



# Onwards and Upwards

20 years of international business education in Rauma

Marina Wikman (ed.)





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## Foreword

20 years is quite a long time, but it seems as if it was yesterday, when we started with the English-tuition business programme, International Business with Marketing Logistics, in Rauma. The programme has evolved, and it has been modified over the years, but the basic idea has not changed: The aim has been, and still is, to provide education which truly prepares the graduates for the modern business life.

The name of the programme has changed. Originally, it was International Business with Marketing Logistics, and later International Business and Marketing Logistics, for both of which we used the abbreviation IBML. A few years back the name was updated to be International Business, and the abbreviation now is IN, the specialisations being Supply Chain Management and Service Design.

In this publication, we discuss the development of the IBML/IN bachelor programme to what it is today, and also look into its future. A graduate's story portrays the career she is holding today, providing a glimpse of where the degree can take a graduate. The history of the programme, how it came about, and why it is in Rauma, is also covered. There is also an analysis about why problem-based learning was selected to be the learning method, and how it still is part of the programme, but in a modified and modernized version. A crucial role in the programme today is designated to co-operation with different partners, and there is one article about co-operation with businesses, and another focusing more on the hidden curriculum in international co-operation projects. The future is more and more online, so one paper deliberates e-learning. Finally, the Dean of the Faculty of Logistics and Maritime Technology, which also the IBML/IN-degree programme is part of, takes a general look into the internationality of the faculty, as a whole. The statistics at the end of publication give the numbers and nationalities of the graduates of the IBML/IN programme from the beginning till September 2017, totalling 296 students from 24 different countries.

This publication aims at giving an insight into the programme and its development from the beginnings to the present day, and it also shows how we picture the future.

*Marina Wikman, Editor*  
Rauma, October 2017

## 20 years on – a graduate’s perspective

*Eeva Turkki*

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When people start saying that it has been 20 years since we first met, I get the chills. I just cannot get my head around the fact that it was the autumn of 1997 when we started studying in the first ever International Business with Marketing Logistics (IBML) bachelor’s programme at Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (SAMK) in Rauma.

A lot has happened since, and some of it might not have happened at all, had I not chosen to study at SAMK. Work, and various employers, have taken me all over the world, and for that I am very grateful. It has been rewarding to have had a possibility to see the world from various perspectives, and work in different cultural settings.

I work as a Logistics Coordinator at Teknos Rajamäki Plant in Finland. Nowadays my days are filled with working with the ERP solution for logistics, either supporting the logistics and warehousing in Finland, or Teknos Group on various ERP roll-out projects, and solution development work. I’m located in our Rajamäki Plant, but the latest projects have taken me mostly out of my own office, and to our various locations in Europe and Russia.

To better show what my work is like, I briefly describe one week in my business calendar:

**Monday**      *I wake up in Germany, the working week has begun already on Sunday, when I took the evening flight to Frankfurt. I meet my colleagues at the office, and we continue the ERP solution training for logistics & warehouse. The day goes by quickly while training, and soon it is time to drive to Frankfurt, and catch the evening plane back to Finland. It’ll be around midnight when I arrive home.*

**Tuesday**      *The day starts with a phone meeting with the rest of the ERP Roll-Out team members, updating schedules & training plans, checking target dates, confirming everyone is on the same page with the project in general, and the upcoming first solution test.*

*Then it is time to start checking a change request to existing functionality of the ERP system, and have a short phone meeting with*

*the representative of the system provider to go through the various scenarios and available options.*

*The afternoon is spent responding to support requests from various Group companies, replying to emails, and updating the training plan for warehouse on the ongoing roll-out project.*

**Wednesday** *The whole day is reserved for preparations for next week's solution test in Germany. Updating the test scenarios, checking basic data in the test environment, dividing the test load between various days and testers, creating test material.*

**Thursday** *A phone meeting in the morning, clear open support requests, and starting preparations for visiting the Group company in Latvia at the end of the month. Follow-up on last month's Logistics Competence Center meeting task list.*

*Colleagues from the Moscow Logistics Department are visiting Teknos Rajamäki Plant. Some of them have not visited here before, so a short introduction of the site in a meeting room, then visiting the production and warehouse premises, and finish the day by discussing the internal logistics and warehouse issues regarding Russia, and the ERP solution support.*

**Friday** *Getting ready for the next week's solution test in Germany. Phone meeting with the German, Finnish, Swedish and Danish colleagues participating in the test, some on site, some from their own country offices. Final check-up on status in different teams, agreeing on some practicalities concerning the test days, and agreeing on the daily follow-up times.*

*Processing a few other pending issues, so nothing is held back next week while I concentrate on the solution test, and schedule some follow-up meetings for the end of next week. Then it's time to wrap the week up, pack the laptop, and go home to rest before the next week begins.*

Being the first ever IBML group at SAMK made us a very close group of people, and it has been nice to see that some level of contact has remained through all these 20 years. Initially more active, then less frequent, but still, mostly thanks to social media, we still manage to stay in touch.

Most of us graduated in 2001, and started working either in Finland, or abroad. Some decided to continue with master's studies immediately after graduation, and others gathered a few years of work experience and then focused on educating themselves further, either in Finland or abroad. A few of us decided that they wanted to change their plans, and started studying in a completely different field, unrelated to business studies.

**The studies provided us with the basic tools to go into the world of business and start learning and growing into the positions, and posts we hold today.**

The general feeling of the first IBML group is that studies opened a lot of opportunities for all of us. The studies made us more culturally aware, open, active, and confident in reaching for our dreams and taking up new challenges, no matter if it was business, studies, moving to another country, or changing careers altogether. It provided us with the basic tools to go into the world of business and start learning and growing into the positions, and posts we hold today. The graduation was not the end of the story, it was only the beginning that took us to places we might not have even dreamed of while studying.

# International experts in demand in Satakunta - a new degree programme launched in Rauma in 1997 to satisfy the demand

*Erja Turunen & Marjo-Riitta Närvä*

.....

## **Introduction**

In this article, a short review of the roots of the degree programme in International Business with Marketing Logistics (IBML) is offered. It all started over 20 years ago, built largely on the development and successful implementation of two existing bachelor of business programmes offered at Satakunta Polytechnic (now Satakunta University of Applied Sciences). The degree programme in International Business, led by Dr. Anne Vihakara, was offered in the business and administration unit located in Kankaanpää, whereas the degree programme in Logistics, led by Senior Lecturer Marjo-Riitta Närvä, was offered at Rauma Business School.

In the early 1990s, the Bologna process brought the dual system of higher education to Finland. The city of Rauma as well as the surrounding region were among the first to welcome it. The need for a new type of highly educated workforce was felt in the area, comprising of a significant maritime cluster, strong paper and metal industries, very active small and medium-sized companies – many of them doing international business – as well as the public sector, which in the process of deepening European integration needed employees with strong international know-how and skills.

## **Combining two regional business programmes**

A wave of internationalization grew rapidly in Rauma. The degree programme in logistics offered at Rauma Business School was running successfully in the leadership of Senior Lecturer Marjo-Riitta Närvä. Various forms of collaboration, such as projects, company visits, and visiting lecturers had already been introduced and established. Close collaboration with forwarding agencies, e.g. Rauma Stevedoring Oy, as well as with the Port of Rauma are worth mentioning. Many of the partner companies were involved in international business and felt that the language skills of their current personnel were not sufficient. In addition, in the light of the EU, new knowledge would be required.

Therefore, it was very logical to develop a new international business programme by combining the strengths of two experienced teams, one in Kankaanpää and the other

in Rauma, and expand the bachelor programme portfolio of Satakunta Polytechnic by launching a degree programme in *International Business with Marketing Logistics*.

It was equally logical to run the new programme in Rauma. The southern part of Satakunta was proactive in promoting Rauma as its location. The message from Rauma business people and decision-makers was heard by the top management of Satakunta Polytechnic. There was a very strong commitment among them that a new degree programme be designed, taught in English, and including a double-degree opportunity for the participating bachelor students. Thus, the decision to run the IBML programme at Rauma Business School was based on both external needs and internal aspirations, as we see it.

### **Partnering internationally**

To assure personal international experience to all bachelor students participating in the new programme, an agreement of co-operation was signed between Satakunta Polytechnic and Buckinghamshire Business School, in the northern outskirts of London, UK, in November 1996. The aim was to promote international mobility (staff and students) and other forms of co-operation, such as joint development of course modules and joint research projects. The agreement aimed specifically at developing and executing a double degree.

The double-degree scheme was expected to increase the employability of the students by enhancing their international skills and competences in a foreign environment, during the third year of studies for the Satakunta students and during the fourth year for the Buckinghamshire students. At both institutions, internationalization at home would be advanced through the students coming from the partner university. They would collaborate with student groups as well as with businesses in Rauma and Buckinghamshire regions. A BA Honours in International Business with Marketing Logistics would be awarded in the U.K., whereas the Finnish title 'tradenomi', Bachelor of Business Administration, would be received from Satakunta Polytechnic.

Collaboration was planned for cohorts of 24 students both ways. Over the years, it was planned, the numbers would be reviewed subject to, e.g. the funding policies of the home institutions. Tuition fees collected by the British university were waived to begin with, as it was assumed that the exchanged numbers would remain more or less equal. There have been changes to this later on.

Why Buckinghamshire Business School? It is there where the concept of Marketing Logistics was introduced to the Satakunta colleagues by Dr. Ziad Naji and Dr. Gennady Polonsky. When the first draft of the curriculum was introduced to the advisory board members coming from regional business companies, the new way of seeing marketing and logistics as an integrated entity, rather than separate subjects, appealed to them greatly.

### **New pedagogical approach**

**The pedagogical approach to be used in implementing the IBML degree programme was unique at the time, at least in business education.**

The pedagogical approach to be used in implementing the IBML degree programme was unique at the time, at least in business education. The authors of this article had a chance to participate in a lecture given by Dr. Esa Poikela from Helsinki University at the health care unit of Satakunta Polytechnic in Pori. Dr. Poikela introduced the audience to the basic philosophy behind Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and explained how it is used by him and his fellow professors in educating medical doctors at Helsinki University. He demonstrated how effective the Problem-Based Learning approach had been. In less than an hour, he was able to convince us of the benefits of this extremely student-centered way of learning. As soon as we returned to Rauma, we shared our enthusiasm with our colleagues and proposed that the IBML degree programme be developed using Problem-Based Learning as its one and only pedagogical approach. The proposal was accepted, thus further curriculum planning got a solid pedagogical base.

The Curriculum was finalized in March 1997 in two separate documents. In Document A course Summary, the objectives of the new degree programme, its pedagogical approach and teaching and learning methods, the structure of studies, as well as the teaching staff listing were stated. Indeed, this was a team combining the expertise of colleagues not only from the Rauma unit but also from Kankaanpää Business School,

as well as from the business unit in Huittinen. Actual collegial networking took place already then.

An important quality assurance requirement we needed to take into account from the very beginning was this: to have lecturers and thesis supervisors with post-graduate qualifications in the team. This was particularly emphasized in an international context.

Looking back after 20 years, it is also interesting to see that we offered a 20 cr (30 ECTS today) module in 'Marketing Logistics in the Baltic Region' as specialization. An 'Enterprise Project' was also included, emphasizing the close contact with the surrounding business life. 'Work Placement' and 'Bachelor's Thesis' completed the required elements of the IBML curriculum.

In Document B of the curriculum, the course contents were described according to the format approved by central administration. Thus, we were ready to market the programme. For example, a brochure was made in collaboration with the Environmental Engineering programme, also a novelty then.

The first IBML student recruitment took place in spring 1997, and the first group of eager students with an internationally oriented mindset started their BBA studies at Rauma Business School in August 1997.

## **Way to go**

In 2003, the degree programme in International Business with Marketing Logistics received the first ever quality award given by the Ministry of Education for its innovative pedagogical implementation of bachelor-level education offered in the sector of universities of applied sciences. It was recognized for its high student satisfaction, excellent graduation rates, as well as multi-skilled experts appreciated by the business world not only in Satakunta but throughout Finland and more widely in Europe and the rest of the world.

For us, the journey to Pori on a winter day in early 1997 was one of the turning points in our professional careers. We are ever grateful for having been in the right place at the right time. With strong support from the Dean's office as well as the advisory board members, i.e. the business world, the actual IBML team was built. What a wonderful team it was – and still is: The students are in good hands.

# After 20 years – why are we still talking about PBL?

*Daniela Tanhua*

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## **Introduction**

In 1997, the degree programme International Business & Marketing Logistics (IBML) was introduced at Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (SAMK) as an answer to a clear demand of the local business life. We at SAMK were also asked to deliver graduates (tradenomi or bachelor of business administration) who would possess skills such as self-directedness, the ability of teamwork and of enduring stress, communication skills in many languages, initiative-taking, to name a few. As it is merely impossible to teach those meta-cognitive skills or competencies, we decided to answer to this demand by introducing problem based learning (PBL) as the learning environment for the new IBML curriculum.

## **Student-centred approach**

Since 1997 many things have changed at SAMK – resources were cut, the number of student-intake in the IBML programme changed, being increased from 24 to 60, and again decreased to 40, also the curriculum development was centralized – but we still realise international business learning within the philosophy of PBL. It is by far the most suitable learning environment to prepare the students for working in business in the future. The following central characteristics of the PBL-model as developed at Maastricht University are the framework for our understanding of business learning:

**Learning is student-centred.** Under the guidance of a tutor, the students must take responsibility for their own learning, for identifying what they need to know to better understand and manage the problem on which they are working, and for determining where they will get that information from – books, journals, faculty lectures, on-line information resources, etc.

**Learning occurs in small student groups.** Groups are formed of five to nine students. Characteristically, the students are re-grouped randomly with a new tutor at the start of a new course or module. This gives them practice in working intensely and effectively with a variety of different people.

**Teachers are facilitators or tutors.** The role of the tutor is often defined in negative terms. It is someone who does not give students a lecture or factual information, does not tell the students whether they are right or wrong in their thinking and does not tell them what they ought to study or read. The role is better perceived in terms of meta-cognitive communication. The tutor asks students the kinds of questions that they should be asking themselves to better understand and manage the problem. Eventually the students take on this role themselves, challenging each other.

**Problems form the focus and stimulus for learning.** The starting point of the PBL process is the stimulus. It represents the challenge students will face in practice and provides the relevance and motivation for learning. In attempting to understand the problem, students realise what they will need to learn about science. The stimulus, thus, gives them a focus for integrating information from many sources.

**New information is acquired through self-directed learning.** Additionally to the student-centred curriculum and the teacher as the tutor of learning, the students are expected to learn based on their own research shared with the peer students in their group. During this self-directed learning, students work together, discussing, comparing, reviewing, and debating what they have learned.

As a summary one can say that the most basic components of PBL are problem-solving, self-directed studies, information acquiring, group work and self-evaluation.

**PBL is by far the most suitable learning environment to prepare the students for working in business in the future.**

## 7-jump model

In the first 15 years of the IBML programme, we conducted our PBL sessions strictly to the 7-jump model.

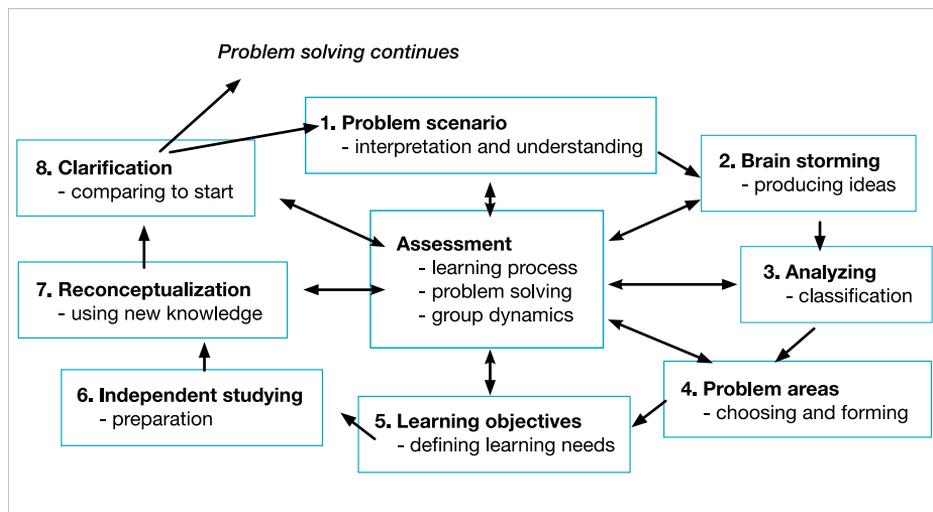


Figure 1. The scenario cycle (Poikela, 1997)

1. **Problem-scenario presentation** – the process starts in the stimulus opening session where students start to analyze facts and define terms and concepts that they do not understand at first sight.
2. **Brainstorming** – the problem areas are identified and classified into the main problem and sub-problems by unregulated discussions and throwing around ideas and thoughts that are somehow thought to be connected or related to the problem. Any questions, strange or unclear issues in the stimulus should arise an interest among students and stimulate curiosity and motivate to study the subject deeper.
3. **Analyzing** – students start to produce hypotheses and ideas, and classify the different problem areas. The ideas are either based on students' prior knowledge or are the result of rational thought.
4. **Problem areas** – problem areas are chosen, redefined and restructured, everything irrelevant is now neglected. This is the core of the analysis; a systematic inventory is made of the various explanations of the problem. Group members can draw

on all the prior knowledge they possess. This prior knowledge may be based on information acquired in earlier education, facts and insights obtained by reading newspapers and magazines or by discussing subject matter-related topics with parents or friends. The other group members and the tutor are allowed to probe the students' knowledge to the full, to introduce other explanations and question certain opinions. This stage of the PBL process, in which the students learn that there is a contradiction between what they know and what they should know, is an essential condition for PBL.

5. **Learning objective** – students make an inventory of the new information needed in order to be able to solve the problem, with questions such as “What does this mean? What do we need to learn before we can solve the problem?” This means that the learning objectives for the group's learning are formed and defined. The group select the objectives on which they will concentrate their activities and, if necessary, agree on division of labour. The stimulus opening session stops at this point with peer and self-evaluation.
6. **Independent studying** – usually the subject matter is so large that it has to be broken into smaller pieces so that each member of a tutor group has to do his/her own individual share of the studying. One essential lesson within the PBL-process is that students gradually learn to discover their own resources. Group members prepare themselves for the final phase by sharing the knowledge within the group, meaning that they teach the whole content to one another.
7. **Reconceptualization and clarification** – during the check-point, the students inform one another about their individual findings, complement their knowledge, correcting it where necessary. The collaborative learning at this stage guides the group to apply the newly formed knowledge on the problem displayed in the original stimulus. The group presents their solution to other study groups in the course.

This very formal process was also very time- and resource-consuming. Therefore, in the last five years, we have adapted it, to facilitate and smoothen the process: We create small groups that are presented with a broad stimulus in the beginning. The students develop about 20 learning objectives and create a check-point plan, as in which week they will cover which learning objectives. Although the stimulus opening is now reduced to one long session at the beginning of the course, it includes all of the initial five steps of the cycle. The tutor is responsible for the whole class and will circulate between the groups working in different rooms. The evaluation of the sessions by the tutor is not possible anymore.

The students create a memo of every meeting in the process – one stimulus opening and five to six check-point meetings. At the end of the course, the groups will produce the final report including theory and problem solution, and present it to the other groups. This ensures that although we have lesser resources available for PBL, all important skills for working in business are fostered in the process.

Another form of PBL is our format of joint module project learning with two or three partner universities. Still the same characteristics: work in teams, communication internationally, activity and responsibility sharing, creating team contracts, project plan and final report, as well as presenting the results to the client company that has assigned the group with their project task – the stimulus. The tutors are guiding the groups in the weekly counselling sessions.

## **Conclusion**

International Business & Marketing Logistics has been renamed to International Business in 2014 and the new specialization path of Service Design was introduced alongside the Supply Chain Management. Our graduates are still well trained in the important meta-cognitive skills asked for by the business life, as they have been in the last 20 years.

# Business co-operation in IBML/IN-programme - how to become professional during studies

*Teppo Lundell*

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## **Introduction**

Universities in Finland have used many different models where students, university professionals and working life combine their experiences aiming to produce new know-how and desired impact on region. The legitimacy of universities relies strongly on how those institutions manage to link their daily pedagogical actions with the surrounding society, especially with the companies located in the same geographical area. It is a question of how to combine boldness and innovative thinking of young students with professional knowledge of university lecturers in creating positive impulse on and together with the companies.

University pedagogy is traditionally seen as teaching and learning. From this tradition we have moved to discourse where universities are perceived as institutions of knowledge production. According to the traditional perspective, by producing competent graduates (professionals) higher education institutes will also produce a positive impulse on the surrounding society.

The rapidly and continuously changing society demands universities to change their operation mode. Producing knowledge should be treated as a different item than producing competent graduates. By bringing companies closer and even inside the university, SAMK has been able to create a learning environment with which the university has been able to produce new knowledge, help companies, generate positive regional impact and new learning experiences in a very enthusiastic atmosphere.

**In the IBML-programme we have integrated the knowledge of lecturers, students and company representatives to create new know-how which all participants can apply in their daily operations.**

Developing these co-operation models is crucial and a central performance indicator for universities. Development means identifying the operation models, which can be applied on current daily routines, but also on identifying the changing environment. The most important challenges are multi-disciplinary courses and workshops, international co-operation and productization of actions so that they can be communicated to all parties.

### **Business co-operation as integral part of learning**

Projects are a central learning environment in universities of applied sciences, and their objective is to bring up students who can work as professionals after graduation. Projects increase competences needed in working life and can include methods, which allow learning of meta-competences. With meta-competence we understand an individual's trained capacity to solve real-life problems, how an individual reacts in new and surprising environments, knowledge of how to use his/her own skills in different surroundings and how to learn new skills.

The mission given to universities is to produce new knowledge and new skilled professionals. The legitimacy for this mission comes from the surrounding society, especially from the constantly changing and evolving working life. University graduates of today need different skills than graduates ten years ago. Operating models and pedagogy at universities need also constant monitoring and revising according to the expectations and changes in the working life. Universities have to pay attention to the future trends and changes what comes to working skills and competences.

In addition to knowledge learned in classroom, in all jobs the graduates need:

- customer-oriented approach
- high work ethic
- courage
- creativity
- co-operation skills
- stress control
- tolerance to understand different people and handle uncertainty
- project management skills
- sense of responsibility.

These competences are also the main characteristics of entrepreneurship. They are features and skills included in our entrepreneurship studies which are intended for all degree students at SAMK.

We have adopted the European Commission's definition of entrepreneurship as the backbone for our studies. The Commission approaches entrepreneurship in a very practical manner:

*"Entrepreneurship is the individual's ability to turn ideas into actions. It embraces creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to set-up and run a business and the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. Entrepreneurship is now considered as a key competence for all which should be promoted at all levels of education, work, leisure and other social activities. These characteristics are needed in entrepreneurship, but they also make people more innovative in their existing business or place of work, stimulating their creativity and initiative." (The European Commission Frame for Entrepreneurship Education 2009)*

During their studies students participate in company and business projects in close co-operation with company representatives. They are responsible for producing the results under the guidance of professional lecturers. Projects are integrated in their curricula as part of professional studies, which enables them to understand the outline of future working life needs in a realistic way. Our motto is: "small companies are as valuable partners as big ones".

*"Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of Europe's economy. They represent 99% of all businesses in the EU. In the past five years, they have created around 85% of new jobs and provided two-thirds of the total private sector employment in the EU. The European Commission considers SMEs and entrepreneurship as key to ensuring economic growth, innovation, job creation, and social integration in the EU." (European Commission 2015).*

SAMK is in a key role providing opportunities for students to learn real competences and for companies to see what the students really can achieve. Studying at SAMK is a thoroughly planned mix of practical doing and theoretical thinking.

## **IBML/IN-programme and integrated company projects**

Company co-operation is an integral part of studies, courses and learning in SAMK's IBML/IN-programme. During the last ten years or more there has been a growing number of companies which have been working with our students and professionals. After the first contact and project results, it is very common that the companies want to continue co-operation in a new project. SAMK has clearly managed to create a concept which

helps companies both to contact us easily when they have an issue or problem, and, in addition to that, companies can use the project results to develop their operations and business. Companies have been satisfied with the customer-oriented approach and the added value they get from projects.

How do we do it? As traditional it may sound, everything starts with the strategy and clear goals. The IBML/IN-programme has been in the front line testing different approaches how to produce skills and competences. Problem Based Learning was adopted early on in IBML and there was strong will and belief that real life case studies would be the strategically right choice to train our students.

The European Commission's framework states: Entrepreneurship is the individual's ability to turn ideas into actions. IBML/IN has had determined staff members who have understood that nothing happens if one does not take the first step and start doing. Moreover, there has been clarity of roles and division of labour. It has been very clear that no one can do everything alone, but with the help of professionals better results can be reached. Teamwork between lecturers and students has been one corner stone of success.

In the very beginning we started to follow a certain process which has helped us to formulate our services in a way that makes it easy for companies to join in our network.

After a few company projects we evaluated the whole process and drew a picture describing all the steps.

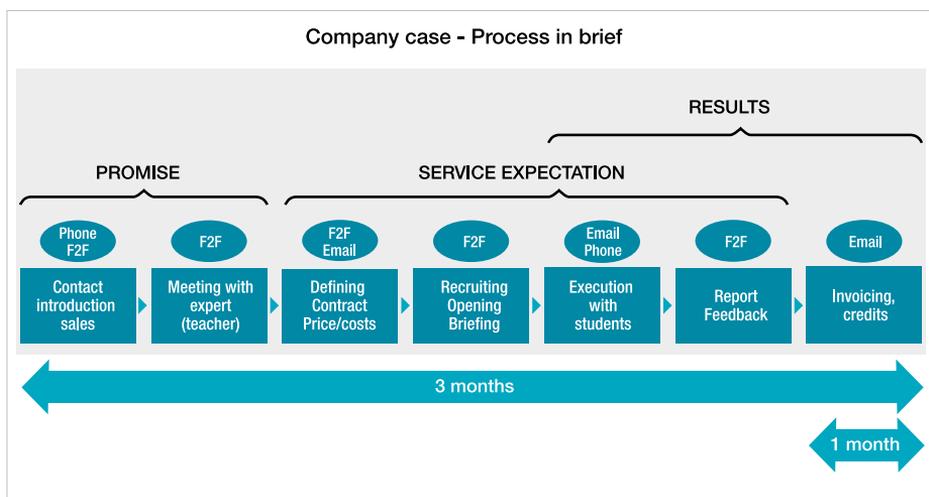


Figure 1. Company case process

The core of success is that small and medium-sized companies have realized that they sometimes lack capacity to do company level business development or time to innovate solely by themselves. We have shared our working models and invited company representatives to plan the content of the courses. We offer the basic framework but companies can bring their own ideas before we start doing anything. We are constantly adjusting the courses and regularly monitoring that we are producing the right content.

As important as the needs of the company is that when running the project, professionals should be able to concentrate on the tasks which make the best use of their skills. During the process there is always one professional who is contacting and introducing the projects to companies. He is also the one who takes care of all the bureaucracy of documentation and recording. That arrangement has given lecturers more freedom to use their capacity to guide students, and collect and produce new information, which is needed in that particular project.

Running and controlling the projects in the changing company environment requires strong experience of project management. University personnel plays a crucial role in successful projects. Experienced teachers add credibility and give companies the possibility to use current business knowledge. At the same time we need people, who are open-minded so that we are ready to try new solutions to new problems. With this experience, we have increased the project management skills of students, and also managed to add project-oriented tools to the teachers' toolbox.

With real-life projects we are in the IBML/IN-programme enabling the birth of new professionals who are ready to face the challenges after graduation. With co-operation we can transfer the latest solutions based on academic knowledge to the companies in a way that they can really use them in their daily operations. Company projects bring students and companies closer together. As a result, the projects often pave the way to work placement, summer job, and in many cases career. In that sense, projects are what SAMK's mission wants us to do: every one of our students gets employed.

### **Towards new competences**

With new methods of learning and new learning environments, we have been able to increase the innovation potential of students. Students are working in multi-disciplinary groups with more than one nationality represented. It has been clear from the beginning that, as we have international business students, we must have international business cases. One remarkable feature of the IBML/IN-programme is that we have started international co-operation with not only foreign universities but also foreign companies.

We have yearly at least two international projects where our students are working with students in Germany and USA in the same project. There is also always at least one company with which students co-operate. In these multilingual and multicultural groups, students learn to utilize their own competences and recognize the competences of their fellow students. Using these innovative learning environments develops the use of innovation potential of the students.



*Picture 1. IBML-students reporting company project results from Rauma to Dundalk, Ireland*

Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment executed an evaluation in year 2012 which was performed by the consultant office Business Arena Oy. In the evaluation companies were allowed to tell their opinion anonymously and the target was to evaluate the performance of SAMK company projects, including the projects in the IBML-programme. The experience was largely positive. In their feedback companies told that the actions always started from their needs and the results provided by the students were realistic, concrete and gave immediate benefits to their businesses.

- “An effective, business-like working model. Easy to approach. SAMK speaks same language with us.”
- “We have utilized students in our customer and sales projects and it’s been useful.”
- “More of this.”
- ”Positive image. Right atmosphere. Casual and relaxed, but strong business connection.”
- ”Good and positive partner. We (company) have been in contact again. Glad to co-operate.”

(Markkanen, Pienonen, Sorvari & Business Arena Oy 2013, 73–75.)

Transferring new knowledge and questioning current business models with fresh new ideas were one of the main results for the companies: “Students have brought new ideas and applied fresh young thinking in the co-operation. It has made us think in a new way.” (Markkanen et al. 2013, 73–75.)

As a result, we have created a process where companies enjoy benefits from the co-operation, our students get real life experiences and are forced to take responsibility and our professionals get the possibility to test their competences in the changing business environment. At the same time we are developing our pedagogical toolbox so that SAMK is and will remain an excellent performer and competitor when new generations make decisions about where to start studies.

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# Liaison of curriculum, business and international collaboration

*Marina Wikman*

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## **Introduction**

Internationality, teamwork and co-operation with business have been at the core of the IBML/IN degree programme from the beginning. Business subjects, e.g. marketing and accounting, provide the students with business knowledge and build a solid factual basis for a career. However, to be successful in working life requires skills that cannot be taught as such, but rather with a hands-on approach or hidden curriculum. To establish opportunities both to use the gained knowledge and to acquire skills, such as working in a team and taking responsibility, triangular projects are used.

Projects have always been part and parcel of the IBML/IN programme, but in 2009 an additional stimulus was added to them. A third party in the projects would be a partner university abroad. The students were teamed up online in mixed groups to work together on the project. This has generated an even wider perspective on the topics, and produced even more innovative results for the companies, as well as provided the students with real-life international experience.

## **Teamwork skills for students**

For the students the benefits are versatile and learning goes beyond the business subjects, giving them a chance to experiment international online teamwork. The advantages obviously include the chance to apply gained subject knowledge, but also to deepen the understanding and experience how businesses work practice. Even more importantly, the triangular projects demonstrate how different skills and competences are useful in a team, and how the skills of each member can contribute to a better result. The students gain hands-on experience on how important it is to have a joint understanding of how the project will proceed as planned, and why it is crucial to compose common rules for the members by drafting a team contract to avoid conflicts and confusion. Awareness of what has been agreed and what is expected from everyone, helps them to work smoothly together, meet deadlines, and listen to each other.

For the students it means networking with students in another country, in addition with the participating company. They have a chance to work in international teams, which brings them challenges that await them when they enter their professional careers, as well. Additionally, the teams being international brings about cultural encounters, as there are several nationalities, and, thus, several cultural approaches present. Due to this, the team members might occasionally have different ideas about how the work should be done, what it means to meet deadlines, or how the team should be organised.

There might be communication challenges, as well. The language skills of the team members can be on different levels, and will cause misunderstandings. It is not only the language skills as such, but also different accents are a source of confusion, as they sometimes are hard to understand for the others, especially so when communication happens online. Furthermore, the amount of speech may vary considerably; as, depending on the culture, items and issues are described extensively or with just a few words, as is typical of e.g. Finnish people. A further complication can be the lack of non-verbal cues as they are not as clear online as in face-to-face meetings.

Working online creates its own challenges. They can be as simple as having technical problems, such as bad connection, and due to them it is not possible to have the meeting, as agreed. Time, too, plays a role; firstly, if the time zones are very different, it requires compromising from both parties, and the meeting times are sometimes very early or late for one party. Furthermore, this means that the understanding of punctuality often differs from culture to culture and consequently causes conflicts concerning schedules and starting times of meetings. Other essential skills to be learnt here are taking responsibility for one's actions along with gaining self-discipline.

For students knowing people in other countries and having worked with them, can lead into partnership and co-operation later on, and the project companies may become their principals when writing their theses and completing their practical training, or they might even turn out to be their employers after graduation.

**The students say that the projects have given them courage and a better overview of how business works and why and where all the subject knowledge is needed.**

### **Benefits for university and companies**

Through projects, the university has the chance to fortify their relations to business, to work closer together with companies, and to better understand their needs. The university staff will have similar benefits as the students, and working together with colleagues in partner universities, can provide them an opportunity to network internationally. The staff works together on planning and designing the projects. They also are the ones providing the professional knowledge the students need for the project, i.e. they need to have a clear understanding of the gained knowledge so far, as well as of the new knowledge needed for the project, to be able to coach and counsel the students. Thus, the role of the staff in the projects is to be facilitators and back-up.

Combining the gained knowledge and having the chance to apply it in projects for real companies, has made the studies more concrete and increased the understanding of reality of working life. Over the years, the students have been doing several projects for companies, researching agreed topics. The participating companies have supplied the students with topics and information, and in return received several suggestions for how to approach the topic or solve a challenge they are facing. When looking at issues from the outside and through young eyes, there can be very innovative and fresh ideas, and new angles. The companies have young motivated people researching for them, and additionally there might be a connection formed and they find potential, future employees for them in the process.

## **Projects in curriculum**

The curriculum plays a big role in enabling project work, as the projects need to have a connection to the subjects that the students are studying and learning about. The IBML/IN-programme has been constructed in a way that it not only provides the students with the knowledge needed in working life, but besides that ensures that the students have a chance to apply the theory in practice. Embedding projects into the curriculum requires flexibility in the implementation, as it needs to be possible to include projects into the schedule, whenever there is a chance of one.

Over the years projects have been done involving Finnish and foreign companies, and IBML/IN students have been working together with e.g. German, American, Australian and Irish students. A sign of co-operation having worked well for all the parties is that both university and business partners have been willing to be part of the next co-operation projects, as well.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, the value of these kinds of projects becomes clear, when talking to students. The comments have been quite similar from project to project and year to year. Even if they say that it has been hard work, and sometimes the teams have had some occasional challenges, in the end the learning in the projects clearly exceeds the negatives. Additionally, the projects have given the students courage and a better overview of how business works, and why and where all the subject knowledge is needed.

The format of the triangular project work has turned out to be an excellent way to bring internationality, business and teamwork to the IBML/IN programme and the students, and the share of international online projects for companies is growing constantly. Mixing education with real life business and international connections has become an integral part of the IBML/IN-programme, as it has proven to be a well-working concept for all three parties with win-win-win results.

# From the present to the future - Role of e-learning

*Riitta Tempakka*

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## **Introduction**

In recent years we have witnessed the development and implementation of an increasingly wide range of virtual environments for learning and training, through the support of advanced technologies. The delivery of learning, training or education programmes by electronic means is gaining in importance. Digitalization has transformed the world of higher education and teaching – also at SAMK, and the transformation continues. As online learning and the use of online technological tools in higher education continues to grow, higher education faculty are expected to incorporate these tools into their instruction.

Learning is moving from a formal group process towards an increasingly open, continuously occurring free-form process not tied to fixed locations. Learning and course credits will be gathered from any corner of the world, wherever the best sources of knowledge can be found. This scenario also challenges higher education actors to develop new pedagogic skills, and above all, a new kind of operating model.

## **E-learning in Higher Education**

Obviously, communication has a core role in all kinds of educational interactions, but teaching methods have changed communication styles from plain lectures to multimedia presentations. Learning environments are designed differently depending on the learning objective, target audience, access (physical, virtual and both), and type of content.

Communication technologies are generally categorized as asynchronous or synchronous. Asynchronous activities use technologies such as blogs, wikis, and discussion boards. Synchronous activities involve the exchange of ideas and information with one or more participants simultaneously.

The extent to which e-learning assists or replaces other methods of learning and teaching varies a lot, ranging from none to full distance learning online. For example, hybrid learning or blended learning can refer to classroom aids and laptops. In turn it

can refer to an approach where the traditional time spent in class is reduced, but not eliminated, and replaced with some online learning.

Virtual learning opportunities for students' professional development are based on differentiated, individual, procedural, competence-based approaches. It is clear that ICT alone does nothing to enhance online pedagogy. Advancement in ICT has created remarkable opportunities for higher education to expand the educational process beyond the traditional classroom to include geographically dispersed students. It is important to understand how ICT is being used and how it impacts students and teachers.

Virtual education has an important place in students' professional development, and during rapid growth of scientific and technical potential the need for the highly qualified specialists, mastering the subject, is growing fast. The virtual educational environment of higher education consists of following components: informative, integrative, communication, coordinating, developing and professional focusing. These cognitive and logic-subject components provide professional knowledge for individuals. The results of virtual learning are as those of any other type of learning via which students receive the necessary competences.

The concept of traditional classroom changes to online learning, where students learn in invisible classrooms. These technologies are becoming an essential part of all aspects of teaching, for example teaching methods have changed communication styles from traditional style of lecturing to multimedia presentations. Teachers and students are applying this technology in all kinds of lectures and presentations.

### **Technology of virtual learning at SAMK – Moodle, HILL & BYOD**

Today, at SAMK we offer both on-campus and distance mode studies for students. On-campus degree programmes use blended learning, and virtual learning is an integral part of them. Some students choose to study in distance mode because of family and/or work commitments, or because they live too far from the campus.

Moodle, the Learning Management System (<https://moodle.org>) is used for asynchronous sessions. There resources are published as videos, power point documents, documents or spreadsheets in pdf etc. Forum, chat and assignments are also Moodle features used by teachers and students. Moodle allows both course management and monitoring course delivery.

For the synchronous sessions, i.e, web conferences, HILL, a WebEx-based application framework is used. HILL (<https://hill.webex.com>) is a concept developed at SAMK to provide online classes. The HILL concept focuses on learning not technology, it enables teaching independent of place and makes it possible to study around the world. The concept diminishes the staff's need for moving from one campus or place to another because of common events, staff training or guidance for students in practical training. In addition, it improves eco-efficiency and use of time and provides savings. HILL can be used to provide online contact classes, to give counselling and in addition, it can be used to arrange online events or meetings. Also, students can use it to independent work online. Moreover, everything can be recorded. If it is important to share or/and discuss something, HILL is suitable even for a large number of individual participants.

In addition, from the beginning of autumn semester 2017 SAMK requires the use of personal terminal equipment in studies. BYOD or Bring Your Own Device means that students make their assignments mainly with their own computers. BYOD is an operational model, which is becoming increasingly common in enterprises and educational institutions. The BYOD concept includes wireless network, printing, data protection, applications, IT classrooms, virtualization, user management, operators, electric supply, communication, support, training etc.

## **Experiences of digital education**

Studies have concluded that students feel more comfortable when communicating with others online. E-learning is a very useful mode of learning among students, as it changes behavior and thinking of students, by providing powerful tools of learning. Reid, Malinek, Stott, and Evans (1996) state in their research argument that e-learning can produce much better results than face-to-face interaction for a complex communication such as problem solving and decision making.

Benefits of e-learning have been widely discussed in literature. Bal-dwin-Evans (2004) would recommend e-learning due to it being flexible, interactive and efficient. Typical critical success factors, as evidenced in literature, are flexibility in time management for learning; active participation of faculty members; the establishment of control mechanisms ensuring that learning occurs; course content quality and structure; the promotion of interactive elements among faculty members and participants; the use of standardized and developed technologies; teaching and learning styles; learners' motivation; learners' technical competency; organizational support of e-learning activities.

Although e-learning usage has increased, and we are familiar with the system, both teachers and students still have a lot to learn. As said, interaction is one of the expected benefits, but at the same time it represents one of the major e-learning weaknesses, as well. Like Rodrigues et al. amplify, there is a lack of ability to stimulate active interaction within the e-learning course. At SAMK our solution to improve interaction has been HILL, where experiences of students, teachers and staff are good.

Digitalisation has also transformed the world of higher education and teaching – and the transformation continues. IBML/IN, as all degree programs, uses the hybrid method, and the digital tools are used regularly and frequently as part of teaching. Considering this development, at SAMK we have also started two degree programs in engineering in autumn 2017, where teaching takes place online. Students study on campus only twice in an academic year a few days at a time, the rest of the teaching happens online.

Considering the pivotal role played by learners in higher education today, we would start asking “how do learners consider e-learning today?” and “what does e-learning mean for learners?”. We intend to investigate the experiences from the learner perspective, and also from teacher perspective to improve our quality and satisfaction of learning.

**It is necessary to remember that an e-learning system is not a pure technological tool, but it is the way how the e-learning system is used by teachers and participants that makes the difference.**

## **Conclusion**

For many years, both academic and practitioner literature has been analyzing the critical success factors of e-learning. High quality of learning is guaranteed when the e-learning system is easy to use, it allows accessing the same content on different platforms and it ensures good levels of emotional and social communication among the learners and the teachers. It can be stated that the educational paradigm has shifted from the teacher-centric to a learner-centric model in e-learning. Good learning environments are learner-centered, knowledge-centered, assessment-centered, and community-centered. In e-learning context, this implies that learners expect to receive a high quality of learning.

The adoption of a successful e-learning system requires that learning strategies and objectives need to be well thought out, carefully implemented, and constantly aligned with learners' needs. It is necessary to remember that an e-learning system is not a pure technological tool, but it is the way how the e-learning system is used by teachers and participants that makes the difference. This signifies that learners should be able clearly to see the benefits for which the e-learning system has been built. It is also important to notice that an e-learning system will not be able to substitute the face-to-face interactions between students and teachers. In e-learning students must be able to use the systems not only as a powerful platform to share contents and materials, but also as an additional environment to autonomously self-evaluate their progress. Today's students perceive mobile and non-desktop solutions more favorably than traditional ones. This creates additional complexity since a multi-device e-learning system might require significant investments as different devices require specific configurations of the system itself. SAMK is aware of this as the whole campus is a learning environment, and BYOD concept has been taken into use.

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# International Faculty of Logistics and Maritime Technology

*Jaana Vase*

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We started with our first English-tuition degree programme International Business with Marketing Logistics, or today International Business, in 1997. In 2017 our faculty offers four bachelor level degree programmes in English: International Business, Logistics, Industrial Management and Sea Captain. It is also possible to continue in English to Master's level with our Business Management and Entrepreneurship, and Maritime Management programmes. The programmes taught in English have aroused interest among students from more than 30 different countries all over the world.

**The programmes taught in English have aroused interest among students from more than 30 different countries all over the world.**

Internationality is very important in the business education provided at SAMK Campus Rauma. The Faculty of Logistics and Maritime Technology, which contains also business programmes, including International Business, sees international activities as an essential part of all programmes. There has been teaching in English since the beginning of the university's history. In the early 1990s the credits taught in English were tailor-made for a small group of students. From 1995 to 2017 the amount of English-taught credits has become 20-fold, and has grown from 50 to 1000. There is no sign of recession in this matter. The growth is mainly the outcome of having enthusiastic teachers and other members of staff who willingly started to teach and work in English and made our internationalization possible.

The number of foreign students has also grown remarkably. In year 1994 Kanali Campus had one incoming exchange student. The number of incoming students has grown a lot since then, and has stabilized to 40 – 60 annually. The foreign students come from all continents: exchange students mainly come from European countries, and the degree students mostly from Asia and also Africa. The foreign degree students have since the start of English-tuition programmes added to the

number of foreign students and nationalities, and today the total number of foreign degree students is about 130.

We also send tens of our students on exchange annually, and we are also pleased that the volume of internships abroad has risen from nil to around 20 in an academic year. Completing part of the studies or work placement in another country is an opportunity to internationalize and grow professionally.

SAMK Campus Rauma receives several foreign lecturers and professors annually, and we also send our own faculty to co-operation universities abroad. These exchanges make it possible to widen the perspectives of the faculty, of the students, and to give new angles to international projects, the number of which is growing constantly.

“Learning by doing” or problem based learning has been the motto of this campus since the IBML programme started. It was a new approach to studying at the time, and proven successful, it was also adapted in other business programmes. The PBL method was an important reason for the IBML programme being awarded a quality prize by the Ministry of Education in Finland in the academic year 2002–2003, only five years after having started.

Also, characteristic of the business studies at SAMK Campus Rauma is a strong connection with working life. This approach is introduced already at the beginning of the studies and it deepens and widens throughout the studies, thus giving the students an understanding of working life in practice. Furthermore, blended learning is used widely in all of the programmes, and especially online lectures and even online teamwork have become a regular feature of studying. E-learning is here to stay.

**IBML/IN graduates since 1997 by nationality**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Bangladesh	2
Bulgaria	1
Cameroon	2
Canada	1
China	24
Colombia	1
El Salvador	1
Estonia	2
France	33
Ghana	3
Hungary	1
India	2
Iran	1
Italy	2
Kenia	1
Lithuania	2
Nepal	7
Pakistan	2
Russia	4
Tanzania	1
Thailand	1
USA	1
Vietnam	6
<b>Subtotal - other countries</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>FINLAND</b>	<b>195</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>296</b>

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It seems as if it was yesterday, when we started with the English-tuition business programme, International Business with Marketing Logistics, in Rauma. The aim has been, and still is, to provide education which truly prepares the graduates for the modern business life.

A few years back the name was updated to be International Business, and the abbreviation now is IN, the specialisations being Supply Chain Management and Service Design.

In this publication, we discuss the development of the IBML/IN bachelor programme to what it is today, and also look into its future. The publication aims at giving an insight into the programme and its development from the beginnings to the present day, and it also shows how we picture the future.

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