council in FTU where the Dean of Faculty of Economics and Management presented the university's history, current trends in economy and entrepreneurship education, challenges and opportunities of the Russian education system. The programme for the subsequent three days was given and general suggestions from the guests were taken into account. The seminar's general topic was intercultural communication, the subtopic being Russian business culture. Two Russian business trainers from an international consulting company organized theoretical and practical, interactive sessions with elements of the game environment and inter-team collaboration. First of all, the business trainer Elena Velikina told about psychological aspects of communication, self-concepts of learning and practical laws of communication. The hidden subconscious as well as the external elements of communication were presented and continuously trained in the international teams of teachers. The afternoon programme included a visit to the Hermitage museum (Picture 5) with the aim of learning signs of the Russian high culture, and discussing inclusiveness of cultural elements in the business and entrepreneurship education.



PICTURE 5. The impressive building of Hermitage (Photo Mikhail Nemilentsev)

On the second day, the Finnish and Danish guests and local teachers from Saint-Petersburg continued studying aspects of intercultural communication in detail in FTU. The main emphasis was placed on the practical understanding of psychological norms of communication, overcoming challenges in intercultural communication and unifying Danish, Finnish and Russian ways of collaboration. The teachers and university staff members answered multiple questions guided by the professional trainers from the international consulting company. In particular, the participants were faced by the questions: “Why do I enjoy myself.” It should be mentioned that certain intercultural difficulties were experienced by the participants due to the different cultural backgrounds and the ethical origins of the Finnish, Danish and Russian cultures. Nevertheless, it was also a great learning experience.

The afternoon session consisted of the practical team building game carried out by the business trainer Alexander Khanin. Such a game could be easily integrated not only into the teaching curriculum, but also to be arranged at any corporate event. Despite the fantastic scenario of the game, the participants experienced multiple strategies of rescuing their teams’ members and solving team tasks to the detriment of one’s personal goals. The teams consisted of the Finnish, Danish and Russian teachers, which complicated the game process to some extent. However, the learning outcomes were much greater compared to mono-cultural composition of groups (for instance, when the game is organized separately in a Finnish, Danish or Russian university in a homogenous group of teachers or students). The evening excursion around the city center gave additional insights into the St. Petersburg culture and its communication profile.

The third day of the seminar was carried out in PPU with the emphasis on the project dissemination and the future cooperation of the partner universities. After a short presentation of PPU and its entrepreneurship education profile, the project-related articles written by the Finnish, Danish and Russian participants were discussed in the international groups.



PICTURE 6. Participants of the seminar in St. Petersburg (Photo Svetlana Tereshchenko)

A joint workshop for students and teachers in St. Petersburg in February 2015

The activity in St. Petersburg in February 2015 was the third joint activity in accordance with the international NORU project. The teachers and students from three partner countries – Denmark, Finland and Russia – were active performers of the activity and learned specifics of intercultural communication and Russian business culture in the settings of two partner St. Petersburg universities - St. Petersburg State Forest Technical University (FTU) and St. Petersburg State Technical University of Plant Polymers (PPU). During a three-day project activity in Saint Petersburg the teachers and students from four partner universities strengthened their practical competences in the sphere of intercultural communication. The Russian partners (FTU and PPU) chose the same topic as it was realized in October 2014, but this time they focused more on the practical issues of intercultural communication rather than on the theoretical issues.

The first day began in the FTU White Hall where teachers and students gathered together to listen to the programme content, discuss progress of the project from the previous activities, and agree upon practical, project-related events. The students from Finland, Denmark and Russia presented their pre-activity assignments introducing their home cultures. In particular, Finnish, Danish and Russian cultural characteristics and stereotypes were discussed. After the students' presentations, the teachers and students worked jointly in the international teams participating in the non-verbal and interactive tasks prepared by the business trainer S. Semenov. The training dealt with the process of international negotiations and sales process where the counterparts represent different cultures. In general, the cultural patterns of Danish, Finnish and Russian partners were constructed during the training session.

The second day had a different programme for the teachers and the students in the FTU venue. The teachers developed their learning and teaching practices in the entrepreneurship education organised by the FTU colleagues. Principles of teaching entrepreneurially, the structure of the education processes in Finland, Russia and Denmark, roles of a teacher and a student, challenges in business education, and opportunities of international collaboration were among the key topics of the workshop. The students in turn participated in the lecture on intercultural communication carried out by the Finnish university lecturer Ritva Kosonen. Additionally, the students were divided into international groups and they were responsible for completing a three-day assignment on collecting examples of the Russian business culture and comparing these examples with their home cultures. The collaboration of teachers and students were supplemented by the visits to the Russian Ethnographic museum with the organized workshop on artful design.

The third day took place in PPU with its main goal to develop art skills of the international participants and to apply art design techniques to entrepreneurship education. In the morning session, the master class with the topic "How to understand myself by the means of drawing" was conducted by two prominent Russian artists. Ad-hoc tasks were combined with the professional instructions of the Russian artists. Each participant of the workshop from Finland, Denmark and Russia created her/his own painting and received professional comments from the artists. The students, in turn, prepared their three-day tasks and uploaded their cultural findings in the computer class in PPU. After the art workshop, the teachers worked as evaluators of the students' assignments. All the student groups received high grades for the completed assignment. At the end of the seminar, future plans and budget issues were discussed by the participants.

In conclusion it can be mentioned that the Danish and Finnish delegation learned to know the Russian business culture and the Russian business traditions more deeply as well as got familiar with innovative artful methods in education. The students received a diverse experience in studying intercultural communication and collecting examples of the Russian business culture. The teachers in turn have analyzed the presented intercultural innovative methods in teaching from a new artful perspective.



PICTURE 7. Green marmalade was a “symbol” of the seminars of this two-year project (Photo Svetlana Tereshchenko)

The Final Seminar of the Project in Mikkeli in May 2015

The final seminar of the project was arranged in Mikkeli in May 2015. The final seminar was organized for three days. The aim of the final meeting was to sum up the results of the project, analyze the results achieved, discuss the further steps of the cooperation in the frame of innovation entrepreneurship. There were also external lecturers who provided insight into two more challenging topics in entrepreneurship education: Students’ inner growth to entrepreneurship and Coaching creativity.

The first day started with the topic of students' inner growth to entrepreneurship. The lectures were given by professor Matti Koironen and he also ran a workshop after the lectures. In the afternoon, the main focus was on the budget review and the reflections on the aims and activities of the whole project.

During the second day the Danish and Russian partners gave presentations on their overviews of the project. It was important to reflect on and discuss the results together. In the afternoon another external lecturer, doctor Asta Raami had her lectures on coaching creativity. She also had a workshop after the lectures in order to activate the participants to discuss and provide their own perceptions of the topics. It was interesting to notice cultural differences between the approaches and methods of coaching creativity in higher education in different countries.

The third day started with the presentation of the results of the Finnish participants followed by the presentations of the completed articles of the final publication of the project. The articles illustrated well the activities and the results of the project. There were also articles related to other important topics of entrepreneurship education in the partner countries. Finally, in the closing session the participants concluded the benefits of the project. All the participants agreed that it would be great to continue the collaboration in the future. After the discussion, it was agreed that the partners will meet again in St. Petersburg in November.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The main goal of the project was to strengthen the network among the partners as well as to strengthen the co-operation between the higher education institutions involved in Russia and Nordic countries: Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences (Mamk), St. Petersburg State Forest Technical University (FTU), St. Petersburg State Technological University of Plant Polymers (PPU) and Tietgen Business College (EAL). The specific objectives of the project were to promote students' skills to reflect on innovations and to enhance their entrepreneurial mindset, to train students' understanding of value creation for customers and markets, and to increase the entrepreneurial teaching competences of teachers. The project started in July 2013 and ended in June 2015.

The project included seven seminars as the main activities of the project during two years – one teacher training and one joint seminar for teachers and students were organized in each partner country. In addition, the final seminar was arranged in Mikkeli in May 2015. Feedback was collected in each seminar. It was discussed in the final seminar.

There was an active mobility of the students and staff members. 30 students altogether participated in the international seminars, in which they studied and worked in multicultural student groups supervised by the local teachers. Also local students participated in the student groups. Furthermore, 71 teachers and staff members travelled to seven seminars arranged in Mikkeli, Odense and St. Petersburg. In addition, in each seminar also local teachers and staff members took part in different sessions of the seminar.

The participants wrote actively about the activities and the outcomes during the project: 21 articles were published in 2013 and 2014. In addition, this publication consists of 12 articles, which means that 33 articles related to the project activities or topics is one result of the project during 2013-2015. All the articles are listed in the list of references below.

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ASSESSMENT OF THE SEMINARS OF THE PROJECT BY THE PARTICIPANTS

Marja-Liisa Kakkonen

INTRODUCTION

Usually the participants assess and give feedback on the events. The assessment process has to be systematic, transparent and critical. (Suopajarvi 2013, 9). In order to understand how the participants found the seminar all in all, feedback was collected at the end of each seminar and it was discussed in the final seminar. The data were collected from each participant in the closing session of each seminar. A questionnaire form was used to gather the feedback. The questionnaire form consisted of eight items and the participants were asked to evaluate with the Likert scale (1-5) the following issues of the seminar: programme, organization of the seminar, dissemination of information, materials, scheduling and timing, atmosphere, social programme and networking. In addition, there were three open-ended questions in the questionnaire form: what they liked most, recommendations for the future, and anything else they wanted to share. The numeric data were analyzed in Excel software and the frequencies and means are reported. The answers of the open-ended questions are analyzed by a content analysis.

FEEDBACK FROM THE TEACHERS

In general, the feedback from the teachers on all the seminars was great. All the aspects, which were asked to be assessed, were rated as very good or excellent in each seminar. In addition, there were only small differences in the scores between the seminars arranged during the project. In other words, the participants were very satisfied with the seminars and how the seminars had been arranged. Table 1 presents the scores of each aspect and also the comparison of the scores between the seminars.

TABLE 1. Feedback from the teachers

	Mikkeli 08/2013	Odense 01/2014	Odense 04/2014	Mikkeli 09/2014	St.Peter. 10/2014	St.Peter. 02/2015
Programme	4.58	4.6	4.92	4.67	4.91	3.9
Organization of the seminar	4.58	4.21	4.17	4.75	4.73	4.2
Dissemination of information	4.09	4.53	4.92	4.92	4.55	4.2
Materials	4.36	4.33	4.92	4.75	4.27	3.8
Scheduling and timing	4.5	4.47	4.75	4.83	4.27	4.2
Atmosphere	4.91	4.13	4.33	4.64	5.00	3.9
Social programme	4.67	4.73	4.92	5.00	5.00	4.7
Networking	4.5	4.27	4.83	4.67	4.27	4.1

Verbal feedback from the teachers

In addition to the numeric feedback, there were three open-ended questions to be answered. The answers have been analyzed by a content analysis. The main themes and their subthemes have been identified and the results are reported question by question below.

What did you like most about the seminar?

Many participants said in their feedback that they had liked everything. However, in the specified answers there were several things which the participants had liked most: programme, atmosphere, social programme and networking opportunities. They are discussed in detail below.

Programme

All in all, the seminars were perceived as high level organized events which were interesting, useful and activating. The participants received a lot of information and also learnt new skills. The professors were pleased with the good input of external lectures during the seminars. They also received various inputs to aid their teaching.

Atmosphere

The openness of the participants was regarded as “great”. It was already in the first seminar and it was emphasized in each seminar of the project. Based on the open and friendly atmosphere, also the communication of the participants was perceived to be easy and open.

Social programme

Informal talking to the colleagues was good - especially discussions about different cultures were rewarding. It was highly appreciated that the host organizations had arranged a lot of social activities in each seminar – activities and cultural visits.

Networking opportunities

Basically, the project provided excellent opportunities of networking for professionals. It was valued very much and the feedback indicated it as well. It was also an opportunity for students and teachers to network.

Nevertheless, there was one contradiction as well. The working language of the project is English, however there were some Russian participants who were not so good at English. Sometimes it was hard to get a good and genuine interaction with the participants due to the need of interpretation.

Do you have any recommendations for the future?

Some participants informed that they did not have any recommendations for the future and they were very happy with the way the arrangements were now. They repeated that everything was good. However, based on the answers received, there are the following aspects, which could be taken into account in the future. They were related to the programmes and the cultural differences. One suggestion was to arrange a short internship for professors during the seminar.

Programmes

One participant commented that it is difficult to organize a students' and teachers' seminar together. It was also mentioned that more informal and unofficial discussions could be included in the programme. Also more teaching opportunities for participants could be included in the programme.

Cultural differences

The cultural differences were regarded as a strength and a weakness. During the seminars both professors and students had an opportunity to learn more about new cultural aspects and cultural differences. However, some cultural differences appeared for example while working in the groups and they posed some challenges to overcome. They did not cause any big problems, but they were more like learning experiences.

Is there anything else you would like to share about the seminar?

In this part there were not so many replies. However, the participants wanted to thank for the seminars and their good programmes. In the answers the best parts of each seminar were repeated, which was already discussed under the first question.

FEEDBACK FROM THE STUDENTS

Students took part in one workshop in Mikkeli (August 2013), in one workshop in Odense (April 2014) and one in St. Petersburg (February 2014). The programme of each event has been described in the first article of this publication. It is worth mentioning that the content, the theme and the methods varied to some extent in each seminar. Also the participating students were different (except for two students).

Some parts of the programme were the same and together with the teachers, but the main part of the students' programme was to study; to learn by doing. The basic idea of the programme was the same in Mikkeli, Odense and St. Petersburg: the students worked together in multicultural student groups on an assignment for a local company. They were supposed to work in a very intensive way, and quite innovative teaching methods were used in supporting their learning. It varied a lot from the traditional teaching sessions of higher education.

Numeric feedback from the students

A questionnaire form was used to gather the feedback. The questionnaire form consisted of eight items and the participants were asked to evaluate with the Likert scale (1-5) the following issues of the seminar: programme, organization of the seminar, dissemination of information, materials, scheduling and timing, atmosphere, social programme and networking. In addition, there were three open-ended questions in the questionnaire: what they liked most, recommendations for the future, and anything else they wanted to share. The numeric data were analyzed in Excel software and the frequencies and means were reported. The answers of the open-ended questions were analyzed by a content analysis.

The results from the students were also good or very good. However, the scores were at a bit lower level than the results from the teachers/professors. Table 2 introduces the feedback from the students.

TABLE 2. Feedback from the students (as means of the statements)

	Mikkeli 08/2013	Odense 04/2014	St. Petersburg 02/2015
Programme	3.75	3.9	3.53
Organization of the seminar	3.88	4.19	3.87
Dissemination of information	3.38	4.33	3.93
Materials	3.69	4.57	3.87
Scheduling and timing	3.5	3.52	3.07
Atmosphere	4.06	4.19	3.6
Social programme	4.13	4.47	4.13
Networking	3.81	4.28	3.53

Verbal feedback from the students

The students were asked to give feedback on the same issues as the teachers. The answers were analyzed by a content analysis and the themes were identified. The findings are presented question by question below.

What did you like most about the seminar?

There were five main themes which the students liked most: real assignments from companies, new learning methods, international atmosphere, meeting new people and local cultures. Real assignment from companies made the students to put a lot of effort into their group work, and they were very proud to present their outcomes in front of the company owners.

In many answers students told that they liked this kind of way of learning very much. In general, the students liked to challenge themselves and work in an intensive way with students from other cultures. However, there were also some students who did not like nor understand this kind of learning.

International atmosphere

International atmosphere was emphasized in the feedback of the students. They liked it, and they liked meeting new people. However, they also mentioned that they could have had more time of their own in order to get more familiar with the local cultures.

Do you have any recommendations for the future?

One of the most frequent answer was related to the time and time management. Some students felt that the time limits of the assignments were stressful and they did not have enough time. Some students, in turn, informed that there was too much time for only one group assignment. Furthermore, in several answers it was mentioned that there should be more free time for the students: more time for shopping and sight-seeing. Some students wanted more time for informal discussions. Some students wanted more seminar days.

In addition, some students told that there should be more countries and more nationalities involved while others told that there should be computer classrooms for the group assignments. More discussions should be arranged and more exchange students could be involved. Only one student informed that s/he was disappointed with the programme in one seminar. Another student told that there should be a more detailed project description for the students. Nevertheless, most of the students told that they liked and enjoyed the seminars.

Is there anything else you would like to share about the seminar?

Basically, the students repeated what they had already answered to the other questions. To summarize the answers, most of them considered the seminars a great experience with great people and all in all, it was nice to meet new people – students and teachers. The following quotation represents the general view of most of the students quite well: *“It was a pretty tough week, but we had fun!”*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

All the seminars were assessed by the participants. In order to get comparable results, the same questionnaire form was used to collect feedback on each seminar. Furthermore, the same questionnaire was used for the feedback from the teachers and the students. The questionnaire form included eight items to be assessed: Programme, Organization of the seminar, Dissemination of information, Materials, Scheduling and timing, Atmosphere, Social programme and Networking.

The scores of the participating teachers were excellent. The teachers liked almost everything which was organized for them in the formal and in the informal (social) programme. The scores of the students were good or very good, but they were lower than the scores of the teachers. Nevertheless, the feedback from the students was good and they also gave some recommendations for the future.

The teachers and the students had some parts of the programme in common, yet the main purpose of the students' programme was to study in an intensive way for a company in multicultural groups (with students they did not know beforehand). It was meant to be a challenge and a new learning experience for them. All in all, based on the feedback both from the teachers and the students, it can be concluded that the seminars were well organized and the participants were pleased with them. How the objectives have been achieved during the seminars of the project, are discussed in the next two articles.

ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TEACHERS

Marja-Liisa Kakkonen and Mikhail Nemilentsev

INTRODUCTION

A self-evaluation of a project can be regarded as an assessment of one's own work produced by the persons who have participated in the project. The project participants can clarify and strengthen their perceptions of the aims and activities of the project. Often the self-evaluation also supports better decision-making and development activities than an external evaluation. Furthermore, it motivates to make changes needed better than the feedback received from the external evaluators. Nevertheless, the evaluation must always be conducted so that it is based on the documents and facts, and the data can be collected with various methods. (Suopajarvi 2013, 18-19; Keto 2015, 70).

The main goal of the whole project was to strengthen the network of four partners in higher education as well as to strengthen the co-operation between these higher education institutions involved in Russia and the Nordic countries. In that sense, the main objective was aimed to be achieved by arranging multicultural and international seminars for the Finnish, Danish and Russian students and the professors. Furthermore, one of the specific objectives of the project was to increase entrepreneurial teaching competences of teachers. How these objectives were achieved was examined by a qualitative study. The project manager sent an inquiry to the coordinators of each partner university. They were asked to reply by email directly how the main goal and the specific objectives were achieved from their point of view. They were also asked to give arguments and examples for their answers related to each objective.

In addition, the project manager discussed these matters with the local teachers involved in Mikkeli and wrote a memo based on the discussions. All the texts were combined before the data analysis. The data was analysed by a content analysis and the main themes were identified from the data by each question.

RESULTS

The following two main themes were identified related to the main goal: Inter-university collaboration and Networking inside the university. The answers related to the specific objective of learning of teaching competences were analysed and reported according to the theme of Development of entrepreneurial teaching competences. In order to understand the findings better in their context, the universities are mentioned by their real names.

Inter-university collaboration

The main goal was achieved and the inter-university collaboration developed between the partners as follows: The Inter-university collaboration in the project emerged or developed at different levels: a) between MAMK, EAL, PPU, and FTU (the whole network); b) between EAL, PPU and FTU (Danish and Russian partners), between MAMK and EAL, and between MAMK and the Russian partners; and c) between PPU and FTU (Russian partners). These three levels of collaboration are discussed further in detail.

The whole network, which consists of one Finnish HEI (MAMK), one Danish HEI (EAL) and two Russian HEIs (FTU and PPU), was continuously developing during the two-year NORU project. The partners had some cooperation prior to the current project. In particular, MAMK had about five years of cooperation with FTU and PPU. Additionally, MAMK together with EAL participated in the preparatory Nordic-Russia project NORU in 2010. However, the four partners had never collaborated jointly in a longer project. MAMK created new project initiatives with the Danish partner and increased the teacher mobility with the Russian partners. During the project, all the partners indicated a creation of a solid international and intercultural network. All in all, the partners attained a synergy effect of innovative approaches to teaching and learning in HEIs, rather than focused solely on intercultural differences in the education systems.

The second above-mentioned level of collaboration is between the Danish and Russian partner HEIs. Prior to the current project, EAL had no inter-university collaboration with the Russian HEIs. Despite expected risks of inconsistencies in the Danish and Russian systems of entrepreneurship education, EAL succeeded in increasing the student and staff mobility with the Finnish and Russian partners. In turn, two Russian partner HEIs became acquainted with the Danish colleagues.

The third level of collaboration involves only two Russian partner HEIs. The Russian partners acted as one team and achieved a closer cooperation with the Finnish and Danish colleagues despite the visible differences in the education programmes and specialities. In addition, as one good outcome the Russian partners strengthened their mutual relationship and deepened their mutual collaboration.

Strengthening international networking inside each university

Besides strengthening the inter-university collaboration between the partners, the international networking inside each university was also strengthened clearly. Actually, there were significant positive changes caused by the mutually successful achievement of the project goals and objectives. Firstly, each partner university strengthened the entrepreneurial mindset of the teachers and staff members. Secondly, Finnish, Russian and Danish colleagues enhanced innovative approaches to teaching by sharing their knowledge and skills. On the other hand, although not every partner could see permanent changes in the university activities and procedures, multiple individual changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes were recognised. Furthermore, the principles of entrepreneurial thinking and acting in a creative way were jointly developed. Additionally, knowledge of entrepreneurship became more profound, which was reflected in the development of inter-university workshops and planning future possibilities of the collaboration. In addition, all four partners have significantly increased their student and staff mobility during the project.

MAMK bridged the developed approaches to innovation and entrepreneurship education that exist in Finland, Denmark and Russia. Additionally, an intercultural entrepreneurial mindset of teachers and staff members at MAMK was further improved with the help of partners from Denmark and Russia. As for EAL, this project raised a greater intercultural awareness of the principles of entrepreneurial thinking and acting in an innovative way. Although the project did not result in any constant changes of EAL's daily activities, EAL widened its teachers' professional network, and teachers' knowledge was integrated into the international innovative modelling. Two Russian partners acted jointly during the whole period of the project. As a result, FTU and PPU created a basis for future cooperation in the field of entrepreneurship education. Additionally, concepts of innovativeness and entrepreneurial competences are under continuous development during and after the project. There were multiple benefits for the Russian teachers that took part in the project activities. For instance, the teachers and staff members of FTU and PPU improved their skills in working in multicultural groups and their academic writing skills. As the main achievement for the Russian partners, the project results were disseminated in the curriculum of the Russian partner HEIs. All in all, it can be argued that the main goal of the project was achieved well, and it was achieved at the different levels.

Development of entrepreneurial teaching competences

One of the specific objectives was to increase entrepreneurial teaching competences of teachers. Based on the findings of this qualitative study, the entrepreneurial teaching competences of teachers from four partner HEIs were developed at three levels: a) the level of knowledge; b) the level of skills (i.e. methods and approaches); and c) the level of entrepreneurial mindset. These are presented in detail below.

Level of knowledge

During the project, the teachers acquired a greater and deeper knowledge of the state of entrepreneurship education, business and society in the partner countries. The participants were inspired by the alternative innovative pedagogical methodologies to foster innovation and the entrepreneurial spirit of the students. The teachers gained professional knowledge about changing the physical setting as well as setting in communication and innovative development for achieving better results in entrepreneurship teaching. The knowledge gained by the teachers in multicultural groups about the systems of entrepreneurship education in the project countries helped the teachers to 'climb the ladder of innovativeness'. The spread of knowledge occurred in particular when the teachers told their stories through Lego® Serious Play®. In this case, the acquired skills contribute to an increase of practical knowledge in the field of entrepreneurship education.

The Finnish and Russian colleagues acquired a greater knowledge about the unification of the campus university education with the industry by means of progressive ICT tools in Denmark. Additionally, the teachers became familiar with multiple innovative environments as a result of a close community cooperation with the education sector in Denmark. Through innovative campus design, the teachers received practical advice on the elements of spatial environment (such as buildings and furniture) for developing a student-driven creative intra-university space.

With the help of the Russian partner HEIs, the participating teachers' understanding of the intercultural communication process improved greatly. In particular, the teachers in national and international groups compared learning and teaching practices in the entrepreneurship education in Finland, Denmark and Russia. Critical differences in the practices and the regulations of the entrepreneurship education were identified in the partner HEIs. One of the critical objectives of inter-university comparison was to improve the current entrepreneurship education systems in the partner countries by means of the new 'synergetic' knowledge gained in the project. The teachers' role, the methods of teaching, a role of innovation, and the sources of knowledge in higher education were in the centre of the teachers' group work. One outcome

of the teachers' intensive intercultural work were the new entrepreneurial ideas created and discussed by means of multiple methods.

Level of skills (i.e. methods and approaches)

The teachers of MAMK, EAL, FTU, and PPU learned not only how to teach innovatively, but also how to learn innovatively while being teachers. The teachers' creative approaches to the innovation-driven entrepreneurship education in the multicultural groups were mutually developed during all the project activities. Approaches and methods of creativity in coaching future/current entrepreneurs were developed. It contributed to a better dissemination of the project results in the partner HEIs. One practical implication of the university collaboration was that, the teachers acquired skills for developing creative methods of entrepreneurship education. For example, the TAMS method was developed by the Finnish and Russian colleagues to develop students' competences of team building and increase their leadership skills by putting them in the role of decision makers in a business environment. Additionally, the teachers enhanced their skills of active learning: they became active learners by knowing their students better through creative workshops and innovative approaches to teaching in general.

During each project seminar, the host university teachers and coaches trained innovative pedagogical skills and innovative methods of the international teacher group. In particular, the teachers' skills of active learning from others were increased in the "give one, take one" exercise organised by the EAL coaches. Approaches of the teachers to solving business tasks were continuously developed in a complementary way during this two-year project. Skills of hands-on and minds-on experience were developed by the Danish partners by means of Lego bricks and Lego®Serious Play®method. Additionally, business-related capabilities of the teachers were developed with Lego®Serious Play®. The teachers' innovative skills were further improved by an open knowledge sharing and a synergy effect that occurred as a result of inter-university collaboration. A promotion of innovative skills of teachers in their home HEIs can be considered successful. For example, the Danish teachers developed the modified 'art lesson' at the EAL Multimedia and IT Department based on the experience in the St. Petersburg NORU activity in February 2015.

Elements of personal creativity and drivers of entrepreneurship such as personal success, success in business, a positive vision, and origins of motivation were considered. A method of fully active references, subconscious experience in goal achievement, a creation of vision, nonverbal communication, and listening skills were trained in the international teacher groups. Additionally, the teachers have improved their cultural awareness, an ability to synthesize, to exploit information process and set goals. Traditional principles of university teachers' work were enriched by the widened concept of innovativeness

through art during the training “Expressive methods in art...” In particular, the teachers’ strengths and weaknesses were assessed and identified through an artful hands-on and minds-on graphical design. In order to outline the single intercultural language of the NORU project partners, various communication tools were employed during the training session in St. Petersburg.

Level of entrepreneurial mindset

The teachers’ entrepreneurial mindset was greatly developed during the project. The teachers have changed their role in a teaching process and became mentors in entrepreneurship education ‘for entrepreneurship’ (instead of just assigning students a passive role during lectures). Additionally, preconditions and practices of the teachers’ inner growth to entrepreneurship were articulated during the project activities. Through changing their entrepreneurial mindset, the teachers gained a wider experience in entrepreneurship teaching and learning as proactive entrepreneurs.

The teachers worked with a new entrepreneurial mindset during the project. A creation of a new mindset was aligned with learning creative entrepreneurial methods (e.g. TIPI concept) and gaining innovative skills. In accordance with the new entrepreneurial mindset, the intercultural teacher groups contributed to the shared learning practices (i.e. the foundation of the synergy between the Finnish, Danish and Russian HEIs). As a result, the teachers of the four partner HEIs constructed their subjective realities of an innovative learning space. The practical examples of “university-industry” collaboration organised by the Danish and Finnish colleagues featured the dynamic entrepreneurship and innovation environment of a new entrepreneurial mindset. The entrepreneurial mindset was found to have strong (inter-)cultural implications. Therefore, a focus on an entrepreneur’s psychology in a different cultural environment was considered critical for developing a new entrepreneurial mindset.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It can be argued that the main goal of the project, to strengthen the network of the four partners, was achieved well. It was followed and recognized already during the project, yet based on the findings of an inquiry sent to the national coordinators of the partner universities, who were also the members of the steering group, it manifested itself at two different levels: inter-university collaboration and international networking inside each university.

The special objective, related to the development of teaching competences of teachers, was also achieved well. Based on the findings, it was achieved at three levels: the level of knowledge, skills and mindset of the teachers. All in all, it can be concluded that the project was a success in terms of the achievement of the objectives from the perspective of the teachers.

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ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENTS

Marja-Liisa Kakkonen and Mikhail Nemilentsev

INTRODUCTION

Two of the specific objectives of the project were related to students' learning. The objectives were formulated as follows: firstly, to promote students' skills to reflect on innovations, and to enhance their entrepreneurial mindset, and secondly, to train students' understanding of value creation for customers and markets. How these objectives were achieved was examined by an inquiry sent to the national contact persons of each partner university of the project who were also the members of the steering group of the project. They were asked to discuss with their colleagues who have taken part in the project and then, to answer the questions and to give arguments and examples for each question. The data was combined and analyzed as a whole text by a content analysis. The findings regarding the two objectives are reported on the following pages.

Development of students' innovative skills and entrepreneurial mindset

Altogether the project had three seminars aimed at developing students' innovative skills and entrepreneurial mindset. The participating students worked in international groups, collaborated actively with the teachers, solved practical business cases for the local Finnish, Danish and Russian small companies. They acquired intercultural knowledge of the entrepreneurship systems in the partner countries, and developed their entrepreneurial mindset by means of various creative methods of teaching and learning. The students acquired entrepreneurial skills and their developed mindset is reported at three interconnected levels: a) the level of students' knowledge; b) the level of students' skills; and c) the level of students' mindset (i.e. students' beliefs and value system feature by the entrepreneurial mindset). These three levels are presented in detail on the following pages.

Level of students' knowledge

The students gained knowledge about the innovative processes, working in cross-cultural teams and value creation. Being active decision-makers, the students were placed in cross-cultural teams and they were to learn about the cultural features of their team members (e.g., in the business case MOM's organised by EAL). Additionally, the students acquired a wide intercultural knowledge about the entrepreneurial and business processes in the partner countries. The students identified their home culture's business stereotypes and analysed their home countries' business culture. In order to improve their intercultural knowledge, the students focused on the intercultural habits, behaviour, attitudes, values, business traditions and etiquette in the intergroup entrepreneurial work.

Level of students' skills

The students developed skills in generating, evaluating and conceptualizing ideas in practice, and handling challenges when working in cross-cultural teams. Further, the students learnt how to create a value for a company. Intercultural learning tasks were conducted during a 24-hour innovative challenge organised by MAMK. As a result, the students' inner growth to entrepreneurship was enhanced. Lego® and Lego SeriousPlay® became a regular part of the learning activities in EAL for the students and was skilfully presented to the Finnish and Russian colleagues. Additionally, the EAL students developed their writing skills: they were trained by the EAL teachers in the joint writing process to trace the results of the NORU international cooperation activities.

New ways of activating students were developed by means of inspiration in a non-traditional classroom environment, an hands-on experience with Lego® bricks, and a multicultural ideation process in Denmark, Finland and Russia. In particular, the Inno-Event practice organised by EAL improved the quality of the students' innovation-driven work. The students received multiple opportunities to learn Lego® serious Play® process in practice and thus developed their 'learning by doing' competences. The Lego® Serious Play® method and MOM's case fostered the 'hand-to-head' value creation by the students in the initial 'idea-generating' phase of the innovation process.

The students strengthened their belief in other participants' potential in contrast with more traditional learning methods with a more passive role of students as learners. Additionally, a method of fully active references presented by FTU and PPU, a subconscious experience in goal achievement, a creation of vision, nonverbal communication, and listening skills were trained in the international teacher and student groups.

Level of students' mindset (i.e. belief)

The first specific objective of the project was to promote students' skills to reflect on innovations and enhance entrepreneurial mindset, and it was aimed to be achieved by arranging courses as a 24 hour challenge. This meant that the students created new ideas and initiatives for a real company with a very tight and intensive schedule. During working in the multicultural teams, they had the chance to enhance their entrepreneurial mindset. At the same time the students were supposed not only to think about their own new ideas, but also that the ideas were also applicable in the business, and therefore the initiatives were expected to create an added value to some extent for the company's customers and markets, which was the second specific objective of the project.

The students' entrepreneurial mindset and innovative competences were enhanced during the workshop "From idea to innovation" organised by MAMK. Additionally, the students' entrepreneurial mindset was evaluated by the Danish, Finnish and Russian teachers by answering specific questions on the students' self-regulated work, and positioning of the student in the learning process. All in all, it can be concluded that the students changed their mindset to some extent by being an active and valuable part of innovative processes and by working in team-based projects.

Development of students' understanding of value creation for customers and markets

In accordance with one of the specific objectives of the project, the project activities were aimed at widening the students' understanding of value creation for customers and markets. Higher university education and in particular the applied university education focuses on the professional development of the students and the close cooperation between the university campus and industry. During the NORU project, the students learned to identify sources and opportunities for value creation for end-users and business customers at various levels. The three identified levels are as follows: a) the level of students' knowledge; b) the level of students' skills; and c) the level of students' mindset (i.e. students' beliefs and value system feature by the entrepreneurial mindset). These three levels are presented in more detail on the following pages.

Level of students' knowledge

The students received practical knowledge about the innovation process and entrepreneurship systems of Finland, Denmark and Russia by means of their personal engagement in the organised project cases and activities. For instance, the Inno-Event organised by EAL helped the students to create an innovative platform for mutually beneficial collaboration between the students and business. In general, the students' theoretical knowledge was integrated with different aspects of enterprises and businesses and especially with the innovative development modelling. The students acquired knowledge about the nature of innovative processes and opportunities for value creation in a multicultural environment. The principles of internationalisation and entrepreneurial development of the Danish enterprise MOM's in the Russian market were analysed in the international student groups. To sum up, it could be specified that the students' knowledge included practical knowledge, theoretical knowledge and cultural knowledge.

Level of students' skills

Innovative skills of the students were developed during every project activity at MAMK, EAL, FTU, and PPU. For example, in a 24-hour workshop organised by MAMK where the students got familiar with the case company's operations and constructed the rationale for the company's international activities. In the innovative camp at MAMK, the students learned how to negotiate in heterogeneous teams under the mentorship of the Danish and Finnish teachers. The students could thus improve their skills in intercultural communication.

With the use of Lego®Serious Play®method in EAL, the students increased their innovation and business performance as well as widened their design and story-telling experience for business tasks. In particular, the Russian students benefited a lot and learned principles of working in team-based projects for real enterprises. The students' understanding of value creation for international customers and markets was achieved by the quest on intercultural analysis of the Russian business culture organised jointly by FTU and PPU.

Level of students' mindset (i.e. belief)

The students' system of belief and their entrepreneurial mindset was developed in a close collaboration with the industry stakeholders (i.e. the 24-hour challenge was organised by MAMK, and the Inno-Event arranged by EAL). A new formed mindset of students enabled their personal and professional development, a better assimilation of the presented creative methods and practices of entrepreneurship education. By means of real-life business tasks prepared by the project partners, the students' gained knowledge about customer logic and the principles of customer-driven value creation. Finally, the multicultural environments presented by the Finnish, Danish and Russian colleagues developed the students' system of beliefs allowing for the visible impact of national cultures on the entrepreneurship and ideation-innovation processes.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It can be argued that all the specific objectives related to the students' learning were achieved well. Especially the 24 hour workshop enhanced their knowledge, skills and mindset of entrepreneurship. The students worked for a real company in three seminars in an intensive way. In each case, the company gave the students a practical challenge which helped them to understand the value creation process in detail.

It can be concluded that although the objectives were achieved well, there are still some aspects to be considered in the future. For example, it might be important to give enough information about the methods and processes in advance and prepare the participating students better for these innovative learning experiences. Furthermore, it seemed that the backgrounds of the participating students varied quite much in terms of their readiness for innovative learning methods. Secondly, it was a good opportunity to have joint programmes for teachers and students, and the hosting university received good feedback on them. However, it was also quite a challenge for the hosting university. If the programme had focused only on the teachers' programme, the hosting university could have arranged it in a different way, and vice versa. The benefits for the participants could have been even better. Thirdly, the appearance of cultural differences was a good learning method for teachers and students. They enriched the seminars in many ways, and the participants learnt a lot from each other. Nevertheless, the cultural aspects could be an even more integral part of the programmes to facilitate the participants' understanding of them.

SELF-EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT BY THE STEERING GROUP

Marja-Liisa Kakkonen, Malin Burström Gandrup, Svetlana Tereshchenko and Tatiana Tereshkina

INTRODUCTION

At the end of the project, it is important to evaluate the implementation and the results of the project in a systematic and constructive way. The good documentation of the activities facilitates an explicit follow-up review of the project. Usually the steering group of the project has a crucial role in the evaluation. The evaluation should be related also to the financial aspects, effectiveness, and practical implications of the project. (Suopajarvi 2013, 13; Keto 2015, 70). The duration of the project was 24 months and it consisted of seven main activities. In order to find out how successful the implementation of the project was, it was evaluated by the steering group during the project and after the project.

The evaluation should support decision-making and development purposes for the future as well. It can be implemented and the information can be collected using different methods. (Suopajarvi 2013, 13). At the end of a project, the most important issue is to evaluate the results and implications of the project (Keto 2015, 71). During the project the feedback was collected from each participant of the seminars which was reported in two previous articles of this publication. In addition, the members of the steering group (i.e. coordinators and responsible persons of each university) had project meetings in each seminar. They also had an active e-mail discussion between the seminars. After the completion of the project the members of the steering group had intensive communication by e-mail in order to complete the budget review, and specify the implications and results of the project. The aim of this article is to report the evaluation results of the whole project made by the steering group.

RESULTS

The results are presented according to the five questions asked from the members of the steering group of the project. The questions were related to the implementation of the project compared with the project plan and with the planned schedule. They were also related to the permanent changes and outcomes of the project and the implications of the project in a long-run.

1. How was the project implemented compared with the project plan?

In general, the project was implemented according to the project plan. It can be argued that the project has been successful, and the cooperation and collaboration among the project partners (HEIs) and the participants has been very positive, rewarding and fruitful. There was a change of the Danish representative during the first year, yet it did not influence the implementation of the project.

Budget

Mamk was responsible for the allocation of the funds to the partners based on the receipts and documentation. In practice, the project manager took care of the follow-up of the budget with the project secretary. The budget has been monitored and reviewed in each seminar by the members of the steering group in detail.

Mobility

The mobility of the project was active. According to the project plan, three staff members travel and take part in six seminars. In fact, the number of the participants was bigger in these seminars. Further, there was one additional seminar (instead of six, seven seminars were organized during the seminar in total). Therefore the total number of the mobility was higher than planned (see Table 1).

According to the project plan, students participate in three seminars: in Mikkeli, Odense, and St. Petersburg. Table 1 illustrates the mobility of the project in detail. It is worth mentioning that 2-4 students and teachers of the host university took part in the seminars: the local students took part in the whole student project and the local staff members participated in the programme during 1-3 days.

TABLE 1. Activities and mobility of the project
*** including 2 only three days mobilities**

Event	Time	Place	Mamk stud.	Mamk prof.	EAL stud.	EAL prof.	PPU stud.	PPU prof.	FTU stud.	FTU prof.
Workshop + seminar	08/13	Mikkeli	0	0	5	4*	3	3	7	6
Teacher training	01/14	Odense	0	5	0	0	0	3	0	3
Workshop + seminar	04/14	Odense	4	5	0	0	4	3	8	4
Teacher training	09/14	Mikkeli	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	3
Teacher training	10/14	St.Pet.	0	5	0	3	0	0	0	0
Workshop + seminar	02/15	St.Pet.	4	3	4	3	0	0	0	0
Final seminar	05/15	Mikkeli	0	0	0	4	0	5	0	3
		Total	8	18	9	18	7	18	15	19

Communication and dissemination of the results

The communication language was English and the communication succeeded quite well during the seminars. Nevertheless, there were also some Russian participants who were not so used to using English as a working language, therefore sometimes a translation was needed. Since the persons were motivated in the participation and interested in the topics, the translation was not a big problem, but it somehow characterized the nature of the seminars. Between the seminars, the e-mail communication was active. Further, the participants were active in writing and publishing articles, and disseminating the good practices and results of the project and its results. There is a list of these articles at the end of the first article of this publication.

2. How was the project implemented in terms of the planned schedule?

The project was implemented according to the planned schedule and the activities of the project were organized as stated in the application. Actually, besides six main activities planned, one additional/complementary seminar was arranged in Mikkeli in September 2014. It was a teacher training session.

3. Did the project achieve permanent changes of daily activities in your university?

All the organizations that have participated in the NORU project have mentioned the project's considerable effect on the entrepreneurial thinking

and the teaching activities at their faculties. However, permanent changes in the organizations is only an issue for the forthcoming years. Nevertheless, the representatives of the Finnish, Danish and Russian higher education institutions have observed a considerable rise in the innovation activities and learning capabilities amongst the participant teachers and R&D staff members.

The Danish and Russian representatives have identified an important role of intercultural communication, whereas the Finnish representatives have considerably developed channels for dissemination of the project-generated knowledge and sources for growth of the internationalization activities in the after-project stage. All the participants have become more sensitive in terms of cultural understanding and cultural issues that dominate the development of international projects such as NORU.

The students of all four participating organizations as well as the teachers have learned the principles of intercultural group work and various techniques of problem solving. The learning of innovative teaching methods and their use in teaching have been eye-opening experiences for most of the participating teachers and therefore it indicates changes in their teaching methods in the future. As the general outcome, internationalization of the education process has succeeded in the curriculum activities of all project partners. The organizations have identified the development need for better dissemination of the project results in the after-project period. In addition, the overall success of the project has become an additional drive for submitting new project applications in the future with the same of similar set of participants.

4. How have the outcomes and results been utilised in your organisation?

The outcomes and results of the project have been utilized in each university during the project already. For example the LEGO Serious Play workshop has given an added value in regards to using LEGO as a part of the learning activities in each university. The usage of LEGO, post-its, pens etc. have been integrated in teaching activities and been used both to get the students active (break the traditional classroom situation where a teacher talks and students listen) and to illustrate theory in a practical way. In addition, improved competences of academic writing have increased the number of the articles which have been written by the participants all in all, not only about and for this project, and the competences of writing academic writing have been transferred to the students since they have been co-writers of articles in the project. In EAL, the 'art lesson' organized in St Petersburg has in a modified way been implemented for the students at the Multimedia and IT Department.

5. What are the implications of the project in a long-run?

According to the joint perceptions of all the members of the steering group, organizing workshops for teachers about the best practices of innovative teaching of entrepreneurship in different countries, we create a basis for future cooperation in this field between four universities. By doing this, we are able to get to know the innovative approaches in teaching entrepreneurship in partner universities, differences in culture, and business culture. It can be argued that the participants gained more knowledge and focus on cultural differences as a benefit for entrepreneurial and innovative processes, as well as are more focused on the entrepreneurial mind-set.

Further, organizing workshops for students we are able to understand that these methods can be effectively used for multicultural groups of students of four universities. We can continue organizing such workshops for the groups of students of four universities. This will be the basics for sustainability of the project.

Finally, one indicator of the genuine intention for future collaboration is that the next meeting will be in St. Petersburg in November 2015. There will be two Danish participants and two Finnish participants to meet several Russian colleagues. In St. Petersburg there will be a conference in which participants will present their research papers followed by a one day workshop for the discussion and planning the future initiatives. The three-day meeting will be finished by getting more familiar with the impressive Russian culture and cultural places in St. Petersburg all together. All in all, the project has contributed to an increased interest of the participants for international cooperation in general, and the collaboration of the four partners involved in this project in specific.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation of the project was based on the documents and perceptions of the members of the steering group during the project. The project has been successful since it has strengthened the network of four higher education institutions, enhanced students' entrepreneurial mindset and understanding of value creation for customers and markets, and increased staff members' entrepreneurial teaching competences. Furthermore, the project has ensured sustainability, not only through the dissemination of the project results but also through the continued commitment and cooperation among the four higher education institutions.

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PART II

**– VARIOUS TOPICS RELATED TO
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT**

GRÖNA KULOR

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BUSINESS TRAINING AS MEANS FOR INCREASING QUALITY OF HUMAN CAPITAL OF HIGH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE FRAME OF NORU PROJECT

Svetlana Tereshchenko, Evgeniya Velikina, Sergey Semenov and Tatiana Tereshkina

INTRODUCTION

Innovations and human capital were the most popular themes for discussion between scientists during the last thirty years were. This period can be characterized by quick changes in external environment and high level of competitiveness in business. That's why a lot of organizations are looking for new opportunities to raise effectiveness in using resources. Business is made on the base of three economic resources: land, labour, and capital. Land is the physical resource used to produce goods or services, labour is the human manpower that transforms the resource into consumer products, and capital is the money used to purchase both. Within all this there is the important economic concept that a company's development nowadays is closely connected with the effectiveness of using of labour or human capital. The importance of investment in human capital now is estimated more than investments in equipment, buildings and other assets. Investments in human capital are connected with its development that can be organized in the forms of training and education.

Thus, human capital development is also very important for the higher educational institutions. Teachers form the human capital of the universities. The role of them is very high in raising the quality of education. Teachers need to improve skills, to get new knowledge or update existing knowledge. Trainings, which are very effectively used in education for companies as a method for human capital development, can help higher educational institutions to develop teachers' competences.

In the article, it will be examined how trainings, which were organized in the frame of NORU project, influenced on the human capital of higher educational institutions, which participated in the project. It will be shown which skills of the teachers can be developed by trainings.

HUMAN CAPITAL IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Human capital is a company asset, but it is not listed on the balance sheet. Human capital is all of the creative skills and knowledge embodied in the employees of a company - skills that bring economic value to the business. It knows "how-to" of producing goods and services in the most efficient manner.

The term human capital was first used by a number of economists in the late 1950's and early 1960's. They described human capital in terms of labour used to produce manufactured goods. Others, like economist Theodore Schultz (Schultz, 1993) expanded the term to include a value for human potential. The idea is that human capital, like any other type of capital, can be utilized more efficiently and thus lead to improvements in production quality and quantity. In a wider use of the term, mostly by economists (Baron & Armstrong, 2007), human capital is the collective wealth of knowledge, talents, training, skills, judgment and accumulated experiences for a population. A. Smith (Smith, 1976) states that improvements to human capital through training, education and experience make the individual enterprise more profitable, but also add to the collective wealth of society. Thus human capital of high educational institutions is based on the creative skills and knowledge of the teachers.

Human capital theory stresses the significance of education and training as the key to participation in the new global economy. In one of the recent reports, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development. Secretary-General's report to Ministers, 2014), for example, claims that the radical changes to the public and private sectors of the economy introduced over recent years in response to globalization will be severe and disturbing to many established values and procedures. The OECD also boldly asserts that internationalism is a means to improve the quality of education. In keeping with human capital theory, it has been argued that the overall economic performance of the OECD countries is increasingly more directly based upon their knowledge stock and their learning capabilities. Another OECD report explains internationalism in higher education as a component of globalization

In order to enhance human development in the general society, it is necessary to apply the theory of human capital to educational systems. By such means, productivity is enhanced and sustained based on an increased and diversified labour force. The contribution of education to economic growth and development occurs through its ability to increase the productivity of an existing labour force in various ways. Therefore, economic appraisal of educational investment projects should take into account certain criteria.

Education plays a great and significant role in the development of human capital in high educational institutions. This augments individual's human capital and leads to higher quality of education for society. It increases their chances of university in the educational market, and allows them to reap pecuniary and non-pecuniary returns and gives them opportunities to be competitive.

TRAINING METHODS: THEORY, AND APPROACHES

Training is usually called a short-term course of active learning of any skills, knowledge, social attitudes, psychological receptions (Bakli & Keipl, 2002). To make the right choice of training and provide high results of the education effectiveness, it is necessary to know, what types of trainings exist, what the difference between them is, what techniques of their carrying out can be used.

Trainings that create skills are the most widespread in the business environment; they develop certain abilities of participants: negotiation technology, sales technology and many others. Psychological trainings are trying to make changes in the participants' minds: to make people more confident, to help people struggle with bad habits or complexes and so on. Social and psychological trainings develop skills of interpersonal communication, help to change social attitudes: learn to behave correctly in conflict situations, to argue, to defend your own point of view and many other.

Business trainings are used to make the company's work more effective: for example, teach time-management, techniques of administrative decisions adoption.

The following techniques of trainings are used: case –examination of the define situation and finding the optimum decisions; business game – modelling of the concrete situations and finding the optimum decisions; role games – playing the different roles and situations by the training participants; group discussion – the discussion of different tasks, situations for finding the right decision; brainstorming – method of the stimulation of creativity, creative activity.

Trainings can be organized in groups and individually – depend on the number of participants. By a development technique trainings can be standard, “under the idea” and “under the order”.

Naturally, efficiency indicators of the trainings developed “under the order” are much higher than standard.

There is one more method of personnel education – coaching. The main difference of coaching is that standard situations are not examined, but concrete tasks from life or work of the participants, and under the trainer's guide the necessary skills for result achievement are developed and actually this result is being achieved. First of all, the following things influence on training efficiency: right choice of the type, theme, program and training technique, competent task's definition, choice of the trainer, participants motivation. There are following indicators of training efficiency: reaction, assimilation, behaviour and result.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF TRAININGS ORGANIZED IN THE NORU PROJECT

Two workshops were organized in October 2014 and in February 2015 in St. Petersburg in the frame of NORU project. The training was organized by business trainers of Gustav Kaiser Training International. This training was devoted to implementation of the third aim of the project - to increase the entrepreneurial teaching competences in multicultural environment. Training for the teachers in multicultural communications was organized.

During three days in October 2014 the participants were offered training on basic moments in intercultural communications. Among them were: practical using of three basic laws of influence, understanding of what protects from misfortune and stupidity, how to measure the influence with money, why many people do everything in a right way but don't achieve success, who is a chance person and who is a problem person, how to pass the experience and knowledge to be apprehended with gratitude, preparation is the basis of everything; how to find the characteristic features that I like in other people.

The project participants took part in "North-South-East" moderation with pleasure, having realized that despite cultural distinctions, they could work amicably and effectively in one team. "Paper clips" moderation showed how difficult is to construct conversation with unfamiliar and frequently with close familiar person!

The participants of the project learned the most effective opportunities to solve most of the problems of communication. They saw that a lot of problems can be easily solved if a day begins with a question "Why am I enjoying myself?" The person who is not able to find reasons to enjoy himself anymore can't be effective in his activities. This question is beginning of every motivation. The question "Why am I enjoying myself?" is the key to energy.

RESULTS OF TRAINING, ORGANIZED IN THE FRAME OF NORU PROJECT, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF BUSINESS TRAINERS AND PARTICIPANTS

During the training that was organized in October 2014 such skills of the participants were developed from the point of view of the participants of the training:

1. The skills to communicate in our group, with students, bosses, and colleges.
2. Work in a team. The participants consider that only together we can achieve the success in business, in connection with partners, colleges, and clients.
3. The skills of preparation work, because according to experience 90 % of success is preparation.

The participants of the training got answers to such questions as:

1. What do we consider to be the reason for our personal success? We want to create the unity of visions in order to fill our head with positive visions, visions with so much strength, that they will lead us to our goals. We do not work with simple recipes but with strong and effective visions.

2. How to answer to the most important question: “Why am I enjoying myself?” This is the beginning of every motivation. The question “Why am I enjoying myself?” is the key to energy.
3. What does the achievement of above-average result depend on? Which skills do people have who have more success than the average?
4. How can you make a positive vision of your vis-à-vis and to know what you about the other person? Here we are talking about every person we meet in our business life.
5. How does a successful entrepreneur influence on others and how is an entrepreneur able “to set the conveyor belt into motion”.

During the training, the main theme was communication between people of different nationalities. The trainer tried to show why it is so important. This is the most necessary in building business in every country. Teachers got to know what communication means – is it only the language that is used or it is something else.

Techniques and methods which were used during the training are widely applied in the whole world and they proved to be perfectly working during more than fifty years. During the training the teachers developed skills in the creation of visions that leads us to goals, conscious listening skills, asking questions skills, skills of nonverbal communication. The trainers also showed the teachers what signals of personalities are used when we communicate with others and what techniques are the most effective in our communication.

In the workshop, organized in February 2015, the participants learned very important key points such as:

1. Visions determine behaviour

The unity of visions is created in order to fill a person’s head with positive visions, visions with so much strength, that they will lead to the goals. Victories are won by a person in his or her mind. During the training there was not work with simple recipes but with strong and effective visions.

2. It all depends on how we influence!

Successful people use the laws of influence: We influence always. It takes equally a lot or a little energy to influence 100% positively or 100% negatively. The influence on the subconscious dominates and iceberg laws: Everything has at least two sides. The first impression decides whether plus or minus points are collected. The subconscious works like an adding machine.

3. *It is necessary to practice to be effective in communication.*

Business training helped to improve effectiveness of human capital of high educational institutions and to improve the high educational institution performance. The participants stressed that the business training was useful for their development. They found that they could improve their group work skills, communicational skills, and presentation skills. As the main results of training for teachers can be mentioned: opening of own internal reserves, mastering new communication skills and convincing methods, more effective use of available administrative resources, practical skills of mentoring (coaching), creation of an effective control system allowing to put and reach highest results, increasing mutual understanding in the work team.

All this allows saying that the skills of the teachers became better. So during NORU project teachers as the human capital of the higher educational institutions were developed a lot. Partner universities are interested in such a development because it allows improving the quality of education. Received new skills and knowledge by teachers allow for the universities to be more flexible to the needs of business life and society. For the partner higher educational institutions development of human capital also means that more skilled teachers will be able to implement innovative approaches in teaching. On base of this there is a real opportunity to raise the quality of education.

The business trainers stressed that it was quite interesting to work with a multicultural group and especially the group of teachers. They mentioned that the result of training was not the same as they had, when working with sales people or business representatives.

CONCLUSIONS

On base of analysis of the results of training of teachers in NORU project can be stressed that using such a method for high educational institutional personnel is very effective. It allows improving skills, renovating existing knowledge and receiving new knowledge. Moreover training allows improving communicational skills of teachers. During the training session such stages of human capital development were implemented as: training, education, getting knowledge, getting skills.

Using training to improve human capital helps higher educational institutions to create a competitive advantage, as when they train teachers to be innovative and to have updated knowledge, they make a basis for raising the quality of education. More and more students would like to study in such higher educational institutions. Such universities can be also more open to the demands of the society. Organizing such trainings higher educational institutions create a good opportunity to teachers to be creative and innovative. They can develop their skills not only in the professional sphere but also in the sphere of communication.

The intercultural communicational skills of the teachers were improved during the trainings that were organized during NORU project. All improvements in teachers' skills and knowledge lead to raising the quality of human capital. Such a development is very important nowadays because the world and the economics become more and more global. This leads to the improvement of quality of education in the higher educational institutions and their competitiveness in the educational market.

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INTERNATIONALISATION IN EDUCATION FROM THE MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: NORU INTERNATIONAL PROJECT AND PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Mikhail Nemilentsev

INTRODUCTION

Internationalisation and acceptance of another culture are both long-term processes, which require sufficient home upbringing, continuous learning and self-management as well as necessary professional skills. This article analyses the criteria of international development in teaching and education from the intercultural perspective. Additionally, experiences in upbringing, education and work are considered. In particular, an effect of intercultural background on the success of international project NORU as the playground for collaboration between Finnish, Danish and Russian higher educational institutes is studied from the pedagogical and project perspectives. As for the theoretical framework, internationalisation and its meaning in the higher educational institutions is considered.

Integration in a new community requires always a proper attitude and flexibility in the learning and work processes. At the initial stage of integration, diligence in real life and hardworking in familiarising with new principles are typical for overcoming cultural and other shocks during inevitable life changes. Significant changes are obvious at the workplace compared to a person's home environment. For instance, differences in the calendar, a degree of flexibility in the work or study schedule influences on the human cultural integration in the new work or study environment. In other words, principles, according to which a person's education or teaching tasks are arranged, may and would probably differ between cultures. Cooperation of people with foreign cultural

backgrounds leads also to critical changes. However, the direction of changes depends primarily from a person's capability of opening new opportunities while fulfilling demanding duties and transforming critical situations into positive consequences.

In addition to the teacher's and project roles, my personal education background in the St. Petersburg State Economic University and Jyväskylä School of Business and Economics is investigated. Through the lenses of NORU project, my researcher's, lecturer's and economist's work experiences in St. Petersburg, Jyväskylä and Mikkeli are discussed. In the conclusion of the article, aspects of multicultural implications, which are based on the three-year NORU project activities, are presented for the development purposes of university teachers' and project staff's responsibilities.

INTERNATIONALISATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Presently the standards of polytechnic and higher education acquire more common traits (Koulutus ja tutkimus vuosina 2011-2016, 3). Teacher curricula all over the world target primarily at developing international pedagogical structures and integrating international approaches in teaching. In accordance with the Bologna process, separate activities of European universities are merged together. In general, it could be mentioned that a university of the present time and its study system are built in a way that both teachers and students can acquire diverse international experience (Lindberg 2011, 29-30).

Participation in international conferences and symposiums could be named as one of the critical activities for teachers. Additionally, a qualified teacher or university staff member is expected to organise or participate in multiple intensive weeks and integration activities together with foreign higher education institutions (Jasman & McIlveen 2011, 119). In turn, students aspire for international study exchanges and foreign internships from multiple available opportunities. Students are generally interested in the intercultural workshops both at the home university and abroad. Student union activities are another type of appealing opportunities for younger students.

Almost in every European university there are faculties and colleges with some international activities (Koulutus ja tutkimus vuosina 2011–2016, 10). Depending on the study programme and field of knowledge, internationally recognised lecturers and researchers are invited for carrying out some joint activities together with the host university. Depending on their study progress, students get opportunities to go for an international exchange during one semester or even a whole academic year. At the same time, teachers' exchanges are considered as the significant way of internationalisation in the academic world (Lindberg 2011, 31).

In order to develop international teaching skills, university employees and other academic experts could plan course tasks in the international markets and cases with prominent large enterprises (Seikkula-Leino et al. 2010, 120-122). One of the most important objectives of these kinds of tasks is to analyse work-oriented cases in local and foreign businesses. For instance, development of a marketing plan, calculation of financial assets, and renewal of economic strategy could be examples of an international task. In particular, international cases are mostly accepted by students if multinationals or leading national business environments are taken into analysis (Kettunen et al. 2013, 338).

If a teacher has a direct connection with a local enterprise, students will receive more field-specific knowledge about enterprises' present challenges and prospects, for instance, in relation to initiation of foreign trade operations or development of current operations in a new national market (Lozano-Garcia et al. 2008, 257). As for the content of the course, weekly lectures include real business problems, by means of which students acquire expert competences. Students learn by concrete examples of the really functioning businesses that widen their evidence base for the professional field.

Formation and further development of the international academic skills depend on a wide variety of factors, in particular on the present of post-graduate or doctoral studies (Kettunen et al. 2013, 333). It could be however mentioned that the role of a scientific supervisor should not be underestimated. A supervisor influences on the long-term occupation of a doctoral student. The above-mentioned collaboration can start at the stage when a student works on his first scientific article and prepares for a doctoral or generally scientific conference either in the home country or abroad. The best and most active doctoral students are awarded with personal scholarships and are sent additionally for the international scientific exchange programs. In general, foreign research work helps a young researcher to engage personally in the inter-university networks or to become a connecting element between the earlier separate universities by preparing several scientific papers with the joint authorship.

INTERNATIONALISATION OF TEACHING COMPETENCES: TRIPS TO ODENSE AND ST. PETERSBURG

This part analyses three trips within the NORU project between the spring 2014 and winter 2015 in Odense (Denmark) and St. Petersburg (Russia), and investigates the author's own role from the international project perspective. The article's utmost objective is to describe project tasks and programs of the above-mentioned work tips and find out the source of learning in the highly multicultural and inter-university environment. By means of personal participation in the project activities and organised workshop, it became possible to get familiar with the applied and practical methods of teaching, develop collaborative learning patterns, and increase personal and group competences in the collaborative project work.

Working at Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences requires generally more active and highly direct interaction with other people. A few years of the author's research experience can help analyse the current goals of NORU project for identifying development needs of the home university (Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences - MUAS) in the light of future academic and practical conferences and international seminars. In addition to personal considerations of the author about NORU project, general project activities of the Business Management department of MUAS are analysed. NORU project's work trips, programs and participants' detailed roles are presented on the subsequent order. All in all, it can be pointed that project experience, teaching and student processes, and project consequences for MUAS are considered from the research, development and innovative perspectives.

Odense trip in April 2014

Odense trip was the third major activity of the NORU project and was organized in April 2014. It was the first international project event for me since I started as a lecturer in MUAS. The main objective of the trip was to exchange experiences and knowledge about innovative and entrepreneurial education and the best practices in the international activities of the Finnish, Danish and Russian higher education institutions. The Danish partner Erhvervsakademiet Lillebælt Tietgen Business College presented its own view on the development of a higher education institutions at the national and international levels. The Finnish and Russian guests were invited to discuss possible development opportunities of its study curricula. In particular, one of the principal questions was to improve the currently used approaches to teaching innovation competences and innovation management disciplines.

The Finnish delegation consisted of the Head of Business Management Department of MUAS Marja-Liisa Kakkonen and lecturers Sami Heikkinen and Mikhail Nemilentsev. MUAS was also represented by the members of the Forestry Department – lecturers Helena Halonen and Johanna Jalkanen. Apart from the teachers, two business management students and two students from the Forestry Department participated in the trip to Odense.

During the three seminar days, teachers and students followed different programs. However, they worked together during the first day. As for the methodological topic of the innovative teaching and studying, Lego Serious Play (LSP) was presented. LSP was described as the innovative learning method, and its theoretical and practical implications were presented by the Danish business expert. It should be added that the staff members from the partner HEIs participated together with the international students during the first seminar day in Odense. Besides one Odense enterprise Mom's presented its own innovative product (a frying-aggregate with a low percentage of the fat used). By the time of the activity the enterprise was interested in the Russian market and especially in the development of a sustainable marketing strategy.

For the case study's purposes, students were divided into four-person international groups and they collaborated during the second and third seminar days. At the same time, the Finnish and Russian teachers were guided by the Danish business and academic representatives with the multimedia department of the partner Erhvervsakademiet Lillebælt. After the initial tour at the multimedia department, the teaching staff developed innovative activities at their own departments and shared diverse opinions in the joint discussion afterwards. During the third day of the seminar, the students made presentations of their case study with Mom's, while teachers visited the Danish largest techno-park and became familiar with the business incubator's operations. In general, an innovative environment and renewal processes in higher education institutions were the central topics during the Danish visit.

Odense trip – the author's role and experiences

The teachers were responsible for the results of the students' accomplishments in the seminar and group work. The Danish, Finnish and Russian representatives discussed presented technologies and study methods and methods' applicability in the home universities during the trip. The members of MUAS were particularly interested in the reconsideration of the current study program. The author, in his turn, planned how it would be possible to integrate the considered topics in the taught courses within the Business Management program in MUAS. In addition, the MUAS representatives considered together international scientific and pedagogical joint activities with the partner universities.

One of the most impressive parts of the seminar in Odense was Lego Serious Play (LSP) – especially practical possibilities in the use of the method. The general interest of the teachers and students in the applicability of LSP method is based on the simultaneous simplicity of its practical implementation and generalizability of the derived results with the use of LSP method. Lego blocks are familiar almost to every adult and particularly every child. With the help of Lego constructive elements, it is possible to model both real and imaginary situations. People's good awareness of Lego functionality is also connected with the visual building process. Lego blocks represent an innovative learning method, since the cognition process continues during the whole construction process. In other words, Lego blocks help to build a subjective reality.

Odense trip – the 1st day

Tasks changed from the personal impressions and development needs of one's own ideas to the work-related issues. The examples of the tasks used during the first day in Odense were the design planning of a radically new motor sledge apparatus in an international company and applied marketing researches for Mom's case company with the use of Lego technique.

When teachers and students acted in the international groups, every member had an equal opportunity to present his or her viewpoint and tell the personal opinion by means of Lego blocks. Words were followed by blocks and vice versa, which helped to integrate both introverts as well as extroverts into the constructive process of the reality's creation. In other words, LSP method developed cultural expertise of the Finnish and Russian guests guided by the Danish experts. It is worth saying that the Danish university students (composed although by the international Erasmus students) were experiencing the same Lego method for the Mom's and many other cases. However, their knowledge of the LSP method was at least one degree deeper compared to that of the Finnish and Russian representatives.

The interaction of the Finnish, Danish and Russian students was surprisingly effective in the solution of Mom's design tasks. To start with, each team had four students of the higher education institutions. Certain problems occurred among the students due to the lack of communication skills. Additionally, the national ways of dealing with the real business cases were obvious, but differences were subsequently managed by the team members. It became clear from the three-day group work that the Danish and Finnish students possessed more skills and experience in dealing with real-work tasks.

At the same time, the Russian students were more genuinely interested in the group-work learning pattern. One of the defining factors of such interest can be found in the lower average age of the Russian students in comparison with the Finnish and Danish representatives. Additionally, the traditions of the Soviet and Russian education have always stressed the theoretical and research significance followed by practical skills, while the Scandinavian universities have always been renowned for the applied knowledge and competences, especially common among universities of applied sciences.

Based on the collected students' feedback, Mom's company task brought a particular use from the learning viewpoint. There were however certain obstacles in the group work, in particular at the planning stage when Mom's machine was designed for the Russian and Finnish markets. During the three-day interaction period, students worked on international marketing planning. The cultural views on the Mom's opportunities in the Russian strong competitive environment and marketing planning issues were explicitly analysed by all the student groups.

Odense trip – the 2nd day

During the second day of the seminar in Odense, the Finnish and Russian colleagues used innovative routines at the multimedia department of Erhvervsakademiet Lillebælt. The international representatives received an unforgettable experience of the Danish applied education, entrepreneurial pedagogical culture, innovative methods of 24/7 effectiveness, and the most fresh tools of ICT field that could be gradually integrated in the teaching and study curricula and daily R&D work at the home faculties both in Finland and Russia. The multimedia environment was arranged in a way that the walls of certain classrooms were flexible and easily adjustable for the learning or work purposes. The freer format of studies 24/7 used by the Danish partner university was in a better access to the real-work business and municipality projects. It should be pointed in conclusion of the second day impressions that the Danish students participate in week- or month-long work-related projects already from the first year of their bachelor programs, which could mean the priority of practical knowledge acquisition over classical theoretical-practical or solely theoretical patterns of learning knowledge in the higher education institutions.

Odense trip – the 3rd day

During the third day of the seminar in Odense, the Danish largest technological park and adjacent business incubator opened their walls for the international delegates. The Danish entrepreneurs and representatives of the Danish public sector told about the effective patterns of long-term collaboration between universities, businesses and community on the example of Odense and its suburban areas. One of the most memorized examples was an innovative and user-driven hospital. The Finnish and Russian university staff members were guided, for instance, how it is possible to develop a user orientation with the home engineering devices while helping disabled people to construct a functionally and easily managed home premises.

The Danish colleagues also showed to their international colleagues how start-up enterprises and potential entrepreneurs can use leased facilities more effectively. In Finland, for instance, Protomo organisation offers free or low-cost facilities for young entrepreneurs and just teams of adventurers unless their business idea starts working and their company is registered. Quite unexpectedly, the Finnish and Russian teachers were invited to observe the Danish national competition of child entrepreneurship that was organised during the last day of the Odense seminar in all the secondary and high schools of Denmark. As for the author's personal opinion on the Danish school environment, it was freer compared to the Finnish school environment and much more liberated compared to the Russian school system. The students' presentations on the Mom's internationalisation plans finished the three day program.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the interaction of the Danish, Finnish and Russian students brought value added to each of the partner universities and helped Mom's business to reconsider its internationalisation plans. Solutions in the students' presentations gave a possibility to learn the Russian business environment and Russian corporate culture in greater details. It was observed that the Danish and especially Finnish students benefited from learning the basics of the foreign culture and compared the principles of economic activities with different Scandinavian examples.

St. Petersburg project trip in October 2014

St. Petersburg trip in October 2014 was connected with the fourth activity according to the international NORU project. The activity was exclusively designed for university staff members with the common topic as international communication. Marja-Liisa Kakkonen, Reijo Honkonen and Mikhail Nemilentsev were the delegates from the MUAS Business Management department, while Kirsi Itkonen and Johanna Jalkanen departed from the MUAS Forestry Department. The participation of guests in the study and cultural programs helped them to become deeper familiar with the Russian business culture and social life.

The lecture about the intercultural communication techniques was held on the first seminar day. The guests and host teachers sought for cultural differences and similarities of their business and national cultures in small international groups. Business trainer Evgenia Velikina from Gustav Käser Training Rus company acted as a lecturer during the first two days. The second trainer from the same consulting company organised a strategic game “South-North-East”. With the help of the game, the participants trained intercultural communication and management competences.

The seminar’s evening program is worth analysing, because it covers another side of the Russian culture and communication. For instance, there was a well-organised trip to the St. Petersburg remarkable palaces like the Hermitage and Iusupov Palace. During the evening visits, topics of intercultural communication and its applicability in the higher education universities’ study curricula were under discussion.

During the third seminar day, four partner universities presented their research results and the best practices of the Finnish, Danish and Russian cases were analysed in the intercultural teams. Possible ways for the after-project cooperation were also discussed in the last seminar day.

St. Petersburg trip 2014 – own role and reflections

St. Petersburg trip gave the author a remarkable experience from the intercultural perspective, since the author has the double citizenship, and a long study and work experience in St. Petersburg. During the trip, the author tried to be helpful for the Finnish, Danish and Russian staff members. Due to the obvious differences of the study systems and business culture in Russia and the Scandinavian countries, interpreting tasks were often required from the author. Under the supervision of the head of MUAS Department of Business Management Marja-Liisa Kakkonen, the Finnish team received necessary guidance in terms of the Russian culture and language. In some particular cases, the author served also as the “ambassador” between the Finnish and Russian patterns of education and intercultural communication.

A new familiarization with the Russian education system after getting a considerable study and work experience in Finland was not an easy process for the author. It was required to assess the Russian higher education infrastructure again due to existing differences at the bachelor and master degree programs. The principal differences were not only limited by the foreign languages’ competences between the Russian and Scandinavian delegates. The largest share of intercultural differences during the seminar were connected with the principles of group work and ways of communication when some foreign members are involved in the collaboration process.

Content of the seminar days in St. Petersburg (October 2014)

The first seminar day started in the St. Petersburg State Forest Technical University. Two Russian coaches lectured and practiced topics of intercultural communication. The theoretical material was equally supplemented by the rich Danish, Finnish and Russian examples of the presently effective strategies of learning and communication in the national and international environment. The whole training was done according to the Swiss methodology, which is apparently different from the most dominant Russian educational system and its entrepreneurial education principles. From the first and main question of the given lecture “What pleads myself?” it became clear that the Western and not the traditional Russian values would be the case for discussion. Additionally, the point of pleasant attitude or satisfaction in life in general are not general points in the Russian or Scandinavian environment. People in these cultures are supposed to work hard and decently in order to judge about the life’s success only at the later stages of personal development. Religious dimensions of culture could be more studied in this respect together with the presented patterns of intercultural communication.

The lack of free Wi-Fi connection complicated the daily work routines of the Danish and Finnish colleagues to some extent. On the other side, it has increased the volume of interuniversity live communication and collaboration during the discussion round tables and breaks between the lecture activities. It is one of the development issues of the education system in Russia so far. However, the author has observed how many changes in the Russian education system have been made over the last 10-15 years. The progress in the unification of the Russian education system with the foreign counterparts is obvious. There are however multiple dimensions that could be corrected in the near future.

The Russian teachers have become much more open and high-hierarchy relations are no longer supported in the intercultural collaboration practices. It is worth mentioning that the Finnish and Danish delegations had mostly teachers and R&D staff members, while the largest share of the Russian representatives were education managers and heads of departments. However, the seminar featured a low-hierarchy and friendly discussion principles in all international or national groups during the teachers' joint work and exercises.

During three days of the well-organised seminar in St. Petersburg, the Finnish and Danish delegates became more familiar with the Russian mentality and education traditions. The foreign visitors had multiple opportunities to visit museums and palaces, walk along the St. Petersburg central streets learning more than 300 year-old traditions, listening to the historical viewpoints of the Russian partner universities, speaking about the future project plans and R&D collaboration also in the information environment.

St. Petersburg project trip in February 2015

A three-day international seminar was organised in Saint Petersburg in February 2015. There were Danish, Finnish and Russian participants from four partner higher education institutions. In contrast to the previous October 2014 visit to Saint Petersburg, the seminar programme involved both teachers and students. The Russian business culture and intercultural communications were chosen as the main topic of the seminar. The programme was multisided and it consisted of the study programme, workshops and social events such as visits to museums, drawing and making decorate art objects. It could be mentioned that innovative ways of teaching and mentoring were explained through art methods.

In addition to the traditional forms of collaboration reflected in the previous activities of the NORU project, a Russian representative of the international consulting company told about practical techniques of effective international/intercultural negotiations. The participants trained these techniques in national as well as international groups.

St. Petersburg trip 2015 – content of the seminar days

The first day of the seminar took place in the FTU university, where the weekly task for the students was presented with the detailed instructions on how the task should be completed. After providing students with the instructions and task, they got familiar with their international groups. Due to the unplanned delay in the arrival of the Danish colleagues, the culture programme of the first day was cancelled.

During the second day of the seminar, the teachers and students worked in different places and with different programmes. FTU university was again the host of all the activities. The teachers analysed the entrepreneurial higher education environment all together trying to delineate their specific national characteristics. The students, in turn, participated in the lecture of the specialist from Saimaa University of Applied Sciences about intercultural communication. Since they worked together in the international student groups, knowledge of various cultures in fulfilling their task was one of the key preconditions.

In the afternoon programme, teachers and students visited the excursion in the Ethnography Museum as well as participated in creative workshop. The workshop's main idea was to make a rose from birch bark. The task was guided by the Russian specialist of the Ethnography Museum. Her instructions were translated into English and her expert help was always provided when it was required. After the workshop, the Danish, Finnish and Russian students searched for the indications of the Russian business environment as the part of their week task. Additionally, they collected knowledge on the Russian traditions that could be utilised in the business context.

In the third seminar day, the teachers and students worked again together in PPU university. In the morning session, the students prepared their presentations in the computer class in accordance with the seminar programme. The teachers, in turn, participated in the art seminar. Under the supervision of the renowned artists (the Russian couple), the Finnish, Danish and Russian teachers learned to draw their feelings and how to apply drawing techniques in the teaching process. The students' presentations received positive feedback from the Russian as well as Finnish and Danish partners.

In conclusion it could be stated that St. Petersburg trip was a beneficial experience for the Finnish team. The Finnish delegation got deeper familiar with the Russian business culture. The students received much information on the practical experience of the Russian businesses. In addition to that, the teachers analysed culture-bound innovative methods in teaching from a new art perspective.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Research and development work, participation in international conferences and workshops, learning foreign languages and cultures, establishment and further development of teaching and research networks, elaboration of teaching methods as well as familiarization with real business activities on the concrete examples of local or international enterprises influences positively on students' and teachers' international pedagogical competences. Another objective of the present paper was to analyse three trips to Odense and St. Petersburg in 2014-2015 as parts of the NORU project and present the author's reflections on the international teachers' and students' profile and its development in the intercultural environment.

In general, participation in national and international research, development and innovative activities add invaluable experience of employees. In the above-presented activities within the NORU project, cultural and intercultural aspects in education and teaching were analysed from the learning perspective. In other words, MUAS's development needs for the future scientific and practical project activities were taken into consideration. It should be however mentioned that the given evaluations and decisions have a strong subjective nature based on the author's opinion. From another viewpoint, a subjective position of the author answers the article's objective, in particular personal reflection of the project trips within the NORU international project. All in all, it can be concluded that by means of subsequent analysis of three NORU trips, the development needs of MUAS, partner universities and its staff were considered.

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SOCIAL PENETRATION IN INTERCULTURAL NORU STUDENT WORK GROUPS: RESULTS FROM A QUALITATIVE PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

Peter Storm-Henningsen, Elena Luiza Papara and Linda Avdeicuka

INTRODUCTION

There is currently a major debate about intercultural learning, especially relating to innovative teaching methods and entrepreneurial activities in across cultures (see e.g. O'Grady 2012, Cuyjet, Howard-Hamilton & Cooper 2010 and Carroll & Ryan 2005). One of the themes discussed is how to make cultural exchange in order to create intercultural learning. With the purpose of making these activities successful, it seemed obvious that the notion of social penetration needs to be considered, as it is normally supposed to be a central component of group integration.

At a workshop in St. Petersburg, that took place Monday, February 16 to Wednesday February 18, 2015, we set off to investigate how social penetration in an intercultural group of students from Russia, Finland and Denmark might befall. The workshop was part of the Nordic-Russian project (NORU, see Kakkonen 2014, 7-11), and as we were all participating in the workshop ourselves, we were resolved to do the investigation as a participatory action research study, in order to obtain data that could yield an understanding of social penetration among students from these three countries.

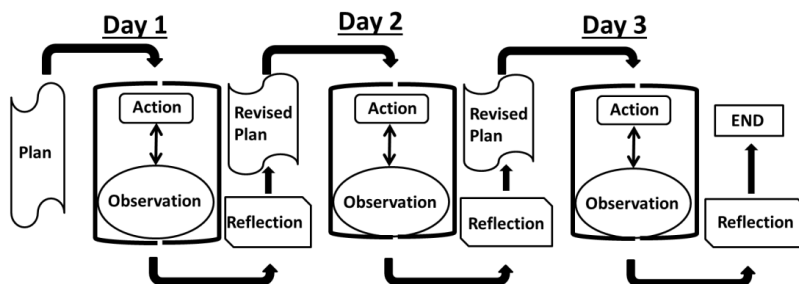
We believed the students from Finland and Denmark would share a common identity as Scandinavian students, and that they, therefore, would score somewhat similar on Geert Hofstede's dimensions 'power distance' and 'individualism' (Hofstede 1991). The expectation was that the greatest challenge to social penetration would be found among the relation between the Russian and the Scandinavian students. Though most of the Danish students were not native Danes, but from Latvia, Romania and Poland, they were sufficiently assimilated to the Danish culture on dimensions as power distance and individualism, to make a significant indication of possible occurring obstacles to social penetration in this particular study.

Ultimately, we found that in this case, social penetration in these mixed intercultural groups proved difficult, due to a variety of factors. These factors included both cultural differences as well as the mental representational context perceived by the participants, which inflicted cultural penetration to a degree that was somewhat surprising. We conclude, therefore, that social penetration in such multicultural groups is not to be taken lightly, and that focus should be on this issue when considering intercultural innovation and development activities in the future.

STUDY DESIGN

Processes and activities of groups are always influenced by various contexts and, therefore, a focus on the personal experience of a current situation is taken to provide indications, or to mirror in some way, the level of social penetration in groups. Henceforth, the Participatory Action Research which has an iterative characteristic, resisting closure, in the sense that the learnings of each day would shape the expectations and strategy for the next seemed to be the most appropriate choice of research process.

The study was designed in such a way that the research agents (RA) would attempt social penetration during the group's project work, and record their experiences in a daily log. In this way we wanted to obtain information about how the students would collaborate and socially penetrate without the presence of teachers, to supplement prior experiences made during the NORU project (Kakkonen 2014). Furthermore, various unstructured interviews would be made along the way in order to involve the other students in the research in such a way, that they would provide experiential data on the perception of the group members and their functioning, including explicitly their perception of the RAs' personality, contribution and participation in the group work. It was important to summarize key points and actions after each day, as it emphasized the importance of building reflections into the research cycle (Kindon 2007) as is also illustrated in Picture 1.



PICTURE 1. The Participatory Action Research Process (Adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart 2005, 564)

The topic of the research was centred on the intercultural relationship development, with main focus on social penetration. We expected language barriers to be a major obstacle to self-disclosure and, henceforth, to social penetration (Sias 2008). However, the study was designed as essentially hermeneutical in the sense proposed by Hans-Georg Gadamer (Gadamer 1960/2010, 270-311), and it is a central component of the research design, that it is able to incorporate new knowledge during the research. Therefore, we planned to include the other students participating in the event, by interviewing them on their perceptions and the group processes and the RAs' behaviour and influence in this regard. Secondly, we decided to use many different methods to collecting data and making adjustments of the study, in order to have as many-faceted data as possible (Susman 1983, 102) (See Table 1).

TABLE 1. The Daily Course of Action

Pre workshop process	-Agree on process design and participants.
During the workshop	-Participants observation (descriptive, inferential, evaluative) -Field notes -Audio and video recordings -Pictures -Group discussions -Selecting and reconsidering effect measures/ interpretation of data.
Post workshop process	-Evaluation of outcomes

As indicators of social penetration, we used a range of effect measures, to guide our interpretation of the observations and interviews recorded during the study. Social penetration, we conceived as a binary concept being opposed to social exclusion. Hence, the effect measures were chosen in such a way, that they might provide us with an indicative mark within the span of those two binary extremes. The selected measures were,

- a) The RAs' affiliation with the group. The expressions of the RAs' feelings, values and observations, recorded in logs at the end of each day.
- b) Social inclusion. The expression of team members, feelings, values and observations, about the group performance and social penetration, recorded in interviews made by the RAs.
- c) Language barriers. Observation of frequency of language barrier-based social exclusion. An example could be a situation where some people would speak a language, others in the group could not understand, and thereby being excluded from the social interaction.
- d) Physical distance. There is an immediate perception of the distance between group members, sometimes discussed under the label of *personal spacing* (Pedersen & Shears 1973). When the group was to sit or walk together, the experience of the physical distance between the participants indicates their feeling of being affiliated with the group.
- e) Frequency of communication. A simple way of indicating social penetration related to group work, is to assess how often the group members are actually talking, writing or meeting.
- f) Conflict. If group members are to experience or engage in open conflict, this is an indicator of social penetration, as it is normally considered a stage in social penetration (Altman & Taylor 1987).

It is important to stress that as this is a qualitative PAR study, the display of the results are based on the impressions and experiences of the RAs'. However, we have attempted to increase the reliability and validity of the study by applying the following means,

1. We used two comparison groups with one RA in each;
2. We made comparisons with interviews of other group members, as well as participants not in these two comparison groups;
3. We applied five interrelated effect measures, which conjunctively indicate the level of social penetration;

However, placing the various groups and students according to the measures in figure 1, is based on our interpretation of the recorded impressions and perceptions made by the students in general, the RAs in particular.

EXPERIENCES

In order to show the development of the social penetration process as it was experienced with the participants of the study, the results from the three days will be presented in this section according to the effect measures mentioned above. After having received the assignments, there was an experience among the Scandinavian students in the groups that the Russian students took over the planning of the execution of the work for the three days.

In some of the groups, the Russian students spoke Russian with each other, reinforcing a language barrier by excluding the other students from participation. At this point, parts of the conversation were centred on how, without too much effort, the goal could be accomplished. It was, during the study, a general impression that the group behaviour of the Russian students in this way involved a large degree of goal-orientation.

The study was done solely among the students. It is important to stress that of the students participating from Denmark, only one was a native Dane, while the other three were international students originating from Poland, Latvia and Romania. Hence, the language proficiencies of these students were highly varied, covering English, Danish, Polish, Romanian, Latvian and Russian. However, these language proficiencies were scattered among the members of the group, so that the only common language proficiency would be in English, and hence most of the internal communication was in that language English. Language barriers of the Danish students speaking Danish internally, excluding other participants from the discourse, did rarely occur, if ever.

It was an overall impression that the Danish students, including the RAs, were more easily worn out than the other participants, particularly in relation to excursions around the city. This was a apparent occasional source of irritation to the other students in general, the Russian students in particular, as they had undertaken the role of hosting the guest students. These impressions of the Danish students lingered on through the three days, and was confirmed in some of the interviews on day three.

On day one, an excursion was, for this reason, cancelled, and it was suggested in one of the groups that the Russian students might take over some of the tasks in the group, in order to increase efficiency of the group work. However, as the Danish students, as well as the Russian students, all displayed behaviour in order to take control and leadership of the group, it was not possible to make such a decision.

Some of the Russian students made complaints about the overall conditions of their study and their facilities, especially due to what they perceived as, that their schools were providing extraordinary nice facilities due to the presence of guests. During a discussion about study environments in Finland, Denmark and Russia, one of the Russian students pointed out that;

“These nice study rooms are because you are here, otherwise we do not have that good facilities”

It was the impression of the RAs that the Finnish students did not participate, perhaps due to language barriers or due to a culturally based reserved-ness, which they themselves pointed out in the presentation of their culture at the beginning of the first day. This difficulty was later confirmed by one of the Finnish students in an interview. However, this was not well understood by the Russian, and particularly the Danish students, who did not know how to appropriately respond to this, and some even reacted angrily.

One of the Russian students said that;

"Half of year living there (in Finland) I had made no Finnish friends, but I had a lot of friends from the exchange students, . . . , with the Finnish it takes a lot of time, much more than half a year."

The RAs frequently observed occurrences, where students were socially excluded, due to language barriers, either because of lack of English proficiency, or because the conversation turned to a native tongue that the students were not knowledgeable of. It is a central point that this was sometimes done intentionally, to exclude members of the group from the decision-making process. In addition, the students generally sat in different places, out of speaking range, in the classrooms, unless they were directly instructed to sit together in groups.

The frequency of communication relating to group work was most frequent with the Russian students and the members from Denmark. At this point it was the overall impression that the Finnish students did rarely partake in the communication, unless directly spoken to. There were no significant signs of conflict.

Concerning the participants from Finland, one of the RAs attempted to approach her Finnish group member, with help from one of the other students from Finland who had a better English proficiency, to overcome the supposed language barrier. It helped a little, but at large the Finnish students appeared to the other Russian and Danish students as being distant and reserved. When asked, the Finnish students admitted themselves repeatedly that their culture is the reason for this experienced social reservation. Hereafter, both the Finnish, Russian and Danish students resigned from trying to develop new efforts to overcome this barrier.

During the third day, a series of interviews were made by the RAs, in order to discover the Finnish and Russian perception of the Danish students. It was clear from the interviews that the interviewed Russian students had a difficulty in viewing the RAs, as representatives of the Danish culture. However, they expressed an impression of Danes as a very smiling and happy people, who, however, seemed to have some problems with taking serious matters sufficiently serious. The Russian and the Danish students used almost the same terms of describing the Finnish students, namely as shy and polite, a description that the Finnish students themselves did also agree to.

During the interviews with the Russian students, some of the students expressed that they felt forced to participate, and many of those who felt that way did not show up for the final presentation, nor did they participate in the farewell dinner.

On the question: “*How did you decide to participate in this project*” one of Russian students said: “*I was forced to*” and then explained that it was a strong suggestion it was for her own good on the teacher’s part.

Other Russian students were either volunteers or at least willing to be there on their own accord, and it was clear that those students participated much more in the group work. Furthermore, some of the Russian students eventually refused to participate, as some of the Finnish students did as well. This is contrasted by that some of the Russian students chose to open themselves to conversations of more personal issues in the evening, thereby enabling some level of self-disclosure and social penetration.

The problem with the language barrier had generally improved, as it appeared to be unchanged to some students, while others saw to overcome a language barrier to a much higher degree. The frequency of communication had increased, as many of the students, by that time knowing each other better, did interact and communicate more frequently. However, the physical distance parameter increased, as some of the students simply removed themselves from the group work. Overall, considering the group work, the social inclusion did in general suffer a drawback at the third seminar day. The Danish students complained that many of the Russian students took over the group work, excluding the guests from the groups. Henceforth, it could be argued that the Danish students and the Russian students did to some degree manage to penetrate socially, though with some difficulty, while the Finnish students apparently did not.

DISCUSSION

It is indicated from the results of the present study, that the Finnish students had a hard time partaking actively in the intercultural group work, as they did, to only a small degree, reveal much about themselves and a private and emotional level themselves and thereby they did not manage to increase the level of mutual disclosure in the group and thereby penetrate socially. This supports some cultural features well described in the literature (Carbaugh 2006) as well as the statements made by the Finnish students themselves, both in their presentation of the Finnish culture and in interviews. However, despite this knowledge and self-reflection, they were not able to overcome this in regards to student group work and social penetration.

The Russian students were, as expected, perceived by the other students, as very goal oriented, importing a high degree of effectiveness into the group work. It was, however, to an extent which led their focus away from the integration of group members and social penetration. It was only when they were confronted with this behaviour, by other group members, that they began to communicate about themselves and in this way opened up for social penetration. The students from Denmark appeared to be most eager to penetrate socially, but perhaps also to dominate the groups, which in this way created confrontations especially with the Russian students.

The level of conflict seemed to rise only in the third seminar day, indicating that the social penetration taking place in the first and second days never reached an extent where conflicts would occur. That a rise in the level of conflict is a sign of social penetration, is commonly assumed, both in social penetration theory (Altman & Taylor 1987) as well as in works on group organization, e.g. in Tuckman's model of group development (Tuckman & Jensen 1977). Here, it is an indication that a *storming-phase* of group development has been achieved, preceding possible later stages of group development, which are supposedly more efficient and productive (the norming- and performing stages). This indicates how to interpret our effect measures, and it is only at the third day that the social penetration reaches a level where conflicts begin to be detectable. Therefore, we may conclude that social penetration *did happen* during the study, but it must also be stressed that it was only to a limited degree.

A final concern, is that most of the data mentioned, was collected through the observations, interviews and interactions of the two RAs, representing the Danish educational culture, and therefore any conclusion concerning the Danish culture and approach to social penetration should cautiously be taken into consideration, as there is a risk that the way the RAs behaved do not represent the common behaviour of Danish students. The results of the present study, therefore, should be compared to other results, as it is important to stress, that the results presented here should not be seen in isolation, serving only as indicators.

Thus, on these grounds and with these reservations, the study indicates that the social penetration as an enabler of group work, and learning modules of idea development and innovation, is not to be taken lightly, especially if it involves interaction of students from these three countries. What seems to work in favour of obtaining social penetration at least to a certain degree, would be self-disclosure involving students criticism of other students with regard to lack of social inclusion, interviews made without teacher supervision, encouraging the students to talk with each other about other matters than the tasks, and assignments at hand. Finally, the common willingness to overcome language barriers as well as the students feeling of having a free choice as to participate or not, seem to be significant to how the group work developed and the social inclusion took place.

What we perceived as factors working against social penetration, were students who felt they were instructed to participate in the group work as well as the lack of English proficiency or social exclusion by some of the group members communicating in their native tongue. Arrangements that would involve activities only for some teachers or students, separating the working groups, we found not to support social penetration and group work. Finally, which is perhaps a bit surprising, it is indicated that the presence of teachers (or other authorities) seemed to work somewhat against the social inclusion and -penetration, that is an important determinant for productive group work.

A final concern, which is not the least important, is that the data was collected through the observations interviews and interactions of the RAs, though both representing the Danish student culture, were natively from Romania and Latvia. Therefore any conclusion concerning the Danish educational culture and approach to social penetration, should be taken with caution, as there is a risk that the way the RAs behaved do not represent the common behaviour of the Danish students. The results of the present study should therefore be compared to other results, as it is important to stress that the results presented here as seen in isolation, serve only as indicators.

There seems to be a clear tendency in terms of emphasizing intercultural group work in order to create intercultural and interdisciplinary teaching and innovation and entrepreneurship. This involves to a major degree social penetration, a matter that is not to be taken lightly. Due to the various nationalities of the students involved in this study, we might say it is indicated as an issue in general, but naturally concerning intercultural collaboration of the Danish and Finnish and Russian students in particular.

If or when such activities, as well as studies hereof, are done in the future, we will on the basis of the observations made in the present study, make the following suggestions:

1. It is important to secure the students engagement in the overall purpose of the project.
2. It might be beneficial that all participating students are equally removed from their everyday activities and responsibilities. It might be a suggested experiment, to do the event in a country or a city that is not native to any of the group members.
3. It might be beneficial to the social penetration if the students to a large extent would do their work without direct teacher supervision or presence.
4. The students should be engaged in team-building activities, designed to help the groups to collaborate, promoting social inclusion and self-disclosure (Coelho 1996).

We believe that these four recommendations should be deployed conjunctively, and we expect that in future studies, significant effects of such interventions would be clearly visible.

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NORU INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY IN SAINT PETERS- BURG AS A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING: REFLECTIONS OF THREE MAMK TEACHERS

Reijo Honkonen, Kirsi Itkonen and Mikhail Nemilentsev

INTRODUCTION

The activity in St. Petersburg in February 2015 was the fifth joint activity in accordance with the international NORU project. Teachers and students from three partner countries – Denmark, Finland and Russia – were active performers of the activity and learned specifics of intercultural communication and the Russian business culture in the settings of two partner St. Petersburg universities - St. Petersburg State Forest Technical University and St. Petersburg State Technical University of Plant Polymers (later named as FTU and PPU respectively). Over two years in the NORU project, the participants learned to know each other quite well and became familiar with the general principles of the education systems in Denmark, Finland and Russia. However, a new intercultural perspective with the help of artful methods helped participants learn deeper principles of learning for teachers as well as for students.

The present paper introduces a reader with three reflections on the St. Petersburg activity given by the senior lecturers of Business Management and Forest Economy departments of Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences. After presenting these perspectives, conclusions are made in order to summarise presented viewpoints.

INSPIRATIONAL TEACHING METHODS AND ARTS DESIGN IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Issues of sustainability in entrepreneurship education

In accordance with Rönkkö and Lepistö (2015, 61), Finnish students have a critical perception of enterprising pedagogy. In general, an entrepreneurship approach in the higher education puts communication between teachers, students, and stakeholders in the community on the rails of mutual benefits and boosts social innovations (Pittaway & Edwards, 2012, 779-780). Education filled with entrepreneurial practices is a dynamic process with new ideas and unique solutions conceived on the basis of energy and passion along with risk and opportunities' exploitation (Kuratko 2005, 578; Seikkula-Leino et al. 2010, 121; Shane & Venkataraman 2000, 218).

In accordance with the delineated objectives of entrepreneurship education, by means of participation in the entrepreneurship curriculum students become better aware of entrepreneurship as a field of studies, develop their entrepreneurship competences, and practice failures and rises of risk-based decision making on the real business cases (Hytti & O'Gorman 2004, 13; Rönkkö & Lepistö 2015, 63). Scholars of entrepreneurship research indicate on the identified dependence of students' behaviour and quality of entrepreneurship programs run in the tertiary education institutions (e.g., Packham et al., 2010, 570). However, teachers and educators are also influenced by the curriculum in the process of developing students' entrepreneurial competences. For instance, work on a business case, visit of a local company, participation in an innovative business campus provide multiple, mutually-enriching opportunities of entrepreneurship development for teaching staff as well as for younger students (Pepin 2012, 802; Rönkkö & Lepistö 2015, 65)

Sustainable transdisciplinary education can be described with the use of STEM model in the interface of community, science and arts (Clark & Button 2011, 41). Students do not longer learn how to exploit the external environment, but rather get familiar with the arts of nature-human interconnections aligned with the multiple levels of culture in order to save the outside community and environment (Gardner 1999, 40). In general, arts increase learners' awareness of the outside world. Therefore, arts are successfully applied in the entrepreneurship education merging students' diverse cultures and increasing their general awareness of environmental sustainability (Clark & Button 2011, 42; Minor 2008, 106). Visual and sensory media can be variously integrated in the education process to increase students' 'cultural intelligence'

(Arnheim 1974, 69; Efland 2002, 15). Art galleries, museums, theatres and other places with the high representation of art and national culture serve a basis for creating and developing individuals' perception of the value-driven environment filled with positively perceived long-term cultural symbols (Clark & Button 2011, 46; Arnheim 1969, 80).

Along with the development of entrepreneurship education, issues of sustainability are considered by the Russian universities (e.g., Verbitskaya et al. 2002, 287). In a way, the entrepreneurship education in Russia becomes cross-disciplinary education with the inclusion of social and ecological perspectives in the study curriculum as it has been already implemented by leading European and non-European universities (e.g., Flint et al. 2000, 193).

Culture, arts and creative approaches to education

Successful entrepreneurship projects can be compared with a famous piece of art valued by society and creating fame of an artist (de Monthoux 2013, 269). Art, in a way, merges social and business realities (Virno 2003, 18-21). Organisations learn by means of 'artistic interventions', i.e. when standardised routines are creatively changed with creative methods of work and customary processes are updated with new, earlier unpractised methods (Berhoin Antal 2012, 48; de Monthoux 2013, 269-270).

Culture influences on the way how people understand the surrounding world, how they interact and behave, how they learn competences for work and private life (Hall, 1976, 12; Hall, 2000, 35; Hofstede, 2001, 5). Culture is not however limited by the country's borders, but a single culture can rather influence on different countries simultaneously (Lee et al. 2012, 399). Values play a role of 'cultural' tools shared among the population (Rokeach, 1973, 18, 159). In the process of entrepreneurship education, a teacher's behaviour can be variously assessed by an international student group (Lee et al. 2012, 400). Compared to operations of a multinational company, an international student environment in the entrepreneurship education can be either effective (i.e. values of a teacher or, broader, of an university are accepted by and shared among international students) or dysfunctional (i.e. values of a teacher and of an university are critically assessed by the students and not sufficiently pronounced by teachers themselves) (e.g. Kuhn & Poole 2000, 559-560; Zhao 2000, 220). Cultural differences within a student group are also reflected in a way how new knowledge is learned. In other words, learning styles of individuals are also value- and culture-dependent (Lee et al. 2012, 400; Reynolds 1997, 126). Human mind is 'programmed' in a line with the set system of values, norms, and beliefs (Hofstede 1980, 5).

Arts widen human mind, help individuals succeed in personal development and acquire creative skills (Beyus 1975, 68; Schnugg 2014, 31). Education is fully penetrated with multiple cultural patterns. Entrepreneurship universities, in particular, remind behaviour of an organisation. Such an organisation involves arts-driven communication. Seminars and workshops devoted to the one of the multiple topics about arts, application of artful design in education, etc. can be a positive experience for an international student groups (Schnugg 2014, 33; Wagner 1999, 50). Dual participation of artists as educators and educators as learners of the designed workshop lead to a higher inspiration of the latter and greater help of the former in restructuring outdated routines of an organisation with a creative approach in work and learning (Harris 1999, 4). In general, it can be stated that arts' design bring motion in education and inspire organisation and people working in it (Darso 2004, 80; Schnugg 2014, 36).

SENIOR LECTURER OF MARKETING: STUDENTS PROJECTS AND NEW INSPIRATION

Some people are more practical, some tend to lean more on theories. Thanks to this diversity it was very fruitful to spend a couple a days working and talking with my Russian and Danish colleagues in St. Petersburg. We brought also some students with us, which gave extra challenge to our trip. This is my short review of the highlights of the trip.

Student projects

Sometimes it is a bit challenging to spend many days together with your students. When you share not only the lectures and the projects, but also your meals and thoughts with them, you might get stressed. When you add to this the fact that you are at least in theory responsible for your students' behaviour and actions, you easily say "no" to shared trips and projects.

During this NORU trip all went fine. I suppose that one of the reasons for this was that our students were adult students with long working life experience. They didn't have any need for taking extra freedom. But this was only one reason. The other reason was the program we had. We had shared lectures and projects, but also lectures and projects that were planned either for the teachers or for the students.

During their program the students could share experiences with the Russian and Danish students. They worked on a project in multicultural teams and gave their final presentations to the audience that consisted of their peers and teachers. It was a good idea to use the streets of St. Petersburg as a platform or

scene for the projects. The students said that though it was time-taking and sometimes even stressful and physically demanding to walk around the city, it was also very inspiring. From my point of view the results were interesting and in a good way different from those results we usually get in class-room teaching.

New Inspiration

I belong to a team that is in charge for teaching and developing innovative studies in MUAS. That's why I always look forward to meeting colleagues with different back-grounds. NORU trip offered once again good opportunities to have good and deep discussions and to try something new. For me the most outstanding experience was the session where we were asked to create something new with the help of two Russian painters. My latest experiences to painting or drawing go back to my early school days and they were not that good. So this session was a good example of what out of the box thinking means. I got inspired. It wasn't because of my hidden talent, but because of the inspiring and open-hearted atmosphere. When I have later analysed, what was the reason for this inspiring atmosphere or who created it, I came to a conclusion that it was the team, us, that made it happen. There was a lot of talking, good humour, and professional and gentle guidance that made the miracle happen. I have put into frames my painting called "A white rabbit tries to survive in a green magic forest". I am sure I will use local painters, musicians and artists to get my students inspired in my innovative lessons. Crossing borders is something we need more and more in our teaching.

SENIORLECTURER OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT: REFLECTIONS ON THE CULTURAL CONSISTUENT OF THE FEBRUARY NORU ACTIVITY IN SAINT-PETERSBURG

In February 2015, a three-day international seminar was held in Saint-Petersburg. Danish, Finnish and Russian partner universities took part in the seminar's programme. Both teachers and students from three different countries arrived at the seminar. As for the major theme of the seminar, the Russian business culture and intercultural communication were chosen. The programme was multisided and it consisted of education, workshops as well as of social events such as visits to the museums, drawing and workshops of decorative art. It can be mentioned that innovative ways of teaching and mentoring were presented by means of art methods. Besides the traditional collaboration, a representative of an international consulting company told about practical techniques of international negotiations. The presented methods were trained both in national and international groups.

Cultural constituent of the NORU seminar in St. Petersburg

During the first day in the FTU university, the week task and key rules of the study process were presented to the international student group. After giving instructions, students got familiar with each other already in the pre-selected international groups. Due to the flight delay of the Danish colleagues, the cultural programme planned for the first seminar day was cancelled.

During the second day, the students and teachers worked in different parts of FTU university. The teachers thought of the national features of the entrepreneurial university environment, while the students listened to the lecturer from Saimaa University of Applied Sciences about intercultural communication. The evening programme consisted of visits to the Ethnography Museum and organised workshop where the teachers and the students created artful roses from birch bark. It can be added that the objective of the mentioned artful event was to present innovative methods applicable for the needs of higher education. Having participated in the workshop, the Finnish and Danish students continued searching for the data of Russian business culture and Russian traditions.

In the third day, the teachers and students collaborated again together in PPU university. In the morning session, the students prepared their presentations in the computer class. In turn, teachers participated in the artful drawing seminar. Under the supervision of two prominent artists, the Danish, Finnish and Russian teachers learned to draw their own feelings and to apply art objects in education. In general, the students' presentations have received positive feedback both from the Russian partners as well as the Scandinavian partners.

In conclusion it can be mentioned that the Finnish delegation learned Russian business culture and Russian business traditions deeper as well as got familiar with the innovative artful methods in education. The students received the multisided experience in studying intercultural communication and collecting artefacts of the Russian business culture. In turn, the teachers analysed the presented intercultural innovative methods in teaching from a new artful perspective.

SENIOR LECTURER OF FORESTRY BUSINESS: REFLECTIONS ON THE TEACHER TRAINING AND IDEAS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF INTER-UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION

The last of the planned teacher and student exchange sessions in Noru-project was held in St. Petersburg in February 2015. St. Petersburg State Forest Technical University and St. Petersburg State Technical University of Plant Polymers had the responsibility for organizing the programme for both the students and teachers. The programme was partly same for the teachers and students and partly separated. I will concentrate on the program organized on Tuesday 17th of February for the teachers. In the end, I will also underline a few ideas for the development of the joint working.

Action/task/workshop

There was a workshop organized for the teachers on Tuesday. The theme of the workshop was comparing the learning and teaching practices in entrepreneurship education in Denmark, Finland and Russia. The venue for the workshop was a small meeting room. It was the first time for me to work in that room, although I had visited Forest Academy many times. The first impression was that now we are applying the tiipii-technique, which we learnt in Denmark one year ago.

The purpose was to work in national teams. The first task, which was given to us, was to define what the entrepreneurial students were like. We were supposed to list some typical features of entrepreneurial students like age, gender, work experience and style of learning. The second task was to concentrate more on the teaching practices and the learning processes. The main topic was how the teaching was done in Denmark, Finland and Russia. We were looking for answers to the questions like who was in the centre of learning, how we saw our students as learners, what was the teacher's role in learning, what happened in our classroom, how we were teaching and who was the source of knowledge.

The work proceeded so that first we discussed in national teams and made the presentation on a flip chart. After it, we gave the presentations one by one and discussed the issue and the differences.

Results

There were differences in the styles of the presentations between the Finnish, Danish and Russian teams. I have to say that I really admire the skills of the Danish colleagues to illustrate their presentations. In all the tasks, they used drawings and stories. Our team succeeded also well. We defined that a Finnish entrepreneurial student is active and self-oriented. Quite often, there is some kind of family business on the background, which gives the student a realistic picture of entrepreneurship. The Danish entrepreneurial students were defined more like “living in a dream entrepreneurial world inside the balloon” although they are maybe more looking for financial achievements than the students in Finland are. Thus, the entrepreneurial mind set of a Finnish student can often be seen in intrapreneurship way of action.

While working for the teaching and learning styles, many differences came up: for example, in Russia the teacher is in the centre. Generally speaking, the teacher has the authority to control almost everything what happens in the classroom in Russia. The role of a student as a learner is more or less passive. This is maybe quite strictly said, but at least partly true. In the west, the students bear the responsibility of learning, and they are supposed to be independent and self-regulated. The role of the teacher is to coach, support, motivate and inspire. We discussed the role of the teacher.

To conclude, unfortunately, the time ran out in our workshop and we were not able to do any joint conclusion about our workshop neither any recommendations for the development of the teaching. I think it would have been useful if after each held seminar or workshop, we could make some recommendations and self-evaluation how each of us will use and utilize the results, ideas, practices and innovations in our everyday working life. In our case, this means teaching, training and coaching. Luckily, our Russian colleagues will write an article where they will conclude the results of the workshop.

Anyway, one famous person has said that sometimes more important and valuable is the travelling itself than reaching the place. In our case working was valuable and fun. One thing or guideline I will keep in mind from our fruitful discussions is the following: We have to challenge ourselves all the time and every day to be willing to try something new. Sometimes it may demand throwing ourselves onto the floor in order to see how the world looks like down there. If we fulfil tasks in a very familiar and safe way all the time, there will be no innovations, no spirit, and no enthusiasm.

CONCLUSIONS

Entrepreneurship education develops students' competences in starting new ventures, identifying creative ways of running existing businesses, and recognizing multiple economic and social opportunities for transforming customary principles of economy into innovative ones. Educators as well as learners of entrepreneurship programmes in Finland, Russia and other European states are being currently put in a highly multicultural environment, with an increased influx of foreign values. Such a fact calls for new, earlier unpractised techniques of teaching. Students' learning capabilities are continuously challenged by the necessity to adapt themselves to standardised university curriculum. Therefore, issues of teacher-student interaction, students' learning capabilities and teachers' methods of education in the heterogeneous international environment are to be considered.

The present paper illustrates reflections of three MAMK teachers about the NORU Project activity in Saint-Petersburg (Russia). In particular, the principles of entrepreneurship education in the Russian education environment are analysed and implicitly compared to the Finnish framework of tertiary entrepreneurship education. Practical reflections of MAMK teachers are supplemented by the literature review of research about entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, culture and artful methods of teaching in the international education domain. Arts workshops and inspirational teaching methods presented by the Russian project partners during the St. Petersburg visit are described. Implications for teaching in the international student environment and future notes of collaboration between four project partners are presented. Conclusions and considerations of all three teachers are logically arranged.

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STRATEGIC APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Natalia Morozova and Svetlana Tereshchenko

INTRODUCTION

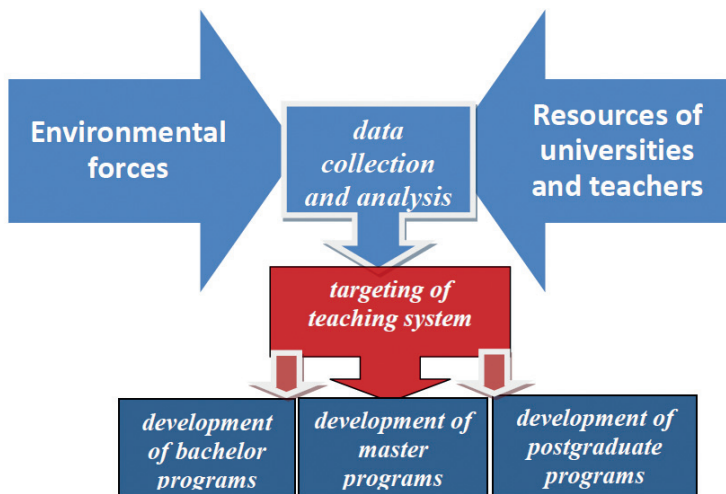
The significance of strategic approach is widely recognized as the basic principle of a project management. This approach is based on the methods and techniques of how to target companies adapting them successfully to changing environment and taking into consideration the level of its potential. As a result of strategic approach company's long-term and current plans of development could absolutely correspond to external forces and internal features

Strategic project management approaches could be applied to teaching (Svetenko et al. 2007, 12). As a result the level of their implementation hugely effects on competitive abilities of teaching. Through strategic project planning the benefits of education for students could be maximized, educational organizations could get a lot of benefits as well.

The objective of the article is to show the significance of using strategic approach for teaching of entrepreneurship in international context through the certain projects. The main principles of educational strategic planning will be described. The essential external forces and internal factors that influence teaching methods while entrepreneurship knowledge and skills are obtained by students will be investigated especially in the context of international cooperation. The results obtained in NORU project will be used as a basis for research.

STRATEGIC TEACHING MODEL FOR HIGH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Strategic approach is a way to formulate targets and to create detailed tasks according to investigation of external and internal factors; changes of external and internal factors have to be taken into account too. Using this method investigator evaluates combinations of internal and external forces, makes a choice between alternative strategies and as a final step implements the obtained decision. These stages of the basic model of strategic planning (Kerzner 2012, 35) could be altered for teaching (in the broadest sense of teaching) (see Picture 1 below).



PICTURE 1. Model of strategic approach for teaching (adapted from Kerzner 2012, 35)

While doing education programs for students it is important to combine the influence of external forces and opportunities as well as the internal resources of university and its teachers and staff. All action could be divided into several phases:

- investigation and identification of the substantial external forces in order to identify the most significant and also their trends as these changes influence on targets of education too;
- differentiation of the external forces according to their effect - encouraging factors and restrictive factors and according to the areas of influence - economic, administrative, social, political, etc;
- investigation of the potential of the University, as well as grouping and evaluation of its resources, their trends and their significance for each training program;

- selection of the strategy for future educational programs and projects based on the combination impact of the external forces and the internal resources of the high educational institutions;
- determination of the programs and projects elements using the targeting strategy.

The area of teaching affects each step of this strategic planning procedure. The strategic targeting of entrepreneurship teaching has to be based foremost on the needs of economy. It requires the combination of the requests and trends of regional as well as international economics. Training and continuous training of owners-entrepreneurs and employees with entrepreneurial skills for companies should be organized according to the economic circumstances. There are no doubts that the effect of economic globalization is the most significant in a list of such circumstances. As a result distinctions in economic, political, social, educational and many other spheres in different countries should be taken into consideration while targeting entrepreneurial educational programs and projects. To sum up, the strategic approach to modern teaching in the entrepreneurship area should include the following stages:

- assessment of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills of future employees and companies' owners which could satisfy business request;
- analysis of internal resources of high educational institutions (teaching methods, knowledge and skills of teachers, technical and software opportunities, connection with business units and other institutions, governmental, regional, local programs of educational development and development of entrepreneurial activities and networks, grants opportunities etc.);
- investigation of the modern approaches to teaching of entrepreneurship and the opportunities for its implementation;
- working out certain educational programs and specific projects for teaching entrepreneurship.

REASONS FOR THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN TEACHING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

There are some essential external trends that lead to the growth of significance of special international education programs in teaching of entrepreneurship. Firstly, economic globalization trend leads to the fact that regional and even local economic development should only be considered from the point of view of international cooperation and collaboration. Secondly, the growth of international activities of large-sized companies leads to the growth of demands for future employees with knowledge and skills in the field of entrepreneurship of the country of their residence and other countries.

Thirdly, it is obvious, that the trend mentioned above affects small and medium-sized companies. As a result the demand for the employees with basic knowledge and skills in the area of international business and economy of neighbouring countries is growing. Small and medium-sized companies tend to involve consultants with the special experience for solving economic problems. However, at least basic knowledge and skills of entrepreneurship (international and regional) is very essential for the employees of SME and their business progress.

Fourthly, those companies that are already involved in an international business activity have to follow the changes in laws and rules of export and import transactions and international collaboration. This is the conditions for companies' growth and development. So the graduates of international business programs as well as of international post graduate programs are very attractive for such employers.

Fifthly, the level of internationalization of labour market is the significant factor too. Labour mobility tends to increase, barriers tend to decline. As the result the level of qualification of employees and competitive atmosphere in a labour market are growing too. Education programs are supposed to meet the requests of international global labour market. Thus, above we introduced the main reasons why the requirements for the education in international entrepreneurship area are presently increasing significantly.

INTERNAL RESOURCES OF UNIVERSITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN TEACHING OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The list of the most substantial recourses of universities to provide international teaching programs and projects of entrepreneurship includes a great number of directions: programs of students' mobility; programs of teachers' mobility; programs taught in foreign languages; joint diploma programs; networks with international business; commercial universities activities; international networks of alumnae; international projects.

TABLE 1. Targeting of international educational activities in teaching entrepreneurship

N	Directions	Targets
1	Programs of students mobility Joint diploma programmes	educational cultural geostrategic political social economic (through networking and development of human capital)
2	Programs of teachers mobility Programs taught in foreign languages	All above plus improvement of national higher education
3	International networks of alumnae	All above plus improving the competitiveness of the national economy
4	Commercial universities activities Networks with international business	All above plus development of the university as an expert-company
5	International projects	All above mentioned

Different mechanisms, methods and kinds of international education activities in the field of teaching entrepreneurship provide the results of different levels. They include the wide range of gains - from universities benefits (if we will describe the university like a business unit) to benefits for the regional or national business (Agranovich 2010, 56). Of course, actual programs and projects, which are implemented by universities, depend on political, economic, social and others forces as it was pointed out above. Table 1 generalizes the targets of the different kinds of universities international activities for teaching of entrepreneurship.

The main idea is to use combination of the advantages of the external factors and the resources of high educational institutions for implementation of the international programs and projects in teaching entrepreneurship which correspond with current requirements of business and its perspective demand.

USING NORU PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STRATEGIC APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Every university nowadays has strategy of development. Obviously, these strategies are closely connected with the society demands. One of such demands is entrepreneurship development. The opportunities of higher educational institutions to correspond with this demand are connected with the development of entrepreneurial education, especially in the frame of innovative approaches to it. The results of the NORU project are worth to be investigated as the results of project that fully meet the educational requests of current environmental forces and the opportunities of participating universities.

The main objective of the project was to strengthen the network of four higher education institutions in Russia, Finland and Denmark in the frame of entrepreneurship teaching. The most essential objectives of the project were: to promote students' knowledge and skills, to enhance their entrepreneurial mind-set, to train students' understanding of the value of creation for the customers and markets and to increase the innovative entrepreneurial teaching competences of teachers - participants. It is obvious, that the project is closely connected with the strategic development of the higher educational institutions due to the objectives that were set.

The results of the project were very important to the strategic development of the higher educational institutions because it makes possible to use their resources in the most effective way. The very important outcome of the project is the progress of professional competencies of the universities teachers. It was done on the basis of the best experiences in teaching entrepreneurship in each partner university. The activities that were organized in partner universities and their impact on the strategic development of the universities in the frame of entrepreneurial education are illustrated by the data of the Table 2.

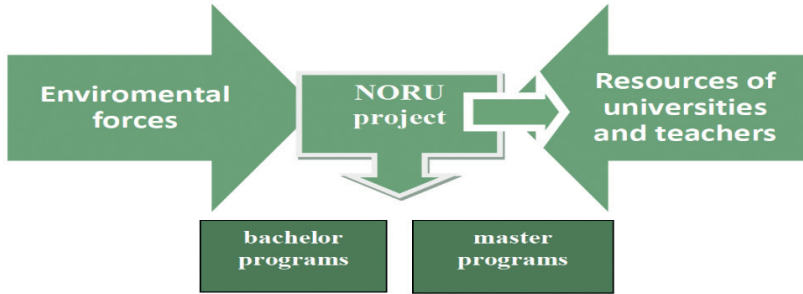
TABLE 2. The impact of the activities in NORU project on the strategic development of higher educational institutions

Activity	Dates	The theme of the activities	Impact on the strategic development of high educational institutions
Workshop in Finland, Mikkeli, MAMK	August, 2013	Practical approaches to teaching entrepreneurship	Teacher's development in the frame of the research of request from students for modern entrepreneurial skills. Development of the innovative approaches to the practical and the theoretical teaching entrepreneurship.
Workshop in Denmark, Lillebælt academy	January, 2014	Innovative approaches in teaching entrepreneurship. The role of the effective group work in teaching to obtain the objectives.	Development of skills and knowledge of teachers: awareness the role and the effectiveness of group work in teaching modern entrepreneurial skills. Increasing the communicative skills of teachers concerning interaction with the business environment.
Workshop in Denmark, Lillebælt academy	April, 2014	Practical training Innovative approaches in teaching entrepreneurship – Lego serious play.	Development of teachers skills how to implement innovative teaching methods. Expanding knowledge about the classical and innovative approaches to teaching entrepreneurship in partner universities.
Workshop in Russia, St Petersburg, FTU	October, 2014	Intercultural communications	Development of the team working skills. Getting new intercommunication skills for the teachers and their abilities to work and teach in the multicultural groups.

These activities allowed to improve several aspects of teaching of entrepreneurship in higher educational institutions through international approach:

- development of the main internal resource of the higher educational institutions – their teachers, whose skills and knowledge determinate the innovative approach to the teaching entrepreneurship;
- progress in the communicative skills of teachers and students and opportunities to work effectively in a team in reaching the aim of entrepreneurial education;
- extension of effective communications with the business environment to be ready to meet it requests;
- strengthening the international cooperation with the partner high educational institutions as one of the most important qualities of universities;
- dissemination of the experience of international cooperation and collaboration in the frame of certain projects in entrepreneurial education area.

Through the survey and investigation of objectives and results of NORU project it could be possible to point out the place and significance of this specific project in a frame of the strategic development of the participating universities (see Picture 2 below).



PICTURE 2. Model of the strategic approach for the entrepreneurship teaching through NORU project.

As we described above, the complex of the environmental forces made it possible and important to emphasize the international collaboration of four universities in frame of the entrepreneurship education. In their turn, these universities could apply their resources to meet the demands of environment through the project procedures. The project procedures encourage students to get much new knowledge and skills as a future entrepreneur (no matter whether they will become owner of companies or employees, no matter whether they are bachelor or master programs students). As a feedback the universities (as teaching companies) have opportunities to improve the quality of teaching (quality of their product and their brand) through the implementation of NORU results: innovative approaches to teaching, innovative skills of teachers, new communicative skills of teachers, new teachers' knowledge concerning entrepreneurship education, creativity and how to implement it for teaching and for learning, a database of teaching and entrepreneurial knowledge, that were accumulated in articles and disseminates by the seminars, conferences and joint publication activities.

In a balance, we strongly believe that NORU project is not the only the successful result of strategic project management of the participating universities (if we deal with university as a company) but also it become the unique resource for such universities for their further development.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The strategic approach of teaching entrepreneurship seems to be essential. Combination of business needs, opportunities of external forces and the resources of higher educational institutions allows to improve quality of education but also quality of educational institutions because it brings a lot of benefits to the universities and teachers as well through certain projects and programs. Beside the fact that the idea is quite clear and the methods of strategic project management are implemented widely, the teaching entrepreneurship in the international project context needs a lot of efforts from teachers and university staff and administration.

NORU project has played a very important role in the development of the teaching entrepreneurship in the higher educational institutions. The activities that were organized in the frame of the project developed a lot the skills and gave knowledge to the teachers of the partner universities. The consequence of this is creation of a basis for changes in teaching entrepreneurship and opportunity to use internal resources of higher educational institutions far more effectively. The project also played a very important role in the development of the internationally oriented higher educational institutions. Joint work in multicultural groups in different project activities meets the requirements of international business, which is very important if we speak strategic development of education and whole economy (global, bordering, regional, local as well). NORU project proved the opportunities of creating long- term and short- term cooperation with business environment on base of facing its demands and ability to reply to them. As a result, the experience gained in the NORU project should be used as the basic point to improve teaching technology as a specific element (mechanism) that guarantee obtaining the goals of strategic development of universities, teacher's knowledge and skills and opportunities for students.

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DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATIVE COMPETENCES AMONG FINNISH AND RUSSIAN STUDENTS: PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES AND OBSERVATIONS

Jurii Zementskii and Mikhail Nemilentsev

INTRODUCTION

In the paper, two experiments on developing innovative competences of Finnish and Russian students are presented. Apart from the experiment, students' reflections are discussed and general cultural-specific conclusions are made. The objective of the paper is to illustrate what are the principles, tools, methods and consequences of development of innovative competences between multinational groups of students in Finland and Russia. The methods presented in the Russian and Finnish samples differ, but they have the common inspiration received by the authors during a short educational trip to Odense, Denmark.

In the two-year NORU project (July 2013 – June 2015), the participants could listen to multiple illustrative presentations about innovative and entrepreneurial teaching methods (Corrigan 2010, 27). The presentation of Lego Serious Play method (Denmark, Odense, 2014) made a significant influence and gave a basis for further considerations (Roos & Bart 1999, 249). The authors of this present paper have an opinion that a positive experience of foreign colleagues can be applied in the domestic environment, however certain amendments are required for a better acceptance of the given teaching methods and its applicability in the home educational environment.

In general, the implementation of new approaches, especially its innovative examples, always faces a number of difficulties (Lissak & Roos 1999, 70). On the other hand, teachers often have a problem of students' engagement in the study process. In particular, it is apparent for adult listeners, who have their own stable mind set, life experience, a lot of settled habits as well as samples in thinking. It is quite difficult to knock to the students' mental place until a teacher is heard when the only traditional approaches of education are used (Granet 2011, 114). When teaching students on a correspondence course (i.e. when students attend the university only for few weeks in a year and do their multiple assignments distantly) or an extension course (i.e. students are generally members of some professional field that have to pass through qualification education in a certain period of time for updating their knowledge in their professional field), traditional teaching formats like lectures and theoretical seminars could be also troublesome for students' overall performance. In order to solve a problem of a lack of students' attention or interest, teaching methods could involve an element of play inside the course. The use of game methods in teaching helps to involve students in the study curriculum more smoothly and more deeply.

DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF INNOVATIVE METHODS OF TEACHING IN THE RUSSIAN EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT

In the Russian Federation, teachers are mainly limited with the use of innovative methods of education. However, when a teacher has enough motivation, a practical use of innovative methods can help to overcome a number of formal limitations in order to increase the overall quality of the education process. In general, the application of the innovative methods can be integrated in the education process in accordance with the following structure (Roos & Bart 1999, 250). All four above-mentioned methods are equally of importance, and have the largest value in the system unity and not as a sum of separate elements.

Structure of the method:

1. Formulation of a question/ a task
2. Construction / preparation of an answer
3. Presentation of an answer in a form of a short story
4. Feedback, comments, considerations.

Even when we face some practical problem, it can be extremely difficult to formulate the core message of this problem and define what is to be solved. At this stage, a teacher's role is primary, since a teacher is responsible for the advance formulation of task and development of questions for the further students' work within the studied professional subject. When the suggested method is integrated in the general teaching practices, a teacher would not be a lecturer or a controller, but rather a coordinator or a coach. It is necessary to give the full range of tools for students, make them capable of completing the set task. A teacher is then only responsible for moderating the study process and viewing whether students work really on the process or waste time. A teacher in the controller's role should manage students' possible diversion from the studied topic. Students should not also disturb their colleagues in the application of the suggested methodological algorithm.

At the moment when the task is already explained to a student group, a teacher is usually developing other relative thoughts on the current study process. Concentration of students can be improved by means of iterative exercises connected with their hands' small motor activity. Therefore, in some Asian traditions, attention is paid to fingers and its psychological meaning in the human life. Use of something usual, familiar from students' childhood could help to focus on the concrete problem. Lego constructors are ideally suitable for such tasks. However, any construction kit is limited not only by the number of components, but also by the strictly defined logic of construction. A simple alternative to a construction kit could be a simple sheet of paper of A4 format. The use of the simple sources could be a possible solution in the Russian current education conditions.

Paper is typical and totally familiar object, which has however a fertile ground for experiments and arts (Corrigan 2010, 58). The number of possible activities is not limited with drawing or making origami. A sheet of paper is simply and with low efforts transformed in various objects limited only by the human fantasy. It is of primary significance to provide a clear understanding that students associate circulated sheets of paper with the basis for knowledge acquisition (Granet 2011, 9). Until the recent time, books were the main sources and symbols of knowledge, and they have not lost its topicality yet. As a result, when students have some constructed material embodiment of their intentions, they can make a story and explain their personal or group positions with a bigger clarity.

Quite often we can find the correct answer on the set task in our consciousness. However, when it is necessary to formulate an answer verbally, an awkward pause occurs. Therefore, it is necessary to say one's personal answer aloud. Sometimes it could be enough in order to understand one's own weak points in the conceived idea. The formulation of an answer as a history has a number of advantages: as any action of art, man becomes an incentive to learning and self-development (Roos & Bart 1999, 248). When already constructing a story, it can come through different changes in its evolutionary formation. After presenting a story, other listeners could present their own opinions and thus they help to evaluate the original intention of the presenter.

Russian experiment on developing innovative approaches to teaching

The practical phase of the research was conducted in the St. Petersburg State Forest University named after Kirov S.M. The same experiment was performed in different times in two groups of bachelor students that specialise in management. The students represented different years of education. The third group of students taking part in the experiment were specialist students of the technological direction.

Every time the experiment was conducted at the end of semester, when students got tired of multiple practical seminars and lectures and their general interest in classes was led to the preparation for the final test or exam. During the academic semester different practical tasks results in different feedback. It is worth mentioning that the students' reaction towards course tasks did not completely depend on the task's quality, but rather on the majority of other factors, for instance, their mood in a given period of time.

Having several hours of teaching in stock, the following experiment was taken place. At the beginning of the experiment, the students were divided in small groups with two or three persons in each. Each group received only one sheet of A4 paper. The task was the same for all and quite simple, but at the same time opening students' freedom for fantasy. The task was connected with the development of a new product with effective characteristics in the market and an imaginary presentation to potential buyers or investors. After a short presentation, every student had an opportunity to ask questions and give personal comments.

After the first 15 minutes of preparation, the general pattern of the task's completion could be now identified: a short presentation and a follow-up discussion. The whole process in all three groups lasted about 1,5 hours that equals 2 academic hours. An interesting observation could be made in relation to the task: in many cases, even before the formulation of the end product idea, the participants started constructing something from the given paper. In some cases the students changed their initial opinion, but it went quickly and without serious discussion. Another observation is connected with the technical issues of the task: only few groups of the students applied the familiar techniques of origami, while other groups found other ways of self-expression.

The level of concentration was high almost in every small team and in three bigger student groups in general. There was not any case of internal rivalry between the students. On the contrary, the students' work within the smaller groups featured a high degree of cooperation where all the members applied active assistance and guidance. In general, the level of depth into the task differed across the teams, but the used cooperative techniques were applied.

As a result, all the teams achieved the set task applying individual methods in each case. The current work did not belong to some faculty or university competition, therefore competitiveness in the teams' work was mainly at a low level. However, there was physical dominant enthusiasm in the lecture hall. A teacher was only responsible for controlling time and coordinating the order of presentations and follow-up discussions. Any kind of hard control over the students' work did not find any proper application.

Several observations could be made in relation to the used method in the Russian higher education environment based on the author's experience in teaching and practising. Students of different years of education made the set task successfully, and their results did not vary significantly. Self-organisation within mini-groups was done without any problems from the students' side. The students of the economic department emphasised more the product itself, its abilities to satisfy customer needs. In turn, the students of the technological department paid attention to the product's technical attributes, quality of the elements of the hypothesised product. A topic of ecological security was mentioned much more often in their mini-groups during the preparation stage.

The Russian students are often criticised for their insufficient skills of making discussion, inability or improper skills of teamwork, and work in the unarranged conditions when some clear frames of work are absent. However, the experiment showed that the students demonstrated excellent capabilities in the area communication and a high level of creativity when the teacher applied the system approach.

DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF INNOVATIVE METHODS OF TEACHING IN THE FINNISH EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT

In Finland, innovative methods are integrated in the higher education system. On the national level, application and development of innovation in society and business is strengthened. Scientific universities concentrate more on the ground innovations, while universities of applied sciences focus more on finding and implementing innovations in the everyday work situations, remodelling the already existing products and mapping services with a more innovative approach. Students of the Finnish higher education institutions observe and actively participate in the familiarisation with the innovative methods of group work, creative tasks for independent learning make their personal contribution to the development of teacher-student interaction on a more creative basis.

Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences, Department of Business Management (MUAS – BM) is a place of work for one of the authors of the present paper. Based on my own teaching and project experience in MUAS at the Department of Business Management, the teaching process in MUAS has a direct interaction with students during and after lectures. The lectures in the applied universities differ from the traditional way of teaching, since they require an abductive mind-set from a teacher. In particular, the abductive way of discovering new phenomena includes a continuous journey between theory and practice. One of the common sayings in the Western Europe means that there is not good practice without good theory and vice versa. Students appreciate when a teacher can say more about the studied phenomenon with the use of concrete examples, give multiple possibilities during one or several study hours to work independently or in groups, read case studies in smaller groups, and be not pressed with the composition of the group.

The Scandinavian education system is traditionally based on the principles of group work and problem-based learning. By the end of their studies, students become masters of the real-work case solutions and identification of managerial issues that are generally met at the local and international enterprises. Application of a new methodology of learning creativity is studied in this part of the paper.

Finnish experiment on developing innovative approaches to teaching

The students of the Innovation Competence course were the major group for the long-term experiment in creative thinking. The students of this course were mainly second year students of the international bachelor program of MUAS in Business Management. Female students were mostly prevalent in the group, while male students were mainly represented by the exchange students. The age of the students generally varied between 18 and 30 years.

During each lecture the students mastered a certain topic with the Innovation Competences course programme, in particular about the composition of creative process, role of innovations, methods of generating new ideas, and so on. By the middle of the course, the students were able to present their partial knowledge of the innovative process by means of their engagement in the team and individual work. The course tasks were divided into collective (or group) tasks and individual tasks, since creativity as a learning phenomenon was considered at two individual and group levels. The students mainly practised with their own notes with the use of clear reporting system and uploaded their results in Moodle by the deadlines. However, one major work for the students during this course was in-progress for almost 3 weeks. It became an evidence base for the present experiment.

The arrangement of the experiment was following. The students were first divided into groups from 2 to 5 people but they could also fulfil the task individually. The duration of the task was about several weeks. Therefore, the teacher served mostly in the role of time coordinator and consultant in order to save the logic of the task and clarify issues. The students applied the abductive way of searching for the concrete information – from theory to practice in the iterative way.

The task was developing a business idea and framing this idea into the business canvas model (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010, 230). The nine building blocks of the business canvas were mainly concentrated on the clarity of the presented business idea. The blocks included a customer segment, value proposition, customer channels, customer relationships, revenue streams, key resources, key resources, key activities, key partners, and cost structure.

Not all of the students were interested in developing their idea in the long-term format, which was one of the challenges of the current three-week experiment. Some of the student groups were ready after the first few lectures and had motivation problems to continue searching for the possible improvements of their models. The business model canvas did not require conducting a quality market survey for testing a business idea and implementing more customer-friendly solutions. On the contrary, the students were only asked to define a clear concept and explain it with the help of the business model canvas.

Motivation of some students increased over the process, since all of them had a chance to participate in the MUAS university business idea competition and win material remuneration for the three best business ideas. Necessity to complete this task as a part of the Innovation Competences course and receive a final grade for the task removed a certain share of creativity among the second-year students. It can be mentioned that the Finnish students were less motivated in the competition than the exchange students. However, this conclusion requires further investigation with the help of follow-up interviews.

Although we should not generalise too much, the cultural dimension of the group composition, in particular a large share of international Erasmus exchange students from German, French and Asian universities, had an influence on the students' effectiveness in the group and individual work. The German participants required bigger clarity and were practically lost with the creative task arrangements when the students got full freedom for developing a certain point of their idea over a limited period of time. On the contrary, the Asian and Russian students demonstrated higher readiness to innovate. However, each student team was mentally exhausted with the constant tasks on the business idea's improvements over the course time. The reflections of the Finnish students during the regular lectures and in the time of developing activities varied depending on the gender, work engagement and other factors. Since some of the students were also employed at the time of the course, their involvement and long-term readiness to work on the business idea deviated slightly from the young students without employment.

The quality of the students' work could be judged by the fact that out of ten best business ideas from the whole university, about 60 percent were ideas of the students from the Innovation Competence course. The best business ideas were subsequently selected for the business development day and three prize winners were selected by the professional members of the business incubators and business community. It should be pointed out that the Finnish female duet from the Innovation Competences course received the first prize, while the third prize was awarded to the German exchange students who also were participants of that course. All in all the experiment allowed international bachelor students to develop their innovative competences, test their business ideas in the long-term education process, and improve their vision of the creativity thinking from their group or individual perspective within the MUAS university-level business idea competition.

CONCLUSION OF THE PAPER

The present paper analysed creative approaches to the Finnish and Russian education environment. Several groups of Russian students and one group of international students, their work patterns in the group tasks and individual cultural-specific traits were presented. Experiments' role in the education process was considered (Olson 2012, 7). Additionally, the level of development of creative education techniques and its significance in the national educational systems of Finland and Russian Federation were shown. The experiments were clear indications of how students' intergroup cooperation, group and individual innovative competences could be developed. Nevertheless, it was only the initial experimentation with techniques of creativity.

However, the quality of the students' perceptions of the explained methods could be analysed only at the post-university level, when former students could integrate the received knowledge and apply the trained innovative techniques at their work places. Follow-up interviews could be a suitable solution in order to get a closer perspective on the students' innovative traits formed during their studies in the scientific or applied higher education institution.

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO TEACHING ENTREPRENEURIAL DISCIPLINES IN RUSSIA AND EUROPE

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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship education is on the agenda in almost all countries, either being in development, or already articulated in some form. The study of entrepreneurship is highly important, because, on the one hand, it helps entrepreneurs to meet their demands better, and, on the other hand, because of the economic contribution of new venture. Entrepreneurship does not only lead to an increased national income by creating new jobs, but it also acts as a positive force in an economic growth by serving as a bridge between innovation and the market-place. An entrepreneur thus serves as a major link in the process of innovation development, economic growth and revitalization. Therefore, it is of high relevance that potential entrepreneurs acquire technical and business skills within their education so that they could become successful entrepreneurs that contribute to an increased national income and economic growth. Therefore, the study of entrepreneurship and the education of potential entrepreneurs are essential parts of any attempt to strengthen this link, which is so essential to economic well-being of a country.

Europe needs a greater focus on entrepreneurship and innovation to help spur competitiveness, growth and job creation, and to achieve the goals set out in the Lisbon Agenda (Ammer et al. 2010). Despite numerous initiatives and programmes, Europe is still lagging behind these goals. There is too much focus on SMEs in Europe instead of the growth of entrepreneurship.

In Europe, entrepreneurship only substantially began to enter the curriculum in the last ten years, although a handful of institutions started earlier (Twaalfhoven & Wilson 2004). In Europe, the significant growth in venture capital began only about a decade ago, in the mid-1990s.

As for Russia, due to changes in political and economic systems in the mid-1990s, issues of implementing the disciplines of business and innovative approaches to teaching, entrepreneurial disciplines in Russia are still unsolved.

Nowadays, Russia has paid great attention to the development of entrepreneurship. The programs of support of small business work at the federal and regional levels. According to different studies, the business climate has been improving. The need for education in the field of entrepreneurship in Russia is significant (Verkhovskaia & Dorokhina 2012).

LEARNING EUROPEAN STYLES AND TEACHING TECHNOLOGIES IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

European universities and business schools start to play a key role in promoting entrepreneurship and innovation, helping students to learn not only how to start but also how to grow enterprises, including across borders. In particular, technical and scientific universities provide potential breeding grounds for high-technology and high-growth companies.

The European Foundation for Entrepreneurship (EFER) has conducted a lot of surveys and research on entrepreneurship education and research in Europe. In 2004, EFER conducted a joint survey with the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD). The goals of the survey were to gain a perspective on the level and a growth of entrepreneurship education in Europe, to identify trends, and to understand the training and development needs of faculty teaching entrepreneurship. The results were used as a basis of comparison with other recent surveys and research conducted in Europe and the United States (Hatak 2011, 32).

Entrepreneurship education is important in all disciplines. In Europe, the majority of entrepreneurship courses are offered in business schools. Entrepreneurship needs to be expanded across the campus – particularly to the technology and science departments, where many innovative ideas and companies originate.

Therefore, exposure to entrepreneurship as well as practical training in starting and growing companies is important. Technical and scientific universities, on the other hand, are potential sources of start-ups and spin-offs. Increasingly, business and technical faculties are linking efforts to encourage the exchange of skills and ideas among students.

According to Blenker et al. (2006) model, there are four learning styles with definite outcomes. Reflective-theoretical. Learning takes place through the collection of information and a variety of activities, selecting the best choice models of behaviors based on their analysis. Learning efficiency increases with the opportunity to discuss their findings with colleagues. Reflective-applied. A thorough study of the practice of theoretical models (literature, simulation, real action), the study of causal relationships, the adjustment options, the search for unconventional solutions. Education requires a number of actions, individually or in a group. Active-applied. Education is based on the performance of certain repetitive actions for developing skills. Actions may be one-off, action selection can be made both based on the study of theoretical material and spontaneously. The results of operations are analyzed, selected the most effective behaviors. Active- theoretical. The-job training in a team when making decisions based on examination of the particular situation requires detailed planning, implementation, analysis of variance and operational adjustment decisions.

The learning style determines the choice of suitable teaching methods. Teaching methods according to the learning styles are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Teaching technologies according to the learning styles

Learning style	Outcome	Teaching methods
Reflective-theoretical	Changes in knowledge	Lectures, independent work in libraries, Internet search
Reflective-applied	Changes in application	Seminars, case tasks, project, company visits
Active-applied	Changes in skills and attitudes	Exercises, workshops, simulation, TIPI, practice in company as a trainee
Active- theoretical	Changes in understanding	Teamwork, social interaction, project experience, interaction with companies, work experience

Accordingly, European universities are actively seeking new methods of entrepreneurship education. New methods of teaching which combine auditory, visual and kinesthetic forms of communication have been becoming more popular. The main goals of this approach are placed team building and creating a comfortable environment for intellectual work on solving non-standard problems.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN RUSSIA

Entrepreneurship education in Russia is usually in the nature of training programs in the field of management and economics for people, who have a different specialty, as well as short-term programs, seminars and round tables.

Data analysis and infrastructure to support entrepreneurial initiatives showed that entrepreneurship education can be divided into four levels (Shirokova & Kulikov, 2011, 9):

- The first level - characterized by the presence of courses in marketing, risk management, business planning and other management disciplines, requiring knowledge of entrepreneurs.
- The second level - availability of courses on entrepreneurship, innovation management, management of small innovative enterprises, entrepreneurship in some sectors.
- The third level – masters programs on profiles Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Technology, conducted business plan competitions, business games, training seminars and programs.
- The fourth level - entrepreneurship and its support are allocated in a separate area of the university (business incubators, technology parks, foundations, grants, etc.)

It is interesting to note the statistics matched by Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey (GUESSS) regarding the percentage of choice for training courses among Russian students and students from other countries. There were 2882 young people who took part in this project. Table 2 shows the results of statistic data (Shirokova & Kulikov, 2011, 12).

Whereas, the percentage of active entrepreneurs, namely those who already established his own business, among those surveyed is very small: about 0.5% with no differences by country.

TABLE 2. Choice for training courses among Russian students and students from other countries:

Kind of Sciences for studying	Russian students (%)	Students from other countries (%)
Economics and management	62.5	29.3
Social Sciences	7.5	2.9
Natural Sciences	18	32,9

Obviously, the area of business education in Russia is currently focusing on the faculties that teach these subjects precisely. There are two groups of the factors promoting the development of entrepreneurial intentions in Russian universities. The first one is the elements of entrepreneurship training (training courses). The second one is infrastructure support.

We have tried to analyze the situation with the presence of specialized courses for the business at universities. You can see the results in the Table 3 (Verkhovskaia & Dorokhina 2010)

TABLE 3. Overview of the availability of courses in Russian universities

Training courses	%
technological and search resources (library, Internet)	75.4
courses on entrepreneurship and	65.0
courses on business planning	67.7
social entrepreneurship	21.2
training courses on Technological Entrepreneurship	24.4
family business	11.3
programs of coaching and mentoring	21.5

The conducted research of the existing infrastructure elements of entrepreneurial support showed that there is still not enough platform for business seminars, to build a network of contacts to find financing, exchange ideas, and opportunities for assistance.

FEATURES OF THE APPLICATION OF TEACHING METHODS IN THE RUSSIAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

In the context of theoretical education in Russian universities, there are two main types of studies: lectures and workshops. As required, Russian teachers design a lecture about some particular problem. The format of the lesson involves discussion. The participation in the discussion involves preliminary preparation of students on a particular subject. 1-2 people usually prepare. It is a big problem for a Russian lecturer to get prepared audience into force because of the existing opinion among students that lecture is a passive lesson.

Meanwhile, most of Russian teachers try to cope with this students' stereotype for a semester of teaching their discipline. A very interesting and useful form of lecture notes is the lectures given by successful entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, such lectures are not often given because of complexity of the organizational process. University schedule is often inconvenient for entrepreneurs; in addition, not all entrepreneurs are able to present the material in the form of lectures.

At the workshops Russian teachers have more freedom in choosing the forms of work with students. At these sessions students, studying economics and management, perform different types of calculations, participate in discussions on a specific issue, a part of the course is conducted in the form of case-studies and interactive games.

Mandatory publication of reports of public corporations facilitated selection of modern material to perform basic financial calculations, but the material for a detailed analysis of the company is not always enough. It is not always possible to get additional material from the sites of enterprises, because the quality of these sites varies.

Dealing with cases of Russian teachers are facing a number of challenges. Individual learning model of universities in Russia at some point makes it difficult to organize a full-fledged group work. Students prefer to work in a stable group, it is very difficult to change the composition of the group because of the resistance of the participants. Of course, skill allows the teacher to overcome these difficulties and ultimately the students begin to understand why it is done, but a lot of time is wasted.

Another serious problem is a small number of cases, written in Russian material. For forming library of Russian cases take time and a change of attitude towards the organization of this type of teacher work. Today, most of the administration of Russian universities do not consider writing cases as a serious research work, so that the teacher either develops its own cases and works with them or not interested in these activities. Businesses are also suspicious of proposals to make the description of its activities for educational purposes. There are objective reasons for such problems, because business leaders are afraid and suppose that they can tell their secrets, and it will make there company less competitive.

The majority of students like business simulations, but decent quality products in the Russian language are hard to find and since they are few, the prices for good business simulations are inadequately high. Another obstacle to widespread use of business games and business simulations is the rigidity of timetable in Russian universities. Sometimes the workshop requires not two, but four or even six academic hours at a time. This problem can be solved, but it is quite complicated and a teacher is not always ready to spend his or her force on the adjustment of the schedule. Lack of free necessary computer equipment is also too frequent.

Visiting successful companies is rare in Russian universities. Few Russian companies are prepared to receive students. Most of them do not have a prepared presentation of information and trained staff for an interesting story about their activities. The last circumstance is because business in Russia is a very young phenomenon, which is only a little more than twenty years.

Practice in real companies is a required component of Russian training programs in economics and management. All universities developed programs of practice that comply with state educational standards. Businesses, unfortunately, are not particularly willing to take students to practice. The reasons are different: sometimes it's a suspicious attitude towards people from outside, sometimes the lack of staff who are able to work with students, and often staff overburdened with their work.

Today in Russia, it should be paid as much attention as possible to the learning environment to implement entrepreneurial direction, which has special requirements. Students get challenges that require innovative solutions. Students work in groups. Searching for solutions requires a lot of time. That is why students need large areas with zoning for working and relaxation area. It is also expected a flexible work schedule with the ability to use the audience in the evening. Audiences should be equipped with wireless communication, computers, printers, etc.

Thus, strategically developing Russian education must not only navigate, but develop new courses, based on the best practices of entrepreneurship education in Europe. According to the 'Guidelines for entrepreneurship education' developed by the Finnish Ministry of Education (2009), such priorities are: to promote graduate entrepreneurship; to carry out recommendations, with focus on motivating entrepreneurship, elaborating innovations into business and supporting growth business; to develop business know-how; to promote the utilisation of research findings; to develop cooperation of the science park/technology park/business incubator type; to constantly develop forms of cooperation between higher education institutions and the world of work; to diversify the provision of continuing professional education intended for entrepreneurs and other employed persons; to develop teachers' pedagogical competencies relating to entrepreneurship (teacher training institutes and vocational teacher colleges). Unfortunately, nowadays many of Russian universities are absolutely not prepared to reconstruction of learning environment like in Europe.

CONCLUSIONS

The initiatives that stimulate entrepreneurship through education at various stages of human development are of high importance because entrepreneurship serves as an important vehicle for economic and social prosperity.

Globalisation, the rapid development of technology and the lower cost of travel have completely changed the nature of traditional work. Universities must prepare students for work in a dynamic, rapidly changing entrepreneurial and global environment. For entrepreneurship to thrive, it must operate in a well-functioning business and regulatory environment. Even potential entrepreneurs wanting to start companies will not do so without the proper framework conditions (Wilson 2008, 112).

Entrepreneurship education can help to promote an entrepreneurial and innovative culture in Russia and in Europe by changing mindsets and providing necessary skills. The system of higher education of Europe has a staff of highly qualified teachers who use the entire set of known-learning technologies. As noted in this article, a lot of the Russian universities are not ready for the reconstruction of the learning environment, as in Europe. The degree of success for the Russian Federation of the application of these technologies depends largely on the position of the leadership of a particular university. Despite the complexity of the process of entrepreneurship, education is carried out with a high degree of efficiency if there is administrative support. As examples could be Moscow State University, Saint-Petersburg State University, University of Economics and other leading educational institutions of Russia.

Developing entrepreneurial qualities more passes in the process of learning, which helps to activate and enhance the personality of the educational activities of students as close to professional. The basis of this training is interactive forms of interaction with reliance on personal experience and the possibility of manifestation of personality functions (self-reliance, creativity, communication, etc.)

The most effective forms of interaction are such interactive forms, methods and teaching aids that promote independent search for information and the realization of their educational needs through practice. It is used to include discussions, interactive games, business cases, training, case studies, information technology, to have successfully employed in the practice of entrepreneurship education.

In an era of change, also it seems necessary for Russia to organize special teacher training programs for studying new innovative approaches to teaching entrepreneurial disciplines as it is done in Europe (Kakkonen, Itkonen, Tereschenko, Tereshkin 2013). The training programs allow to learn quickly about new approaches and technologies in entrepreneurial training and to avoid wasting time, which are inevitable in the method of trial and-error.

The data presented in this article show that entrepreneurship education requires the use of active learning methods that place students in the centre of educational process and enable them to take responsibility for their own learning to experiment and to learn about themselves. Such methods have been shown to make learning experiences richer and to have positive benefits for students in terms of improving their motivation with positive effects from their engagement with learning and long-term attainment.

Thus, teachers need the professional competencies to be able to guide students through the learning process rather than, as in traditional methods, communicating knowledge and information mainly through 'chalk and talk'. They need the skills to be able to ensure the relevance of education to students' learning needs and backgrounds and be able to support students in planning activity.

The teacher's role is especially important in the latter stage of activity-based learning that's in the reflection and generalization stages. Without the right support, students may not be able to draw lessons from their experiences. In this setting, there is a fine balance to be found between too distant interventions that leave learners under-equipped to make the most of the experience and too much supervision, which does not leave space for students to develop their independence.

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MULTICULTURAL EXPERIENCES IN THE NORU PROJECT: A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DANISH, FINNISH AND RUSSIAN STUDENTS

Pernille Christiansen, Monika Käll & Monika Kosman

INTRODUCTION

At the end of February we participated in the NORU Project's multicultural seminar in St. Petersburg. Through the research carried out during the seminar, cultural differences between the participating countries were discovered, analyzed and explained. The participants came from St. Petersburg State Forest Technical University, Russia; St. Petersburg State Technical University of Plant Polymers, Russia; Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences, Finland; and Lillebaelt Academy of Professional Higher Education in Odense, Denmark. Each of the educational institutions brought with them about four students, who participated in the seminar. The seminar ran over three days and the frame for the seminar was structured and arranged by the Russian participants prior to the start of the seminar.

The students worked together in four international groups with representatives from each of the participating countries. The groups were given different assignments to solve throughout the seminar. On the first day the students made a presentation in their national teams about their own nation. They had prepared the presentation prior to their arrival. Afterwards they were divided into four different groups with at least one student from each of the participating countries. On the second day, the students had a lecture on international communication by a Finnish professor in the morning and in the afternoon all went to see the Ethnographical Museum in St. Petersburg, where after the student went to visit different sights in St. Petersburg and

take pictures as a part of the assignment they were given the day before. In the evening a trip to the theater was arranged for the Finnish and Danish students. On the third day the students had to prepare and present their group presentation and in the evening there was a social event with dinner for all students who took part in the seminar.

This paper is a description and an analysis of the multicultural experiences gained during the seminar held in St. Petersburg between the 16th and 19th of February 2015. Focus will be on the cultural differences between the participating partners from Russia, Finland and Denmark, with the aim to analyze and reach an explanation. Focus was on the cultural differences that can have an impact on the students' cross-national work. In order for the students to gain a better knowledge about each nation's markets and customers, it is vital that they get to know the cultures. Additionally, it is important that a group consisting of different cultures learn about and from each other in order to improve collaboration and avoid misunderstandings that can lead to a negative outcome of collaboration.

Over the past decades, globalization has made the world more international. Globalization means that different cultures mingle with each other, as time and space become of less importance. Other cultures affect us as local cultures interact with cultures far away (Giddens, 59-62). As the world has become more global, a better understanding of other cultures has become of greater importance. As we work and live with different cultures, it becomes more noticeable that we do not all share the same background, values, and beliefs. The way of perceiving the world can vary between cultures, and in order to be able to work together, an understanding of the other's cultures is a necessity.

Understanding cultures is of great importance when working with foreign markets and customers. In order to create value for customers, a better understanding of the market and the customers' culture is essential.

When working with culture, there is no right or wrong culture. Culture is learned and can be described as a social organization in a society (Hofstede 2010, 20 - 24). In order to simplify our understanding of culture, it is common to talk about national cultures. National cultures can, however, contain many different social institutions. However, nations that have existed for quite some time do become more homogeneous as the nation's shared history gives its people a shared identity, values, and institutions (Hofstede 2010, 20 - 24).

Globalization also concerns education. Across borders, students' skills are compared and evaluated. When students in a country rank high on skills, other countries may observe how they achieve it and whether it makes sense to apply their techniques or approaches to their own culture. The success may also depend on cultural circumstances and/or resources (Usunier, 14-15).

Over the past decades an increasing number of students have spent a semester abroad as either as an exchange student at a partner university or as an intern at a company or organization abroad, often with the aim to improve intercultural competencies (European Union 2013). As a shorter alternative, some educational institutions also offer study trips abroad where students from different countries work together on specific projects.

METHODOLOGY

The method is based on qualitative research. The research design was agreed on prior to the arrival in St. Petersburg. Two of the students representing Denmark would collect data about cultural differences between the participating partners through qualitative research during the seminar. It was later expanded to be both during and after our stay, as more questions occurred in the weeks after the seminar. The interviews during the seminar were carried out as face-to-face interviews and those after the seminar on Skype and Facebook due to the physical distance. The research consisted of observations and qualitative interviews of students from the participating countries. All three days were a part of the research, also social events that took place in the evenings. The research has been limited to people who took part in the NORU seminar in St. Petersburg. Further, it must be stressed that only one of the four students from Denmark was a native Dane. The others were full degree students studying in Denmark, and come from Romania, Latvia, and Poland. Their behavior and understanding of the participants' national cultures might therefore not fully correspond to that of a Dane. However culture is learned and they have all been students in Denmark for at least three years. The approach is hermeneutic as it allows the individual to interpret and then analyze a given experience (Collin, 2011).

The research was carried out in English, as it was the only common language between the participants. However the level of English among the participants varied and at times participants, both teachers and students, from all three countries would use their native language and exclude those who did not master their language from the conversation. Thus, not all parts of conversations were understood, and at times the language barrier could cause misunderstandings.

Prior to the seminar in St. Petersburg it was discussed that Finns and Danes to a certain degree share a common identity as they are all a part of the Nordic countries, and therefore it was expected that the biggest variations between the countries would be those between the Russians and Scandinavians. It must also be taken into account that the research carried out is only focusing on the participating institution, and not the countries as a whole. Most of those students also turned out to be students who already had gained an international experience in their life; either through travels or studies abroad.

HOFSTEDE'S DIMENSIONS

In order to analyze and better understand the cultural differences deduced from research, Hofstede's national dimensions will be used. Hofstede's dimensions consists of six different dimensions, that reflect national culture based on research carried out in 40 countries. Thus national cultures can be compared based on the six dimensions, which are:

- Power Distance
- Individualism
- Masculinity
- Uncertainty avoidance
- Long Term Orientation
- Indulgence (Hofstede 2015)

When using Hofstede's six dimensions to compare Finland, Denmark and Russia, Denmark and Finland are in most cases pretty similar, but both countries are quite different to Russia on most dimensions. Based on the observations and interviews made during the NORU project, there is also a rather strong indication that Danes and Finns are pretty much alike, however with a few variations where the dimension uncertainty avoidance shows the biggest difference. Some dimensions also indicate that Finland lies between Russia and Denmark, however with a score that is more close to Denmark than to Russia. Below the six dimensions have been applied to analyze the cultural experiences gained during the NORU seminar in St. Petersburg.

Power distance

Hofstede's dimension "Power Distance" is defined as: *"the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally"* (Hofstede 2015). When comparing Russia, Finland and Denmark it shows a rather great difference between Denmark that scores 18 and Finland that scores 33 and Russia that scores 90 (Hofstede 2015).

This difference was also observed during the NORU project in St. Petersburg. Students from Denmark had a much more relaxed approach when talking to professors. One Russian student even mentioned in an interview that it at times appeared awkward if not respect-less. The Danes address for instance the professors by first name and talk about private matters and not only professional subjects, where the Russian students would use a more formal way to address a Professor.

From one of the interviews made with a Russian student, it was explained how the Russian education system teaches its students. According to her the lecturer is often standing in front of the class, reading the material out loud,

while the students take notes. Students are not expected to have questions or questioning the educator or the material presented, which can be interpreted as a respect towards the educator, where you do not question the material presented or the educator's knowledge. Some of the students representing Denmark mentioned that this is quite different from the Scandinavian model, where students in most cases are expected to have a dialogue regarding the material, ask questions for clarification, and have a critical approach to the material presented. However the Danish students might not know the material they have been taught by heart at the end of the semester, but focus is more to teach the student how to learn something. Another aspect that was mentioned was brought up by one of the Russian students who said that as long as you are a good student, you would be able to find a job. The Danish students expressed their view that in Denmark the grades alone will not give you a job, but good connections and the individual's personality are also of great importance. However, the subject was not discussed in detail, and it might therefore not show the whole truth.

Individualism

Hofstede's dimension "Individualism" is defined as "*the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members.*" (Hofstede 2015). This dimension also shows a gap between the three countries, where Denmark has a score of 74, Finland has a score of 63, and Russia a score of 39, which means Russia is a more collectivistic country than Finland and Denmark (Hofstede 2015). This difference was expressed when students from each of the participating countries were asked what made them proud of their nationality. For the Russians it was the history and being a big country with a lot of resources. One of the Russian students also said that the most important was "to be a good citizen", which can be seen as perception where you are expected be part of a greater whole. The Danes and Finns also showed some pride in their nationality, but what they mentioned first were sports teams that won international medals and national brands that are known abroad, and not the society as a whole. Danes and Finns also had to think a bit before they answered to this question. The relative high score on individualism may be explained by the political systems in both Finland and Denmark, where studies are free of charge and students are paid their living expenses during their studies. In Denmark for instance, a student is being paid 900 – 1000 euros a month to help cover costs like accommodation, food and books. Once you are a student you move away from home and start your own life. You are no longer dependent on your family as you were before. If you do not succeed in life there will always be a security net to catch you. Another difference that expresses more individualism in Scandinavia is the age of the students. New regulations on the SU (Student grants) are however forcing students to finish their studies on time, as there will be financial consequences if they do not

(SU 2015). Nevertheless, if a student wants to take a gap year or slow down the studies, they can do so.

The Danish students compared this to their observations from studying in Denmark. They have observed that it is quite common for students in Denmark to start a program and after a while realize they want to do something different in life and start all over again on a new study program.

As the Polish student representing Denmark expressed, then it seems like the students follow their own “speed” and are not “forced” much by the society’s norms.

Another example showing a higher collectivism in Russia compared to Denmark and Finland, was mentioned by one of the Russian students. She explained that in Russia it is common to buy presents for business partners, as it is in so many other countries, but it is not always only for the business partner, but often also for the business partner’s family. This can be interpreted, as a person is not just an individual; a person is a part of a greater group - a family, and one must show respect to the whole family by buying them a present too.

Masculinity

Hofstede’s “masculinity” dimension shows whether a country is driven more by competition, success, and achievement (masculine) or values like quality of life and caring for each other (feminine) (Hofstede 2015). When comparing the three countries, there is not a great difference, but there are however some. Denmark scores 16, Finland 26, and Russia 36 (Hofstede 2015).

One observed difference between the three countries was that the Russians seemed more goal oriented when given a task. It was important to deliver something. When given an assignment, the Danish and Finnish students expressed frustration that the Russians were too much in charge of the process. The Danish students liked to discuss the different options pros and cons before picking the final option. As one of the Danish students said, they meant it well. It seemed like they felt responsible for the success of the group work. They were the host and wanted the visitors to feel they could accomplish the teamwork, without any obstacles. Some of the Russian students also did a guided tour in their free time and went shopping with some of the visiting students. It seemed very important to them their guest were comfortable, and did not only see it as a seminar that took place at the school, as they were glad to spent their late afternoons and evenings showing their guests around.

The Finnish students did not talk a lot during the seminar. As one Danish student mentioned it seemed like the Finns at times were shy, though they seemed to listen and observe the situation. At all times they appeared very polite and considerate when the groups were discussing something. They never interrupted and made sure the others were able to freely speak their mind, for example when a group was discussing how to approach the project. Two out of four cross-national groups have experienced a situation, where a disagreement has occurred and the Finnish participant simply left the room without saying a word. It might have seem rude, but after gaining a better understanding of the culture though research it was understood that most likely Finns were trying to make a step back in order to come back with a fresh mind and try to reach an agreement. It seemed like they were in search of more harmony and wanted to make sure everyone in the group was satisfied.

Uncertainty avoidance

The dimension “uncertainty avoidance” is defined as “*The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these.*”(Hofstede 2015). This dimension shows a rather large variation between the countries. Denmark only scores 23, while Finland scores 59 and Russia 95 .”(Hofstede 2015). Danes might be more willing to take risks, as they know they will get another chance by society if they fail, as mentioned previously. During the seminar, the uncertainty avoidance was discussed among the students. The Russian students explained that there was a difference between the older and younger generation, when dealing with uncertainty. The younger generation was much more willing to take risks like moving to another city or abroad or quitting a job with the purpose to find another one. However, there still remains a greater difference when talking uncertainty between the countries.

The fact, that younger generation feels like the uncertainty avoidance is actually lower than according to Hofstede’s theory might be seen in the Globe research (Globe Research Project 2005).

Hofstede and Globe’s research do not agree on the level of uncertainty avoidance in Russia. Some of the Russian students mentioned that Russia is such a big and diverse country, that it’s very hard to generalize. It all depends on the generation and area. People living far from big cities are rather conservative, reserved and approach uncertainty very cautiously, whereas people living in big cities are more open and willing to take risks.

As the Russian students described it the younger generation is more straightforward and open in communication, while the older generation is more reserved and formal. When we went out for drinks the last day, the Russian girls told us that they speak their minds freely, there aren’t that many

taboos, like for example sexuality. They are not afraid of talking about the situation of homosexual people in Russia, whereas the older generation in Russia in general is more conservative.

Long Term Orientation

The Long Term Orientation describes, “*how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future.*” (Hofstede 2015). When looking at the long-term orientation dimension, Denmark scores 35, Finland 38, and Russia 81 (Hofstede 2015). This indicates that Danes and Finns are far from as long-term oriented as Russians. During the presentations on the first day of the seminar, the Russian students showed more knowledge and greater pride in their country’s history compared to the Danes and the Finns, and at the same time the Russian students also mentioned Russia is a country with a lot of opportunities. This could reflect a greater awareness of both the past and the future. The Russian students did not directly express that they have great focus on future orientation. However it was stated that focus on education is important. One of the Russian students said she believed it was very important to be a good student in order to succeed in the future.

Indulgence

The indulgence dimension is defined as “*the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses*” (Hofstede 2015). If the control is relatively weak the country has a higher indulgence score. This dimension also shows a relatively great difference between the countries. Denmark’s score is 70, Finland’s is 57, and Russia’s is 20 (Hofstede 2015) Through research it was expressed that the Russians find the Danes relatively liberal. The Danish students appeared more unpredictable to them than Russian and Finnish students. If a Danish student would disagree, the student would not hesitate to come forward and start a constructive debate, be it with other students or a Professor. This is also linked to the relatively low power distance in Denmark.

During the farewell dinner, the students also discussed what it is like to be a homosexual in Russia, Finland, and Denmark. It was explained that even though homosexuals in Russia were accepted, it was far from as liberal an approach as in Denmark and Finland. For instance, Russia has passed on a law against “homosexual propaganda” which outlaws information to under-ages about how it is to be homo-, bisexual and transgendered. Violation against the law will be sentenced to a term of penalty or imprisonment. This law reflects a culture with less indulgence. Another way the difference in indulgence can be seen is the way students are being taught. In Denmark students are expected to engage in a discussion with the educator. In some cases students are even given the opportunity to decide to a certain degree what they would like

some parts of their studies to contain. One could argue that this encourages students to follow their desires and impulses.

In order for the participating students to learn about the three different countries' approach to innovation and at the same time work together in cross national teams, it was a necessity to gain a better understanding of each other's cultures. The research carried out during the seminar did lead to a better understanding of the Russian, Finnish, and also the Danish culture. At the same time, some of the participants also felt they gained a better understanding of their own culture, as they got the opportunity to see it from another culture's perspective. Through the meeting with and an understanding of the different cultures, the participants seem to have gained better intercultural competencies, and are thus better prepared to work with foreign markets and its customers in the future – in particular Russia, Denmark and Finland.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The research carried out shows some differences between the participating cultures. In order to analyze the cultural differences, Hofstede's six dimensions have been applied. Denmark and Finland have shown some similar traits, most likely due to their common identity as Nordic countries, though with some variations. The Russian culture on the other hand has shown to be quite different from both the Finnish and the Danish culture.

The difference in **power distance** was expressed in the communication between students and professors. Where the Danish and Finnish students are used to more dialogue with their professors, a more conservative approach is used in Russia. The power distance was also expressed in the way students address their professors. In Denmark the students are expected to address their professor by first name, where as in Russia the students address their professors in a more formal way.

The difference in **individualism** between the participating countries can be seen in the students' pride of their nation. The Russian students expressed that it is important to be a good citizen and were aware of their nations' possibilities. The Finns and Danes on the other hand did not indicate as great an attachment to their respective nations. It was also expressed that as a student in both Finland and Denmark you are more independent, as students in those countries normally get their living expenses paid, and at the same time studies are free of charge. Thus students are not less dependent on support from family. Furthermore it was explained that when a Russian buys presents to a given business partner, the present is at times not only for the business partner, but also the business partner's family, which can be seen as a business partner is more than just an individual and thus reflecting collectivism.

The difference in **masculinity** between the participating countries became visible when the students were given an assignment in cross-national groups. The Russian students seemed more goal oriented and had a greater focus on the result, whereas the Danes and Finns preferred to discuss. The Finnish students tried to make everyone talk and seemed to be in search for harmony.

The difference in **uncertainty avoidance** was discussed among the students. According to Hofstede there is a huge variety in the score between Denmark, Finland and Russia, where Denmark has a rather low score, Russia a high score and Finland lies in between the two countries. It was discussed that the Danes might not be reluctant to take risks, as they know they will get help from the Danish state if they fail. The Russian students explained that there is a big difference within Russia when dealing with uncertainty avoidance. The older generation might be more conservative, and at the same time the country is huge and diverse that it can be difficult to generalize.

During the students' presentations on the first day of the seminar, the Russian students expressed a greater awareness of both their nation's past and the future, thus indicating that they are more **long-term orientation** compared to both Danish and Finnish students.

The difference in **indulgence** showed that Danes had the highest degree of indulgence among the participating countries. This was expressed by the Danish students' way of communicating and acting. As one of the Russian students said, the Danish students appeared to be more unpredictable. At the farewell dinner the right of homosexuals were discussed and they also indicated that Russia is less indulgent compared to Denmark and Finland.

The most visible cultural differences were on the dimensions power distance, individualism and indulgence. Cultural differences that are linked to the other dimensions, which are masculinity, long-term orientation and uncertainty avoidance were more difficult to explore and would need more research compared to the other dimensions.

The students only had three days to carry out the research, and due to a cancelled flight, the Danes arrived an hour later on the first day. They hardly slept the night before and therefore the research on the first day might have been influenced by their fatigue. The event in the afternoon on the first day was postponed, so the Danes could get some sleep, which lead to less time with the other participants and thus less time to carry out the research. The students did not spend all the time in company with the Russian and Finnish students. During meals the Finns and Danes would eat together while the Russians were somewhere else, and the social event on the second day was only for Finns and Danes, and the 3rd evening the Finnish students went home early.

Despite the fact that the students had three days to carry out research, it took a while before the participants got to know each other and become less formal. Everyone is playing a role either as a host or a guest and does not show their “real person” as much until they have become more familiar with each other. Hence the students only had a limited amount of time to carry out their research in St. Petersburg, and therefore also less time to get to know the other students and break the ice and gain more in depth information through research. A suggestion for future seminars would therefore be to intensify the social process so that the participants would spend more time together during the seminar, including meals and social events.

Another aspect to take into account is that culture is complex. When we talk about national cultures, it is not taken into account that we are talking about a much larger group of people and in theory also different societies. Russia for instance is a huge country compared to both Denmark and Finland that are relatively small countries.

Finally the risk of selection bias should be discussed. The research is based on a smaller group of students and may not correspond to the greater part of the country they represent. As mentioned above, the Danish delegation had only one Danish student. The others were from Poland, Latvia and Romania. As culture is something that is learned and not a genetic aspect, the students representing Denmark were however behaving more to the Danish culture than their own, as they have lived and studied in Denmark for two to three years. It should however be taken into account that they may not act as “Danish” as those who have spent their entire life in Denmark.

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