



# Impactful Learning Through Business Case Competition

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## ABSTRACT

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The speed of the fast-growing entrepreneurial ecosystem in Finland has brought new challenges in terms of competency for new graduates. To catch up with the accelerating change, students from Finnish business schools need to gain proficiency in entrepreneurship skills already from early years at college. Accordingly, inspiring students to do development work is an important starting point to join the entrepreneurship world.

The thesis discusses why Business Case Competition, combined with Training, is a valuable learning method. The study is aimed at refining the concept of Business Case Competition in Finnish Business Education and investigating possible learning outcomes from this teaching method. Tampere University (TAMK) took the initiative to enhance business school education in terms of practical learning experiences by the most professional and impactful learning experiences for business students around Finland.

The study was conducted as a development work using a qualitative research approach. Creativity Race Competition and Business Case Competition Training were carried out as experiments of the concept to gain a better understanding of student learning about entrepreneurship skills through this learning method. Data for this research were gathered with the help of the Director of Tampere Business Case Club **Mari Rytisalo**. The main purpose is to find out the evident entrepreneurship skills which contributed to the final ranking results of the teams. Most importantly, video records of students' performances during the competition was an essential source for the final evaluation.

The majority of respondents stated that they had seen dramatic developments of skills in students. Students and coaches were motivated to participate in more case competitions, and the jury members were satisfied with the outcomes. In comparison with the perspectives of real-life working requirements, these Finnish business students need to improve more in innovation, risk-taking attitude, and open-minded mindset.

In conclusion, Business Case Competition is an effective way to teach entrepreneurship skills in a specific short time. There are several improvements in terms of designing learning experiences for students, case content, and further collaboration in the future. However, the objectives were achieved to spread the message and make a brand new difference in Finnish Business Education.

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Key words: business case competition, entrepreneurship, skills, learning experiences, learning methods, competitive

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**ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS**

TAMK	Tampere University of Applied Sciences
cr	credit
C	Case
M	Managerial Skills
T	Technical Skills
E	Entrepreneurial Skills
PM	Personal Maturity Skills
UAS	University of Applied Sciences

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background information: General situation of Business Case Competition in Finland.

In the past few years, Finland appears to be one of the fastest-growing nations with an upward trend in its entrepreneurial activities and established startups. According to a report by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy (Business Finland), around 4000 startups are established every year across the whole country. This accelerating growth also brings along a more significant pressure for education to make sure the quality of the future labor market remains compatible with the changes. In the context of Finnish Business schools, teaching entrepreneurship and developing relevant skills has become one of the mainstream in education. There have been more partnerships between the schools and local businesses to deliver more practical development work for students as a part of their study, which opens the door for a new challenging learning method that has not yet been implemented in Finland: Business Case Competition.

Business Case Competition is a type of academic contest that originated in the United States for business students, which is frequently used as a teaching method to develop many practical skill sets for students to prepare for their real-life working situations. Business case competitions are popular and respected around the world. Long traditions with this concept include the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Rytisalo, 2019). In a business case competition, many groups of participants compete with each other and strive to create the best solution to solve a specific problem provided by a case company in a time frame. These competitions can be organized between groups of students in the same class, or be organized nationally or internationally (Karen Schweitzer, 2019). More often, the national and international case competitions are more challenging due to the combination of different backgrounds, cultures, educational systems, et cetera. Therefore, some institutions have developed training for the partici-

pants to be highly competent in challenging competitions. Worldwide, this concept of training is not new, and each of the training is conducted differently depending on background, cultural aspects, and purposes.

Case competitions in Finland have been organized independently and privately by a few Finnish higher-education institutions such as Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, Aalto University and Tampere University (TAMK), or consulting corporations such as KPMG, Nordea, Mckinsey, et cetera. In February 2018, TAMK was invited to be the only Finnish higher-education institution to participate in an international Case Competition Heavener International Case Competition in Florida, USA. Being inspired by the professional and academic organizing of the program, Tampere University (TAMK) took the initiative to enhance business school education in terms of practical learning experiences by creating the most professional and impactful learning experiences for business students around Finland.

## **1.2. Purpose and objectives of this study.**

The study aims at introducing the concept of Business Case Competition into Finnish Business School Education by organizing a training program and investigating possible learning outcomes from this teaching method. The thesis discusses why Business Case Competition is a valuable learning method and documents the foundation of the first National Case Competition in Finland: Creality Race. There are three main objectives:

- Research on what entrepreneurship skills are demonstrated and utilized the most during the competition, and followed by an indication of actual learning outcomes from participating students.
- Document the foundation to organize national case competition and preparation training at TAMK.
- Propose possible improvements for designing student learning, and analyze the feedback collected from the coaches and business jury members to show the standards in real-life business world that should be met.

### **1.3. Thesis questions**

The goal is to demonstrate skill sets which can be learned by students and professional advantages can be obtained. Thus, the research tries to answer two questions:

- (1) What skills Finnish business students can learn from this teaching method.
- (2) Feedback from the jury members about the performances compared to real-life expectations, and what can be done better in the next Creality Race.

The first question tries to indicate the results of training and intensive learning through the case competition, reflecting the effectiveness of applying this teaching method into an educational path. The second question evaluates the impact of Creality Race on helping the participants realize the needed skills required by Finnish business employers, as a base of reflection to know current reality understanding of the students and what can be improved in the programs at TAMK.

### **1.4. The commissioner's vision**

As the first higher education institution to organize the national case competition, TAMK's vision is to make this platform become a strong path as well as a new culture in business education and bring the first international case competition to Finland in 2021 (Rytisalo, 2019). Ideally, this is an excellent way to promote Finnish cultures in education to the world. The ultimate aims are to explore the reaction of Finnish students, educational practitioners regarding this teaching method and to learn by developing.

### **1.5. Thesis structure**

The structure of this thesis includes six major parts. The first chapter is an introduction that described mainly about background and motivation of this work; research objectives, purposes and research questions; and most importantly is the commission's ambitious vision which showed the importance of this development work. There are many concerns about the adaptability of the new refinement into

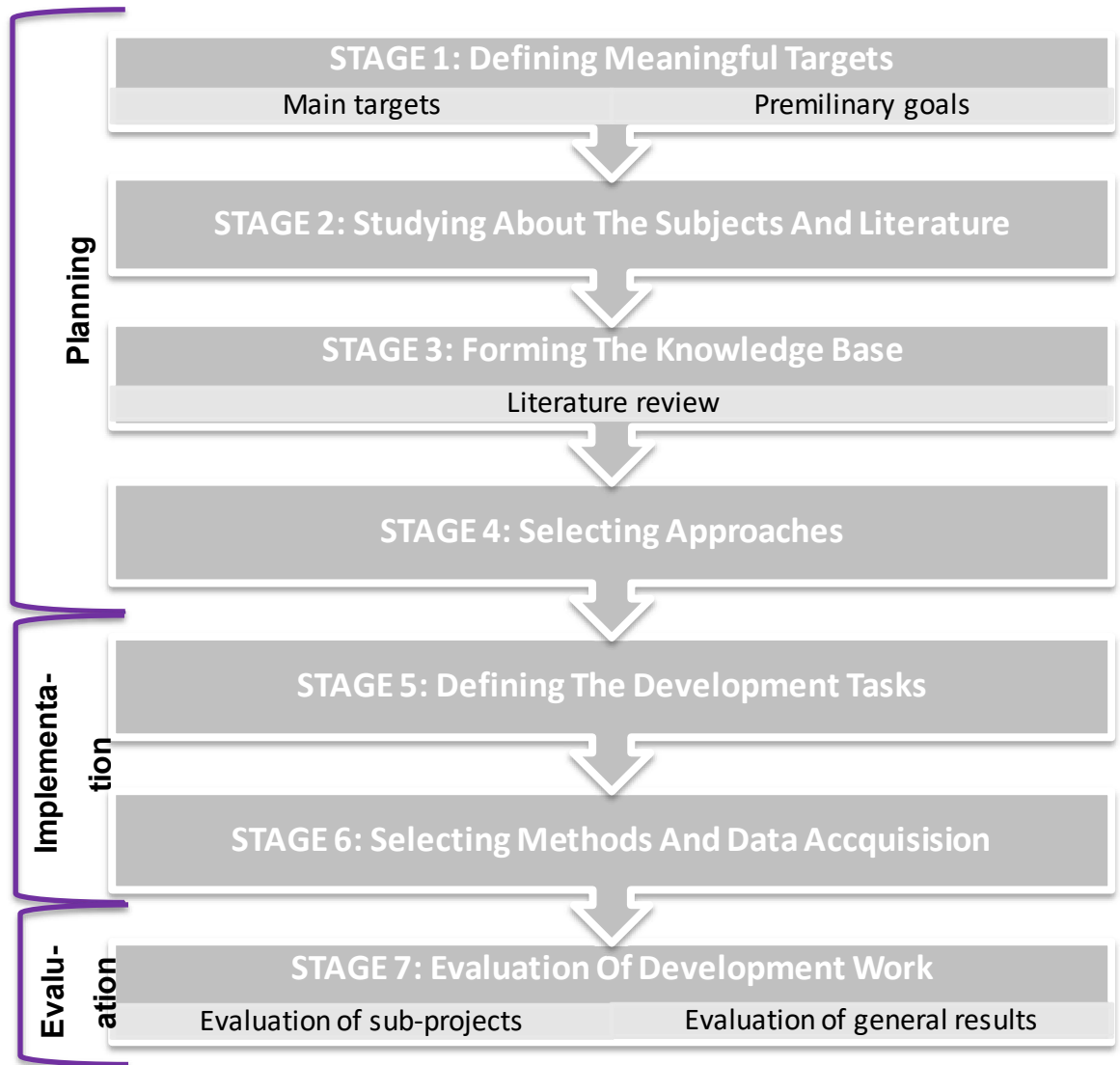
the organization; however, it is better to start with a deep understanding of why to implement the teaching method. In the second chapter, there will be an explanation of the theories which are used as the theoretical framework of the entire development work and defined entrepreneurship skill sets. Chapter 3 explains the Research Approach and methodology. This research was carried out as research-oriented development work. In the sub-chapter 3.1, the reader will learn about the chosen type of development work, followed by methods of data acquisition and analysis.

The next chapter describes the entire development work, including timeline, structure, preliminary goals of each sub-projects, expected outcomes, and implementation process. This chapter is the star of this thesis report, which acts as the foundation for the later chapters; readers also gain a better understanding of what has happened during the Business Case Training and the National Business Case Competition. Chapter 5 presents the results of this research and important findings from both sub-projects. Here is where readers find more information about different perspectives from participants, including criticism and discussion about it.

Next, chapter 6 was composed of a conclusion and suggestions to improve the learning experience for students in the future International Case Competition in 2021, as well as for the future. Last but not least, appendices contains survey questions and evaluations, attachments of project implementation, rulebooks of Creality Race, notes of interviews.

## **1.6. Process of development work**

A development work process was advised by the Methods for Development Work done by Ojasalo, Moilanen, and Ritalahti (2019). **Figure 1** will explain elaborately about the process of this development work in detail.



**Figure 1.** Process of development work (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti, 2019).

## **2. RESEARCH THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. Review of literature**

The theoretical framework of this thesis is surrounded by the concepts of entrepreneurship skill sets and learning by developing. The concepts involve different research topics of entrepreneurship and the impact of theory-based concept Learning by Developing in education and working life. To form a logical knowledge foundation, the Realising-Traditional model (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti, 2019) was applied to review the literature of this thesis. In this model, besides the requirement to write a separated report of a literature review, including summaries and citations, the author's opinions and developmental thinking are recognized. This slight flexibility has played a vital role in bringing about diverse perspectives and creativity into the discussion, positively contributing to the author's development. Synthesis of these theories will be explained in the later subchapter as a concept map, which concludes that Business Case Competition is a method of learning by developing to develop useful entrepreneurship skills.

In addition, this research promotes the new concept of training for case competitions and a new framework of case competition to Finnish Business Education. In a bigger picture, this is a powerful way to boost innovation in any economy. Education is a foundation for the future of the national economy and the country's development. Some of the most developed countries such as the United States of America, Australia, China, Germany, et cetera. have been intensively participating and developing Business Case Competitions as a crucial part of their educational systems. It seems timely to explore why Finnish education should start taking action.

### 2.1.1. Entrepreneurship skill sets and their importance in businesses.

It is crucial to identify specific skill sets that are being evaluated in this research. Thus, the selection has to be insightful and purposeful. **Table 1** below describes the selection process:

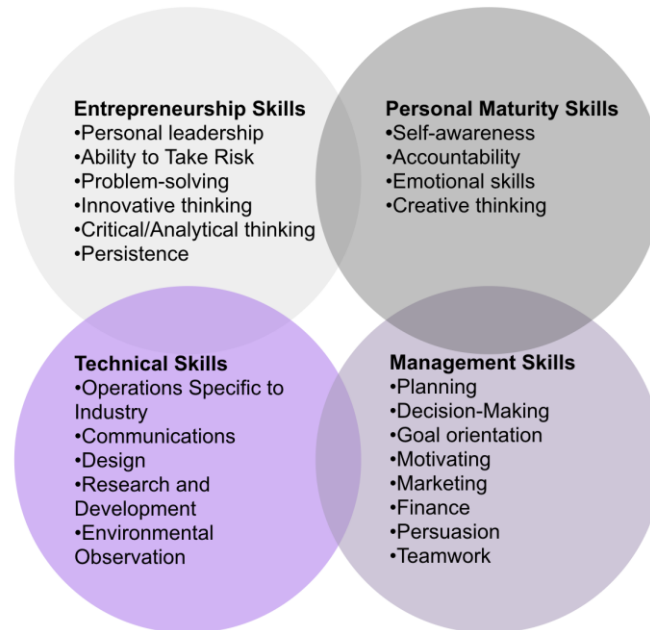
**Table 1.** *Skill-sets selection process (Van Le, 2019).*

	Step 1	Step 2
<b>Objectives</b>	Identify entrepreneurship skill-set model	Draw limitation and choose the most important skills to be evaluated
<b>Theoretical Approach for each step</b>	Four dimensions of entrepreneurship skill sets (Gerber, 1995)	The key traits of serial entrepreneurs (Bonnstetter, 2013)

According to Gerber (1995), skill sets which are required for a person to become an entrepreneur fall within four main dimensions as below:

- Managerial Skills are essential to the day-to-day management and administration;
- Technical Skills are necessary to produce the business's product or service;
- Entrepreneurial Skills are for recognizing economic opportunities and acting effectively on them;
- Personal Maturity Skills include self-awareness, accountability, emotional skills, and creative skills.

This study by Gerber (1995) was a robust theoretical background concerning defined skill sets. In the same period, another study by Dublin Institute of Technology took a further development to identify which specific skills belong to each of the dimensions (Cooney, 2012). **Figure 2** indicates 23 universally-recognized work-related skills as the result of the development:



**Figure 2.** Entrepreneurship Skills for Growth-Orientated Businesses (Cooney, 2012).

The biggest weakness of much of the literature on using this model (Cooney, 2012) in this research is that it is impossible to evaluate every single element from each skill set. Hence, the selection can rely on the theoretical framework of research done by Target Training International under a partnership with 18 universities across the U.S.A (Bonnstetter & Preston, 2013). With a sample of more than 17 000 entrepreneurs, the research measured the mastery level of a list of 23-entrepreneurship skills. Both lists of 23-entrepreneurship skills studied by Bonnstetter and Preston (2013) and Cooney (2012) share a significant number of similarities in terms of meaning and definition behind the skill sets. The differences in skill names are considered not significant to affect the result of this selection process. According to Bonnstetter and Preston (2013), successful series entrepreneurs show an above average level of mastery 14 out of 23 skills which are used as assessment criteria in this research. His study also demonstrated 5 top skills that should be learned to be successful in business. In consideration of all the studies above and research limitations, **Table 2** presents the list of primary skills to be discussed in this research paper:

**Table 2.**

*Entrepreneurship skill-sets to be assessed (Bonnstetter & Preston, 2013).*

	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Managerial skills (M)	Persuasion	Being able to convince others to change the way they think and believe.
	Teamwork	Work effectively with others in a group, collaborate successfully with others to achieve the common goals
	Planning and Management	Achieving extraordinary results through effective management and planning of resources, systems, and processes. Utilizing logical and orderly procedures to meet goals
	Goal-orientation	Energetically focusing efforts on meeting a goal or an objective
	Decision Making	Using effective processes to make decisions.
Entrepreneurship skills (E)	Critical and Analytical thinking	Anticipating, analyzing, diagnosing, and resolving problems.
	Problem-solving	Ability to solve a complex issue with different solutions
	Personal Leadership	Achieving extraordinary business results through people and self-management, demonstrating self-control and an ability to manage time and priorities.

	Innovative Thinking	Adapting traditional or devising new approaches to develop current products, services, or model.
Technical skills (T)	Communications: Professional presentation skills and public speaking	Presenting ideas in professional manners and being confident to deliver the presentation in front of many people
	Research and Development	Ability to find, compile, analyze and evaluate information effectively
Personal Maturity skills (PM)	- Self-awareness	Ability to identify one's strengths, weaknesses, emotions, and actions
	- Creativity	Ability to create new ideas or development which do not exist before
	- Accountability	Being accountable for their learning and responsible for finishing what is started

### 2.1.2. Business Case Competition is a method of Learning by Developing.

The concept of Learning by Developing is drawn from research by Raij (2007) from Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Learning by Developing is a learning process via development projects focusing on work-life experiences or issues. This concept is matched with the educational tasks of all Universities of Applied Sciences defined by the Polytechnics Act (351/2003). According to the expert, the tasks include:

Higher education that responds to the world of work and its development needs, and is based on research and artistic principles; applied research and development work that fosters regional development and takes into account the industrial structure of the area; and support for individual professional growth. According to these tasks, universities of applied sciences are closely linked to the world of work and therefore rooted in praxis. (Raij, 2007.)

At the Tampere University of Applied Science, this is a challenge to foster the change by collaboration between many stakeholders, including students, lecturers, local companies, and student coaches. In learning by developing, students can apply their knowledge from the classroom into practices and reflect on their learning within an intensive comprehensive program. It is an exceptional opportunity for them to challenge their strengths and weakness, express themselves in professional manners, experience networking with business experts and create an impression in front of prominent company representatives who can be their future employers.

The current learning-by-developing programs conducted at TAMK for business students are impactful and exciting but rather take at least the first academic year for students to go through the experience. In international competitions, such as the world-class Heavener International Case Competition in Florida in 2018, there was a clear indication that the TAMK representative students have not been capable of handling intensive challenges as compared to other students from different countries, such as Thailand, Australia, China, et cetera. Thus, there has to be a method to boost the learning process and create highlights of learning at TAMK with more intensive challenges. **Table 3** below compares the most important features of concept Learning by Developing (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti, 2019) to the nature of Business Case Competition through implementation, proving that Business Case Competition is a method of Learning by Developing.

**Table 3**

*Learning by doing case competition is a method of Learning by Developing (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti, 2019)*

<b>Features to be compared</b>	<b>Nature of implementation</b>	
	<b>Learning by Developing</b>	<b>Learning by doing Business Case competition</b>
Authenticity	Starting with development tasks which can be from work life or problem-based searching for solutions	Real cases from case companies. Students are expected to bring innovative and implementable solutions
Partnership	Learning is done together with many stakeholders: students, working life experts, supervisors	Learning is done together with teammates who are business students, coaches for the team, working life experts. Through this short experience, networking is a critical element contributing to the success of this teaching method.
Experientiality	Participants are being active and share the learning experiences	Students learn from each other in many aspects; coaches can share coaching experiences; working experts can get new solutions for their companies and get in touch with the top students from many business schools.
Research orientation	Creating new knowledge by doing research	Student teams have to work on two intensive 5-hour periods of research by being located in their room, isolating from external communication and distractions.
Creativity	Indicating new ideas which are desired, but it is not yet known	Ideas from research work have to be new, creative, but implementable according to proposed requirements from case companies.

## 2.2. Synthesis of the theories

To convince the importance of business case competitions, indicating skill sets that can be learned through this teaching method is not firmly relevant enough to be the main reason due to the fact that entrepreneurship skills can be possibly learned from different sources. However, the challenge is more visible when it is linked with the educational vision of the University of Applied Science and the capability of students in the international competition. Teaching ordinary skill sets is not enough, not to mention the fact that there is a fast-growing demand for new approaches, processes, and methods in working life. Therefore, it is crucial to push learning faster and more intensive, eventually, turn it into skills, which is an advantage of learning by developing in case competitions. Learning by developing is the supporting theory to explain firmly why learning via competition can solve the vital problem. Students need to be able to respond quickly to new changes and be competitive already from when they are still at the university. Drawn from the research about the Key Traits of Serial Entrepreneurs (Bonnstetter & Preston, 2013), successful people significantly show five stronger behaviors compared to other normal behaviors, and top ones are being highly competitive and being quick to change.

This competitiveness is the source of their resilience since it is grounded in a solid self-confidence that says, "I can win at this!" (Bonnstetters & Preston, 2013).

### **3. RESEARCH APPROACH, METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research approach**

The study was carried out as a research-oriented development work using an action research approach to gain a better understanding of developed skills through case competition and its impacts. In definition, research-oriented development work is usually done as project work by businesses or grow-minded organizations to refine problems or renew the organizational practices, which is to meet the new environmental requirements (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti, 2019, 3-7). There has been an upward trend of development activities in business and organizations, and its importance is critical to their long-term organizational success.

The current business world changes at an increasing speed, and also companies have to strive to keep pace with the development. On the other hand, it is no longer sufficient for only success that the organization adapts itself to the changes which are taking place; they have to involve themselves in the creation process of new developments.

The most successful are those who have been able to develop further, in other words have acted as engines of development. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti, 2019, 3.)

The development process can either be problem-based or renewal-based. Problem-based development aims to solve the currently perceived problems which require an in-depth investigation to identify the causes of the issue. On the other hand, renewal-based development seeks new innovative ideas or innovation to develop the organization, such as creating a new business model, new business culture, or new working processes to boost productivity. In this study, the development work is renewal-based to introduce new teaching method into the Finnish Business Education. The process of this development work will be explained in the later subchapter 1.4.

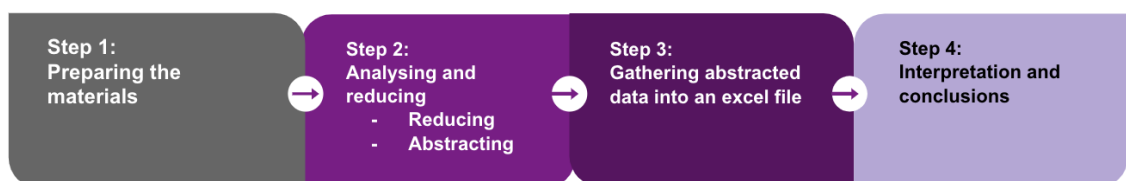
In an action research approach, the target is achieving change and producing researched knowledge. This approach utilizes the participation and interaction of many people who are working in the organization or their community. In this case, participants are senior lecturers and business students from the community of Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland. Action research is often applied to solve a defined problem. However, action research can be applied to develop a new work method to understand new work development and its impact.

### 3.2. Data acquisition and analysis

There are three types of collected data:

- Existing materials: books, articles, videos.
- Self-produced data (Group 1): recorded videos of presentation, observation notes, and abstracted data from observation notes.
- Self-produced data (Group 2): photos, interviews, surveys, and learning from participation and observation in the process.

This research applies content analysis as the main qualitative data analyzing method (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti, 2019, 69-74). The analyzing process for all data is described in Figure 3 below. The content analysis includes four primary steps. The purpose is to find out the evident entrepreneurship skills which contributed to the final ranking results of the teams.



**Figure 3.** Content Analysis process (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti, 2019, 69-74).

In this research, the analysis of data in group 1 was significantly important work. Planning and data acquisition for this group in the first step has to be done carefully and separately to avoid unnecessary technical issues, such as issues with

recording devices, unsuitable recording view, et cetera. In reducing step, the reports from each video observation present feedback on each team's skill performance in the form of text. Those reports were gathered into a structured Excel sheet. Due to confidential reason, detailed content of this sheet will not be included in this paper. Please contact the author for further discussion. Appendix 3 presents the final abstracted results in step 3, which was the primary information to present results in chapter 5.

Two interviews were conducted with the coaches to gain academic perspectives about student learning experiences. The surveys were sent to three types of participants. The sample consists of 36 students, nine coaches and 13 members of the jury panel who are currently working as top management executives and have actual experiences in entrepreneurship and managing from small-sized to medium-sized companies. Intentionally, there was no academic representer from university or teachers to be selected in the jury member to make sure the feedback of jury members reflects the most authentic view of the current real-life business judgment. However, this requirement can be changed if needed. The participants have different roles but are equally important in this development work. After one month since the ending of the project 2, the response rate from surveys was:

- Students: The response rate was 55%.
- Coaches: The response rate was 71%.
- Judging panel: The response rate was 59%.

### **3.3. Limitations**

The research concerns about student learning experiences happened in the Business Case Consulting Training, and Creality Race National Case Competition organized by Tampere University (TAMK). The results will be against the following group of research participants: 36 students, nine coaches, 13 members of the jury panel who participated in Creality Race, four student teams who participated in the training. To gain more details about event organizing, please contact the author.

## 4. DESCRIPTION OF THE BUSINESS CASE COMPETITION TRAINING AND CREALITY RACE

Defining development tasks is an essential stage in doing development work. This chapter describes precisely the purpose of the development projects with concrete expected outcomes. In this context, the development task is the implementation and analysis of training and organizing a Business Case Competition at Tampere University. The sub-chapters represent necessary actions in implementing the Business Case Competition training and Creality Race.

### 4.1. Project Descriptions

The development task included two sub-projects:

- Project 1: Business Case Competition Training (BCCT)

Four groups of four business students were selected for the training program. The students applied to this program as an official 5-credit free-choice course. They had majored in different backgrounds, such as marketing, finance management, sales.

The purpose of this project is to train the teams intensively with a variety of content to explore their competitive competencies. In the end, only two teams were selected to represent TAMK to compete in the upcoming Creality Race national competition and Heavener international case competition. During the 5-month training program, the teams practiced solving more than six different cases with different challenging time frames.

In this project, the author's role as Student Mentor to help facilitate the students' learning, as well as being trained to deliver qualified assessment and general aspects of the business case competition. TAMK senior lectures Mari Rytisalo and Pia Lamminsivu were mainly responsible for the course structure, materials, and course facilitation. The author's participation in this project plays a crucial role in academically refining the author's understanding of case competition organizing, and enhancing the knowledge to be compatible with the Creality Race

Project Manager position. Therefore, the project implementation plan, which is described in the later subchapter, will focus on the author's responsibility and work area.

- Project 2: Creality Race National Business Case Competition

The Heavener International Case Competition organized by the University of Florida advised this case competition format. Contestants were divided into nine teams of four business students who were the top students from different universities in Finland. The name Creality Race is inspired by the main themes Creativity and Reality, which means the outcomes of student work need to be creative and realistic enough for implementation. This case competition is not only about creativity, but it also takes practicalities and implementable vision into consideration.



**Picture 1.** Organizing Committee from January to February 2019 (Creality Race organizing member, 2019).

The primary purpose of this project is to create a case competition for the teams from the training program to compete with other teams from different schools who will be mentioned in chapter 4.2.2. Consequently, students can discover new perspectives, and they can exchange knowledge with each other. The most important document of this program was the Rule Book in which student teams can find all information, eligibility requirement, the format of the competition, case preparation and deliveries, case presentation information and other general rules. Regardless of background or prior preparation, all teams have to follow the rules of the case competition with limited communication with external stakeholders during the event. In this project, the author's role was the Project Manager, who

works closely with Project Director Mari Rytisalo and the 8-people organizing team.

#### 4.1.1. Create a project plan and define expected outcomes

**Table 4.** General plan and timeline for the project implementation (Van Le, 2019)

<b>Project Implementation Plan</b>				
	<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>	<b>Phase 4</b>
	<b>08.2018</b>	<b>12.2018</b>	<b>01.2019</b>	<b>04.2019 to 08.2019</b>
	<b>Kick-off project 1: BCCT and mentoring</b>	<b>BCCT closing &amp; evaluation Planning for Project 2</b>	<b>Kick-off Creality Race</b>	<b>Phase 4 Development work evaluation</b>
<b>Activities</b>	Recruit student teams	Choose the winning teams from BCCT	Event planning and execution	Collect data and materials
	Support planning for course content with Mari and Pia	Create plans for Project 2: marketing and budget	Find sponsors and partners	Write report
	Be a jury member to evaluate student's work and presentations	Recruit the organising team	Finalize the budget	Send report for feedback and modification
	Team mentoring	Find the case companies	Finalize cases and important documents	
	Inviting other participating UAS			
<b>Expected outcomes</b>	Student teams are motivated and developed to meet the evaluation criteria	Train the best team to win Heavener International Case Competition	Creality Race is done successfully	Results of the development projects meet the preliminary goals
	Mentor and coaches gain deeper understanding about skill evaluation and case competition in practice	Find the best 2 case companies who are passionate about helping education	Case companies can use some of the student teams' ideas	Evaluation of skills is done appropriately
	Understand important requirements to write cases	Educate people about new concept of case competition via CR channels	Get constructive feedback about events and cases	Get feedback from at least 3 experts
	Deliver enough team mentoring sessions for teams	Get 9 different participating universities	Trained teams should be recognised as highly competitive with good results	

A project plan, with a clear timeline and the expected outcomes, was essential to implement the development work in practice. **Table 4** provides information about general tasks for two projects. The project plan is different from the process of development work. It presents more detailed development tasks during the sub-projects by working with many stakeholders according to a specific timeline. Expected outcomes from the projects contributed to delivering data for research analytics in stage 6 of the development work process, and the expected outcomes from each phase in this plan contribute to the success of the following phase. The project plan also explains the timeline overlapping and task delegation between two sub-projects. Without this clarification, there would be confusion in managing the projects.

The project timeline was divided into four phases. The main objectives were written as the title of each phase. Phase 1 was the most challenging period with different struggles to convince and promote the new concept to everyone. It was essential to have a clear vision of what to do and what to achieve, then the next step is to transfer the critical messages to relevant leaders from different Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland, including TAMK. At the same time, a similar approach for TAMK business students was made to attract talents from different background experiences in business-related programs. The main goal is to actively involve in observation through each practicing case to research on student performances via different case contents, their development process, and what to consider when writing a competition case. By learning from these materials, it was easier to learn about different case competition formats and what are the most suitable for this development work.

In phase 2, a winning team was selected, who demonstrated high quality in terms of skills and professionalism, to represent TAMK at Heavener International Case Competition in Florida. The runner-up team continued the training to be more compatible until they are ready for the Creativity Race National Case Competition. Among the tasks mentioned in **Table 4**, finding suitable case companies was the most important to influence the decision making of other university leaders. Regardless of their university academic calendar, the decision to participate had to be made the lasted December 2019. Consistently, the organizing team had to

concentrate on promoting the concept to the audience from all touchpoints. Most importantly, during this transformation between two projects, the director and project manager had to reflect and evaluate the work results continuously from many aspects to make sure the plan was on the right track.

In the next phase, the main focuses were organizing the Creality Race and collecting data. The author's responsibility was no longer involved in project 1. At this phase, the most challenging tasks were writing the cases and refining the rulebook together with the Project Director. Data acquisition included recording videos, taking photos, recording competition results, taking notes from the interviews, and sending surveys to participants. The surveys were sent immediately after the event to gather the most valid information. Phase 4 is the period of independent work that involved analyzing and writing the thesis report.

#### **4.1.2. Data acquisition and materials to be collected from each development sub-projects**

This subchapter presents the sources of data to collect and its purpose of usage in each sub-project. In project 1, data is collected by recording videos and taking notes via observation, notes taken from reading documents. The observation notes were written after the first case of the training to evaluate the knowledge level of new students. It is vital to see the reality of their understanding and necessary skills, which helps decide the appropriate teaching approach. In the last class, the teams' presentations were recorded as less than 10-minute videos as a learning material for students to reflect on their performances, which were also used to analyze the learning to write the second observation note. In between these observation periods, Student Mentor conducted direct coaching sessions with each team. Thus, the researcher could gain an understanding of the current learning experience and help motivate student teams if needed. The result of these coaching sessions was reviewed together with the program leading coaches.

In project 2, data were collected from interviews, surveys, documents, observation from recorded videos, and photos. Open-ended interviews were recorded as audio-based with two interviewees who are professional coaches from two participating UASs. The interview transcriptions (Appendix 1 and 2) were written in literary language. The surveys were sent to three groups of participants. Regarding video recording, three cameras were put in three presentation rooms of each division with the same purposes of use as videos in project 1. The videos were sent to the teams after the event for their all learning analysis. During the event, photos were taken randomly for not only marketing purposes but also catching the best moments for the success of this event. After each presentation, digital versions of students' work, which were placemats and PowerPoint presentations were kept for later document analysis.

## **4.2. Implementation - What to do in practices**

### **4.2.1. Project 1: Business Case Competition Training (BCCT)**

#### **Promotion and preparation for students**

The most important mission of this starting period was to explain the concept to everyone. The project would not happen without the trust and support of the Management of the TAMK school of business. In promotion, different methods of communication were utilized such as video (Rytisalo, 2018) and posters, emails, letters of invitation, and participation in networking events to get in touch with leaders from different schools. Meanwhile, the introduction about the course was promoted via email to all business students at TAMK and on the school communication channels

Since this was the first time to introduce this training concept to TAMK students, mental preparation needed to be done to explain what it was all about. Students who registered to the course were invited to the first day and listen to all the information about the course regarding expectations, time and commitment,

plans, and learning opportunities. During the same day, it was essential to challenge the students with a simple task: introduce themselves by using the public speaking skill in the class. In this way, it was easier to evaluate the skill level of each student and locate them in suitable a team where their talents are needed. The students then were divided into four teams. They worked together until the end of the course.

### **Materials and content**

The teams were given the materials needed for their study, as described below:

- Study guide: this document explains in more detail the content, the structure of the course, assignments, and general evaluation criteria.
- Supporting knowledge: include Decision Survival Guide, Ethos Analysis Matrix, Overview, and Presentation Survival Guide. These documents were advised and used by Stewart (2018) at Simon Fraser University in their training program.
- Detailed evaluation criteria: this is a description of what skills to be evaluated during the course and the general expectation.

The selection of the case was essential, and the cases should be similar in terms of framework and suitable concepts for training purposes. However, the key point was to maintain diversity in culture, company size, or field of problems, et cetera. It helped students gain open-mindedness and adaptivity when it comes to a strange case in an international competition.

### **Training methods**

During the training, students experienced six different cases with different time frames in increasingly tricky levels of challenges. One of the challenges was to attend an international case competition Creative Shock by the ISM University of Management and Economics (Creative Shock, 2019). Regarding the training approach, the teams were coached mainly on three aspects: performance in casework, teamwork, and presentation methods.

- Performance in casework: the ability to research for information effectively in short time periods, ability to analyze the given or found information, suggestions of useful tools and techniques to support the thinking process and delivering

ideas, ability to present the idea consistently and precisely, and ability to conduct argumentation to evaluate the work results and other suggestions

- Teamwork: in most of the case competitions, teamwork is one of the most important criteria and the most straightforward to evaluate the teams. Conflicts may occur at any time, which may affect the team's results. In this training, teams were observed and coached to deal with conflict and identify issues at the right time to be able to focus on other essential tasks.
- Presentation methods: communication can be used differently in every school, city, country, and continent. For example, Finnish people prefer to address a member of the jury panel in friendly manners by using names or not at all, in the other hand, American people prefer using Mrs. or Mr. Depending on the host country of the competition, students need to know these fundamental differences to present themselves appropriately. Besides, board-room style presentation and more professional Powerpoint presentations were used in the classroom.

In addition, some of the presentations were recorded as a self-evaluation method for learning. Students were able to see how well they did and what they could do better in many aspects, such as pronunciation, gestures, spoken languages, relation, et cetera.

### **Feedback sessions**

Feedback was done after each case presentation and systematically. Feedback sessions could be conducted as a round table discussion with students, or students could give feedback to themselves after each presentation or watching their videos.

### **4.2.2. Project 2: Creality Race National Business Case Competition**

There are six major topics to be discussed in this session which are essential to know when organizing this case competition: event organizing; partnership and members of jury panel; case company and case writing; rule book; the participating team; and their coaches.

### **Creality Race event organizing**

Planning for the event started in December 2018. The goal is to deliver engaging learning experiences for students; therefore, planning specific tasks for the organizing team to reach the goal is essential. The tasks involve:

- Ensure that participants get access to resources while working with cases such as sticky notes, brainstorming paper, snack, and coffees, et cetera;
- Communication about logistic is clear and updated;
- Technical issues are well managed and prepared before and during the event;
- Make guests feel welcomed and respected;
- All working spaces are cleaned during the event;
- Breakfast, coffee, food are available at any time.

### **Partners and Members of Jury panel**

Finding sponsors was a challenging task. The event could not happen without these people who believed in the mission of the Creality Race. Partners were local businesses that sponsored merchandise and materials.

Member of jury panels consists of 19 top leaders in many companies in Finland, including six people from the case companies. Communication with them was prepared carefully. The debrief sessions conducted by Mari Rytisalo were essential to make sure they understood the competition objectives and what was expected from them. Teamwork in the groups of judges was also important; therefore, the event aimed at creating the best co-working opportunity for them with networking and efficient resources.

### **Case company and case writing**

Looking for a partner company to provide a real case was a mission of aligning the developmental visions of two organizations. A case competition is not only beneficial for students' learning but also an invisible bridge for businesses to be in touch with the latest knowledge and talents, which is one of the most effective ways to gain new ideas to solve problems. Nevertheless, the tasks involved:

- Finding a case company who has a problem which is suitable for the competition theme;

- Finding a partner who is looking for a change, be open-minded for opportunities and risks, be supportive for education;
- Finding a problem which is shaped by the current trending topics in business, information is accessible through open sources;
- Coaching the business in finding an actual problem that can be potentially solved by participants from the competition;

The last task was challenging in terms of shaping the complex issues into one presentable problem, guiding the desire to solve many problems in an all-in-one competition into a clearer understanding of what they want and how to get it. In problem-solving challenges, the role of a case giver is also to help the solver understand their problem, as well as help the team solve their problem. To achieve this, the case company needs to be fully aware that they genuinely want a solution whatever the circumstances. This mindset was the first and foremost important matter to discuss with the company. It is usually hard to ensure the outcomes are as expected; therefore, the company needs to work on preparing themselves for many possible situations.

The companies worked together with Mari Rytisalo and the author to deliver ideas, refine, and finalize the whole case documents. Depending on the round, each case company had different case delivery methods:

- Case Fortum: The theme was about Circular Economy and Fortum's project development progress. This first round, students presented ideas via a board-room style presentation by using placemats. The explanation of methods can be found in the rulebook of the Creality Race (Appendix 4). The case company was required to present their challenges in PowerPoint slides with explanations and Q&A session. If possible, a rehearsal could have been useful. In board-room style presentations, students have to learn how to give first impressions via close interactions with judges as in the most consulting job.
- Case K-kauppiaslitto: The theme was about market research and market-entering strategy. In this round, students present ideas in a longer time frame, and they can use slides to present their ideas. However, in this case, the company was not required to prepare slides instead of a written document with no need for a verbal explanation. Also, it was essential to select both relevant and

irrelevant data to challenge the thinking skills of students. Besides, the case writing process can be more complicated, depending on the complexity of the problem and competition framework.

### **Rule book**

Case competition gathers people from diverse backgrounds and experiences; thus, everyone has different perceptions about their ethical working methods. To ensure fairness and equality, it is crucial to have a written document to define the concept of rules in a relevant context. The rule book (Appendix 4) defines the following point:

- Competition Overview. This content is to explain competition format and evolution and clarified the meaning of division.
- Eligibility and team compositions.
- Case Preparation. This content is to explain what preparation is allowed and suggested.
- Deliveries. This content is to explain how materials should be done and delivered.
- Presentation. This content is to explain everything about presentation requirements.
- Feedback after the case presentation. This content is to prepare students for an excellent opportunity to learn directly from the members of the jury panel.
- Final round.
- Consequences for rule violations.

In some opinions, it was unnecessary to define such strict rules for Finnish students due to a high level of trust in culture. However, regardless of the cultural positivity, standards have to be written and followed. Trust can be applied in the ability to follow the rules. It is highlighted in the rulebook that external communication is prohibited during the case working time until the result announcement. Therefore, phones were collected before the start of each day. It is not only about restricting external communication; it also helps improve team communication without distraction from doing personal tasks on personal devices while working together.

### **Participating teams and coaches**

Participating student teams are students from four Universities of Applied Sciences. They were selected and formed in teams by their home universities and coaches.

- Tampere university: three teams with two coaches
- Satakunta University of Applied Sciences: two teams with two coaches
- Seinäjoki University of Applied Science: two teams with two coaches
- TAMK: two teams with one coach.

## 5. RESEARCH RESULTS

The final results of this developmentwork are divided into two major parts. Firstly, the findings answer to the first research objective, which is the assessment of entrepreneurship skill sets and the learning outcomes. The second subchapter answers to the second objective, which is documenting and generally discussing feedback from the participants for the first national competition in Finland. Numerical data and tables in this chapter were generated based on the observation results and the abstracted data in Appendix 3. For example, good teamwork skill was demonstrated by 7 teams out of 9 participating teams; the percentage is calculated by dividing 7 by 9, which is equal to 0,78 or 78%.

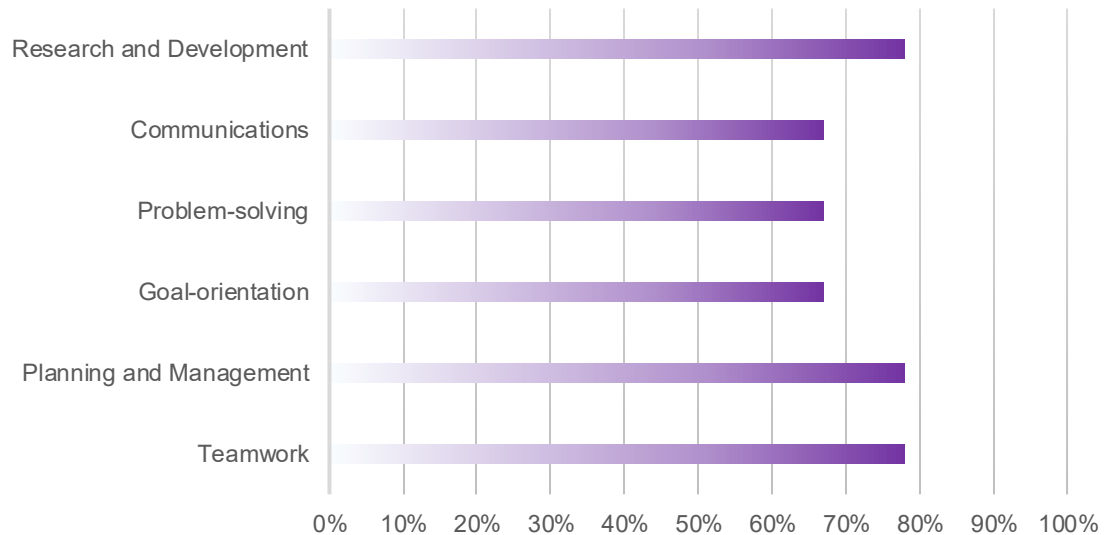
### 5.1. Findings based on Entrepreneurship skillsets framework.

#### 5.1.1. Well-performed skill sets

**Table 6**

*Top commonly-used skills (Appendix 3).*

	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Teams demonstrated the skills (%)</b>
	Teamwork	78 %
Managerial skills	Planning and Management	78 %
	Goal-orientation	67 %
Entrepreneurship skills	Problem-solving	67 %
Technical skills	Communications	67 %
	Research and Development	78 %



**Figure 5.** Top Commonly-used Skills (Table 6)

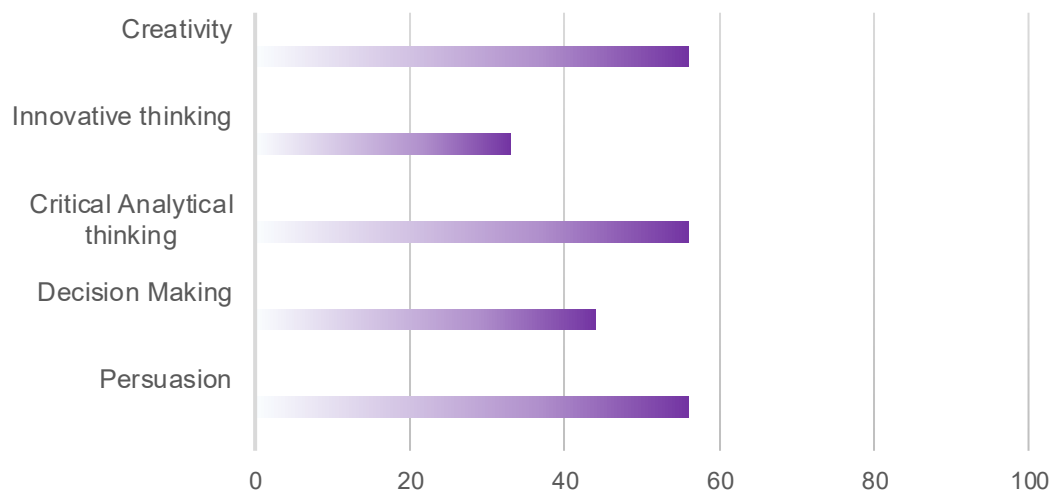
**Figure 5** presents the skills which are commonly used in many basic practices, presentations, projects at school, or work. In general, the majority of the teams were able to show their strengths in Teamwork, Planning & Management, Research & Development. The teams demonstrated the skills account for 78% of the total student participants. In comparison with the rest of the skill sets from the framework, Technical skills and Managerial skills were the most commonly used skill sets. Among the teams demonstrated the top skills, their rankings were in the top levels in each division, including the trained teams and the finalists.

Despite that each team was at a different level in each skill, majority of the teams or team members showed that they were always ready to support each other in working throughout the intensive schedule and challenges, they were able to conduct fundamental researches to develop and deliver plans how to solve the proposed problems. Besides, communication skills were the most important to make a good first impression. 67% of the teams used communication effectively in both presentation and Question & Answer sessions. Following up after the top skills is a list of skills that brings significant differentiation between the teams in **Table 7** below. They were not demonstrated by the majority of the participating teams; in other words, some teams need significant improvements. These skills need more specialized attention in the preparation period.

**Table 7**

*Top skills that bring differences between the high ranked and lower ranked teams (Appendix 3).*

	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Teams demonstrated the skills (%)</b>
Management skills	Persuasion	56 %
	Decision Making	44 %
Entrepreneurship skills	Critical Analytical thinking	56 %
	Innovative thinking	33 %
Personal Maturity Skills	Creativity	56 %



**Figure 6.** Top Skills That Bring Differences Between The High Ranked And Lower-Ranked Teams (Table 7)

What stands out from **Figure 6** is that innovative thinking is a challenging skill. However, having a good idea only does not guarantee a winning position, the initial impression from observation of the finalist and the other two teams in each division is their ability to persuade the judges about their innovation or creative idea. Thus, here is a chance to create a second impression. Decision-making skill is difficult to see during the presentation; nevertheless, it can be seen

from a broader view of the presentation structure. Convincing decisions can be seen based on how they structure their thinking, arguments, and plan. For example, a good marketing plan for the market-entering strategy should be aligned with a suitable given budget plan to make the plan implementation, following after that can be decisions about priorities or important tasks. To succeed in making decisions, teams need to understand the problems deeply, the requirements of the case, and all aspects of their solution. They should be able to see a big picture of their idea and explain it clearly to convince the judges.

Besides, Critical and Analytical thinking was seen in the presentations and teams' performance in Q&A sessions at many levels. Teams who were able to defend their ideas based on facts, practical experiences, researches had a higher ranking level within their divisions and also in the final round. Meaning, teams who made decisions and answers based on their personal rational opinion or emotions were ranked lower. These behaviors could be easily seen in their presenting languages and communication.

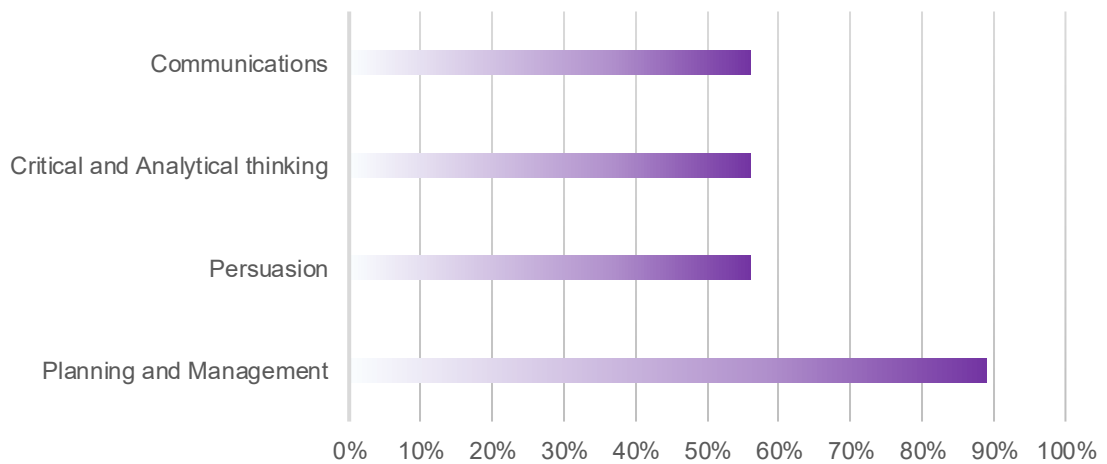
### **5.1.2. Skill sets that need significant improvements**

Among the skills which were mentioned in sub-chapter 5.1, some of the commonly well-used skills needed improvements when it came to more difficult challenges. It was evident that the teams were struggling with task management in the second round, in which they had to give more effort into content delivery and solving more complex problems. Despite the good demonstration of skills in chapter 5.1, teams need to practice more the following skills to be more consistent and mature in using them. The percentages in **Table 8** present the importance level of improvement for each skill.

**Table 8**

*Top commonly-used skills that need improvements  
(Appendix 3)*

	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Teams demonstrated the skills (%)</b>
Management skills	Planning and Management	89 %
	Persuasion	56 %
Entrepreneurship skills	Critical and Analytical thinking	56 %
Technical skills	Communications	56 %



**Figure 7.** Top Commonly-used Skills That Need Improvements (Table 8)

What is striking out from this table is the dominance of the Planning and Management skill percentage. From the observation, teams were able to create plans and correlations between plans. However, their plans were considered quite general for implementation, and especially some teams did not work on plan analysis. The lacking of understanding the risks or benefits can be a significant reason to lose the game. Talking only about risks was not enough; they should be able to come up with suitable solutions for the identified risks. Also, they need to learn to

communicate more effectively all of the thinking genres out on their presentation and communication.

### 5.1.3. Comparison between the trained teams and finalist teams.

**Table 9**

*Bench-marking table of performance of skills, which were demonstrated by Finalist Teams and Trained Teams (Appendix 3).*

Skills	Finalist 1		Finalist 2 (Winner)		Finalist 3		Trained team 1		Trained team 2	
	C1	C2	C1	C2	C1	C2	C1	C2	C1	C2
Persuasion			x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Teamwork	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Planning and Management	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Goal-orientation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Decision Making				x	x	x	x		x	
Critical and Analytical thinking			x		x	x	x		x	x
Problem-solving	x		x	x			x		x	x
Innovative Thinking		x	x	x					x	
Communications	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x
Research and Development	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Creativity	x		x		x	x	x			

The trained teams and finalists are in the top highest-ranking and were the most competitive in terms of skills. In the final results, both trained teams from project 1, and the finalists demonstrated a competitive level in many skills. **Table 9** above compare each of the skills between the mentioned teams. However, what

differs them was innovative thinking and communication. In the first round, the trained teams were in first positions in each of their divisions. In the second round, they were not considered as innovative and creative as the first ranking team in their division.

According to the assessment of competition results, the trained teams and finalists achieved high rankings, who demonstrated maturity in entrepreneurship skill sets. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that learning about entrepreneurship skillsets is a distinct advantage to bring a higher winning possibility. Despite the different criteria of each competition, contestants need to learn these skills to perform and present their ideas in clear and appropriate manners. Thus, the training program as similar to the project one can boost the ideal results to be more achievable.

#### **5.1.4 Different presentation deliveries in each round enrich the learning experience for students.**

To provide the most realistic simulations of real-life challenges, students who participated in this competition were generally satisfied with their participation and the competition deliveries. Round 1 was a simulation of the so-called elevator pitch, which is used almost every day in most business situations to present ideas, problems, or suggestions. Round 2 was a simulation of more demanding conferences or meetings between corporate management or directors. The diversity of deliveries in this competition can enhance students' skills, as well as challenge them on their flexibility to adapt and exceed learning within a short period. In addition, students have different opportunities to present their competencies in different concepts.

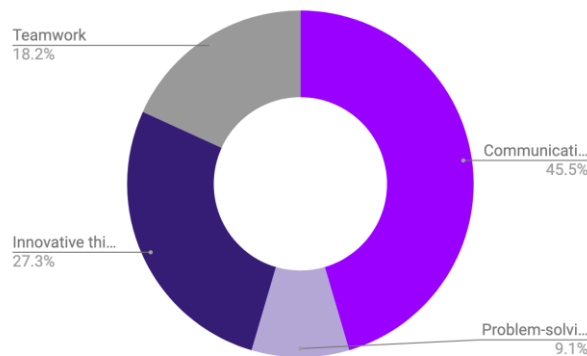
It was good that there was a short presentation and a longer discussion. It fostered the preparation of the second case (Laine, 2019).

#### **5.1.5 Reflection from the students.**

In a survey, students were asked to choose the top three learning outcomes from this competition based on their learnings. **Figure 8** below presents the actual

learning outcomes based on the entrepreneurship skill sets framework. What can be clearly seen in this figure is the high rate of communication skills and innovative thinking, which were also mentioned in the list of skills to improve. This teaching method not only teaches students the most fundamental knowledge but also the ones that grow them.

They learned a lot about attitude and business like performing (dressing up, presenting, et cetera.). Also, they saw the importance of teamwork. With cases, they were able to see the real importance of clear communication to judges, the ability to answer when questioned (so they learned to understand they need to prepare for the questions) and in the end, they truly saw the meaning of branding and story (Laine, 2019.)



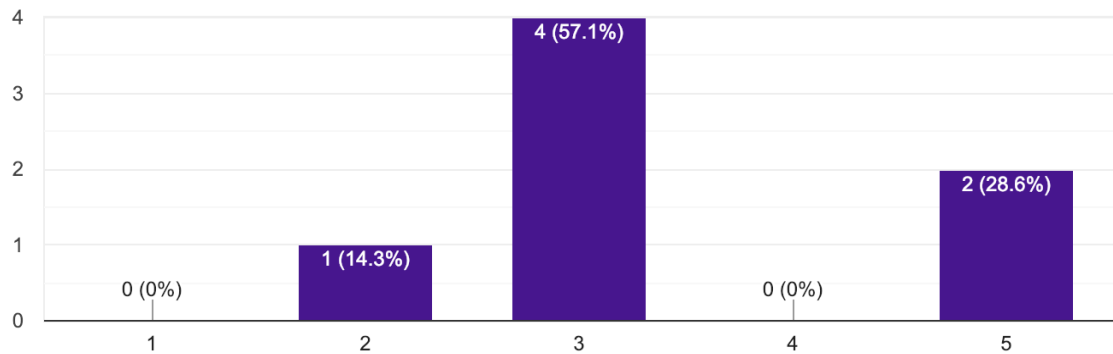
**Figure 8.** The top learning outcomes (Feedback for Student in Creativity Race, 2019).

### 5.1.6. The lack of open-mindedness

The teams were competitive in skills; however, some of them did not prepare an appropriate mentality to maximize their learning in and after the competition. To elaborate on this point, an assessment was explicitly made in the students' reactions to the case deliveries and case content. Case content is one of the important elements to evaluate the success of learning and testing the reaction of students with this new teaching method.

An interesting figure analyzed from survey responses by students. The question was asked to reflect on how students appreciate the challenging level of the

cases and their comments. They were asked to rate their opinion on a scale of 1 to 5. Majority of respondents rated less than 3 for their experience as shown in the figure below:



**Figure 9.** Question: Did you find the cases to be relevant and interesting to work with? (Feedback for Student in Creality Race, 2019).

To clarify the meaning of their rating, the teams also left comments. Majority of the respondent who rated below average in figure 6 said they did not appreciate the following facts about the case:

- The case was too easy, so it was a bit challenging to come up with a solution.
- The case did not tell exactly what they are supposed to do
- The cases were more about innovation and marketing, which is not in their strength-zone, so they did not have a chance to shine.
- The case did not need much knowledge.

The respondents, in this case, were not the winning team, or either their results were in high ranking. The results were made according to defined criteria which were informed to everyone before the actual competition. Moreover, case structured were consulted by the framework of successful international case competitions from Australia, New Zealand, and the U.S., with validation from many experts who have many years of experience in training and working with competition cases. Besides, the real business problem requires a solution that can be understood easily. Students should be able to apply their academic knowledge into practices, which is their main challenge in this learning experience. From the

observation, judges found it was hard to understand the communication of some teams because they were not able to describe their ideas in practical terms.

We think that it would be in place to have one judge from some educational institute in every panel. Now there were three judges who might know a lot about selling things to people but probably cannot understand at least all of the theories behind a teams' sense-making. (A student, 2019)

This is an indication of the lack of open-mindedness and low flexibility from some of the students. The nature of case competition is a method of learning by developing, which can either be problem-based or renewal-based. In the sense of competitiveness, it is impossible to compete if everyone is informed precisely what outcomes they should deliver, or to make the cases more comfortable to fit everyone's strength. Regardless of the varied case content, the teams should be able to show that they could learn and get over many challenges if they would like to become a winner. From this finding, it is reasonable to prepare a suitable mentality before the competition to avoid unnecessary loss in self-learning opportunities. Also, this is a learning point for the organizing team to design a better concept for case content.

You should always have a wider view because that's how real life also works. In real life, when you work in a company, and you can't say that I'm only interested in marketing and I don't understand anything about numbers, and I don't know how do we get the goods here. I just want to do the marketing. So they should have an overall picture of the business (Wikman, 2019.)

## **5.2. General feedback for Creality Race**

In general, the Creality Race has received many encouraging feedbacks about the hospitality, well-organized event. The participants felt welcome throughout the event and appreciated the enthusiasm of the organizers. Regarding the event agenda, some of the most appreciated sessions were Q&A and Feedback sessions. Students and coaches had the opportunity to interact and review their performances with judges and took away concrete learning points. The primary purpose of the event is learning together.

Besides, Creality Race also received much constructive and useful feedback. The tight schedule was a challenge for everyone which created some unnecessary hectic experiences for many participants, followed by issues in communication, such as, loss of information, and not having enough time for preparation before the event. Most importantly, the cases were considered as focusing on too much of creativity and innovation for marketing, which was not so impressive for students in general. Feedback sessions should have its structure for judges to have an equal division for positive and constructive points.

### **5.3. Suggestions from the coaches and the judging panel.**

Real business life requires more complex competencies from every graduate than what has been taught in the classroom. Usually, it is easier to know only when the students enter their working life; they struggle and learn from their struggles. In most cases, it is hard to know what the standards are to acquire, and people instead spend many years in their careers to comprehend. From this competition, the coaches and judges had a chance to interact and listen to students via their presentations. They provided valuable and diverse feedback so students can learn about the general expectations right in their study based on their performances. The following points are given as optional learning for students.

In general, students did an excellent job of delivering professional presentations; some presentations were considered better than the real-life situation. However, the majority of feedback was about improvements in thinking and argumentation skills. Regardless of what major they choose, if their goal is to become a manager, they should be able to understand that combining knowledge about economy, sales, marketing, and overall business development is key to understand what will work and what not. Management is not a task of tracking what is happening. Besides, it was clear that some teams had good business knowledge but lacked creativity, practical issues, and implementation. When proposing a new business concept, it is important to make everyone understand it with analysis at a practical level. In this case, many teams had conservative approaches with the

product idea. Most of the teams had their numbers completely miscalculated (revenue, sales, et cetera). Finally, teams need to learn to argue their ideas with facts and numbers from a broad perspective to more detail levels.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SUGGESTIONS

### 6.1. General conclusion

Nowadays, business case competition is an increasingly common teaching method in many educational systems worldwide. There is a high variation of competition framework; however, each framework carries out intensive and compact learning experiences, especially for business students and graduates to explore themselves in a similar situation as in real working life. By attending a case competition, participants can exceed their knowledge through complex challenges, including networking, case solving, time management, teamwork, et cetera. In the end, the real challenge is not just about solving a problem. It is more about how they can learn from and see beyond what is apparent, regarding personal development, skills, and competition results.

This development work was carried out through two sub-projects. The primary purpose of project 1 was to train the teams with an intensive schedule and content to explore their competitive competencies. In project 2, a case competition was organized to provide simulations of two real-life scenarios in the business world. These two projects are simultaneously supporting and defining each other. To compete in a case competition, training is essential; on the other hand, training content will become too broad without knowing in advance the specific format, history, culture, or theme of the competition. As the testing project to see real impacts of business case competition on Finnish education, the results presented many aspects regarding the reactions, the mindsets, knowledge levels, the potential of development, and learning outcomes.

Each team prepared themselves differently. According to Laine (2019) and Wikman (2019), the majority of the teams had experiences in different preparation approaches. However, only the teams from TAMK were trained in specialized training in project 1. By bringing them together, it is easier to see what the training has contributed and what can be improved in the training from more open-minded perspectives of other participating schools.

The role of coaches was a new concept for most of the schools (Rytisalo, 2019). Coaches are important people to observe the teams and help them develop during the competition, as well as managing networking on behalf of the teams. In Creality Race, being competitive is not the only way to win. Coaches and students have to be active to learn at any second during the event. The role of coaches in business case competition is similar to the role of coaches in sports. Their responsibility is to push the team to explore their potential and to achieve the goals.

One event cannot define or create a new culture of competitiveness and wisdom of problem solving directly into an educational system; however, the results from this development work have proven that it is possible when it is done together with good collaboration. Organizing competitions is not a competition; it is a vision to create an impact. The vision of Creality Race is to create a world-class competition from one of the best educational systems, which is a call for collaboration to other Finnish educational institutions to make the impossible possible.

By using the Entrepreneurship skill sets as the framework of this research, the findings have proven that winning a competition requires much more practice in skills. The student teams in this research were coming from different backgrounds; their preparation did not emphasize on Entrepreneurship skill sets. The research is to find out if they have demonstrated these skills with the assumption that the winning team has to be the best in using these skills. The skills appeared on different levels; nevertheless, in every round of Creality Race, student teams had demonstrated or utilized many skills from the framework consciously to present their solutions. The training program can help strategically prepare for precise and professional presentations. From this study, it is essential to acknowledge that the right combination of some entrepreneurship skills can bring completely different results.

Mindset is a broad topic that is crucial to discuss within the team. Besides the positive indication of professionalism in communication, presentation, appliances et cetera, being more open-minded can be a strength. Knowing the standards and respecting the competitors will help them see through what else they can improve for themselves, not just being blindly competitive.

In conclusion, Business Case Competition is an effective way to teach entrepreneurship skills in a specific short time. There are several improvements in terms of creating a learning experience for students, case content, and collaboration in the future. However, the objectives were achieved to spread the message and make a difference in Finnish Business Education.

## **6.2. Future Suggestions**

Base on the research findings, we have learned some significant point in organizing the student learning experience in training and competition. The subchapters below present the suggestions to improve the learning process for students before, during, and after a competition.

### **6.2.1. Before a competition**

#### **Technical and Teamwork preparation**

Business Case competition can be organized in a variety of formats and themes. It depends on the purpose of teaching; the competition organizer will choose a suitable combination of formats and themes. Therefore, preparation for each competition should be flexible for each purpose. Preparation is vital in this context to make sure students are mentally and physically ready for intensive days.

The team should prepare templates of presentation and research materials in advance due to the lacking of time during the competition. Teamwork is always in the assessment criteria; therefore, the team needs to get to know each other and create an actual bond with each other in advance. Team spirit can be performed at some point, but it cannot hide the strange inconsistency in the long run, not to mention teamwork is the strength to overcome struggles or conflicts. Thus, the team can practice team building activities such as personality tests, team bonding events, teamwork coaching, solving conflicts together, et cetera.

### **Theoretical Preparation**

One of the most important aspects of competing in a competition is the open-minded mindset to challenge themselves for new aspects of a problem or new thinking methods to evaluate information and idea. A finding from this development work is that some Finnish business students who participated in Creativity Race preferred to choose a problem which they find to be interested in or within their strength-zone. Unfortunately, it is not usually the case in reality. Business life is full of different problematic waves, which emphasizes that a business person needs to be able to solve or face any problem in developing the company. In order to be successful in this task, students need to approach every matter with a critical look from different aspects. This mindset was not prepared in advanced in some of the participating teams. This topic is usually considered as too obvious; however, it is also easily neglected, which can be seen easily from the students in this research.

Being open-minded opens the gate for many positive results in a case competition. This preparation should be a focus before, during, and after a case competition. Due to a limited timeframe, a person should be able to maximize the ability to take in information and realize where the issues are to address them appropriately. Jason Baehr, a philosopher from Loyola Marymount University, defined open-mindedness as being “willing and within limits able to transcend a default cognitive standpoint in order to take up seriously the merits of a distinct cognitive standpoint” (Snow. S, 2018).

### **Strategic Preparation**

Creating a winning strategy in advance can be a helpful step. There is no identified way or a universal rightway to create a strategy to win. The team has to work together to gain the big picture of the theme, then circle the trending information and collect those to create a strategy. Finding as much information as possible is essential. There is a high chance that the case is different from the team’s strategy; however, knowing a topic in other aspects can bring creativity into the solution differently.

### **6.2.2. During a competition**

It is always possible to learn new knowledge by taking advantage of networking with an open-minded mindset. Networking is a distinct task, but it was not utilized effectively in many cases. Networking is a way to get updated about the standard of competition. Students can network to express their desire to know about the competitors or what can be improved for the next time in a fairway. Especially, networking is the key to create an impression if any student wants to be remembered. This is not a must-do task; this is an advantage of which the results depend on each individual way.

### **6.2.3. After a competition**

Learning after competition can be the most important phase, which is easily forgotten or skipped (Rytisalo, 2019). After the competition, students and coaches have time to review their learning points and feedback together. Teams should be open-minded to make the best of these review sessions. They are able to come up with what has been done well, what to improve and plan for the next steps. This process can be done by watching the recorded videos of themselves or watch the final presentations of the best teams. By watching other presentations, students have the possibility to benchmark their performances, which is a step in strategic preparation for the next competition.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Interview transcription- Laine, T. Associate Professor

V: What was your first thought from yesterday?

T: I think in general everything was very well organized, everything was in place. Also, what I was appreciating was the teams' professionalism and also that everyone was also working hard. I think the structure and the rules make very good. kind of.. basis, so the focus on the case itself was kind of easily made. In general, this and of course I follow the presentation of the teams I was coaching. Also, also in that, that I think it was quite good, something new probably for the student that the cases were real-life business cases of the companies, which they probably have some experiences from courses but more like introduction and not like the deep end. Also, for the reason that the juries consisted of being only the business managers, it made the focus on the content of the solution, and also practical limitation, and risk and so on. So it is really lovely learning for the teams. One of the teams has an experience of a competition where the juries are academic, and the practice perspective is more from the consultancy, so this is very good in that. The practicality is from the real company of making a decision and so on. So it was very good in that sense.

V: That was what I hope to hear from the participants because we want to help the students have the best experiences from making the case, working on the case until they receive feedback. We have to work a lot with the jury members to help them to be on the same mindset. So not everyone is asking different thing different practical questions from engineer sides, for example, which make the teams confused about which direction they should go and where is the limit of discussion. That is what we are trying to achieve, and I am really happy to hear from you.

T: I think that the presentation structure works quite well so 5 minutes plus 15 minutes of discussion. To me, the idea of what I had beforehand was that it was quite difficult for the teams to answer, So they have to practice much more than the executive. I like the idea that the 2nd case is then in a way that the teams are more in control in the way that they can present a bit more

V: So, the idea of the first case is to help them practice elevator pitch. In reality, you may not have 10 minutes of presentation, so it has to be fast and quick in order to sell your idea.

T: that is something that I agree, and it is very important that you can actually have a, let say, very brief presentation. On the other hand, by experiences, still, if you get interested in the idea then you actually have much more time. I think that it is really good to kind of also train and play with different concepts. Because something you may have only 2 sentences in the way can say that this is something I would like to tell more and so on. And then sometimes, because I have the impression when you talk as an executive, suddenly you again you have more time. The middle managers are very busy and hectic. But on the other hand on the top executive, you have time to hear good ideas very fast. So it is very good to play with different timing. Also, it is important I think, that the teams, they have to read again like this: "when I am answering the question, is this the question I should answer alone or is it just like, okay agree and let's move on." So you have to know what was asked and why it was asked and so on. You have to communicate. So this is like a simulation.

V: that is very true, the teams have to think about it, so not like just coming in and go with the flow, that is not how the competition goes. They need to have a strategy.

T: Yeah. And in the end there is something you can learn inside out, but when you have questions, then the better answers are the one you kind of more detail. So you understand that they (the students) cannot understand well but can they open something else. However, it was very good in that same.

V: Did you train the two teams together or separately?

T: The training in my case, or in our UNI, is quite light, to be honest. The idea is that this possibility was discussed with Mari and Ari-Pekka already before all the practicality. It was discussed at the general level in the way that this would suit our second and third-year students. And we discussed with our student association people, let's find the teams and two teams volunteered and what I was asking was the motivation letter. It wasn't really kind of big assignment. But it was just to tell about yourself, why are you interested and so on just to prepare. And then I was happy, of course, I understand that in the next year it is not possible to have two teams. But this time it was very good that I had an opportunity to get two

teams to participate. Because it would have been very difficult to choose between the two teams. So those two teams were very fast, very proactive, and they showed the motivation and so on. But then the training was like more. I haven't been teaching the students at all because my teaching was in international level courses so actually from the perspective of the students and head of the program meaning kind of welcoming.

## Appendix 2. Interview transcription - Wikman, M., Senior Lecturer

V: can you tell which team are you coaching?

W: actually we have two teams, and I'm co-coaching both 2 and 4

V: you have said that these students have been coached`?

W: these students, no they haven't been in the program because they are in the Finnish speaking program

V: ahhh okay

W: they are in the Finnish speaking program, that course is for the English speaking ib program

V: can I ask more about that course because there is so much we can learn. What do you teach them in that course?

W: real case analysis because its the traditional Harvard and iv cases they have to solve in the actual competition. They are trained to analyze and present cases. They practice with cases. Of course they don't know what is in the competition. They take old cases that they analyze, and there is one teacher who has a key role. He then gives them hints like you didn't realize this and you left out that.

V: what do you think about these new team's performance that doesn't have training?

W: i think that they are doing surprisingly well. Considering that they are in the Finnish speaking program. And they haven't been trained for this expect of course they have had different courses about varying subjects in the cases but not specifically for the case competition. We had one or two meetings to boost their confidence but nothing else.

V: it's like pre-coaching for them?

W: yeah

V: did you have any discussion with them after yesterday?

W: yeah, we did.

V: can I ask in more detail what did you discuss?

W: we talked about their performance because we had watched them and gave some comments. Mainly we told them what went well. that's the idea when you are in the middle of the competition. If you start saying you did that wrong and that wrong and that wrong they start to think why are we here. So it was more boosting their confidence. It was like 15 minutes to max half an hour. And then

they went somewhere to have dinner, and we went somewhere else to have dinner.

V: have any teams from your school participated in international case competition?

W: no, not this program absolutely no idea

V: we are planning to do this international case competition next year. Where there are different backgrounds culture and its not only one country

W: so it's like the one we normally participate in. Because it is the most international case competition in the world.

V: where is it?

W: it's in different places every year because otherwise, it would be too hard for one university to organize it every year. it's a lot of work we had it here two years ago and I was the main organizer, and i know it takes more than a half a year almost full time before it really works. So I actually feel for you guys because I know exactly what you guys are doing.

V: i'm so happy to hear that. It's amazing to hear that you have organized international case competition before

W: yeah, she was actually so surprised that we actually have a course to prep them for case analysis but not for this program that our students here represent because we want to give a chance for other students as well not only the ones that are in the international business program.

W: The first time is always pioneering because you don't know what happens, but it works well. Maybe the major hiccup is that they can't pay with a card.

M: well if that is the biggest hiccup then we are doing quite well.

V: what do you think about the judging panel?

W: we talked about it with Mari as well, and we would have wanted that each panel should have one pedagogical person, so they understand where the students are coming from. Of course it wasn't possible now, but it would be really good and also judges with more experience of judging because this time they were all first-timers, so it was a bit hard for them as well. They were struggling sometimes a little bit what should i ask. I actually followed that one section out, so I saw them 3 times, and I saw them changing the first time was trickiest for them, and they were really strict and straight forward. And then the second and the third they started joking with the students, but they learn as well.

V: it's good to have them learn as well because some of the judges we want to bring the executive level to here so those people who found the company, so they grow the company from zero, so they have the ideas to know how it goes in the practice. So that's why invited mostly them, but that is a really important point of view because this year we were thinking that we can't find so many judges like that, but next year it is going to be different.

W: it's important that there are people from business life and especially if there could be someone who is from that company or has lead to the company that is the case company that would be really wonderful. So business people are really important because they see how it works in practice and they look at it from a different angle, but it would also be nice for the students to have also someone who knows where they are coming from. So that was our idea because we talked about it.

V: that's a brilliant idea. We should do that because this year, I was responsible for the judging panel and I was talking to Mari; how can we approach this case so the students can feel like they learned at least something. We can also find some employees in the future.

W: of course it's your decision how do you want to do it but it was just how we felt because again we reflect to the competition we know and the one we normally participate in so we look at that and look at this, and we are used to that there is a professor and why there isn't here, but your decision might be different. So there are no right or wrong answers.

V: But it's good that I have the talk with all the coaches so I can see the differences and get some suggestions for the next year and it was amazing experience for me that I decided to be here and I have two of my bosses here, and they were really amazed that business side is doing so well now. They would be even more amazed if they would know that other schools in Finland are doing the same thing or even bigger. So this is so cool to see. I was thinking because this case competition is ending tomorrow, so we need to have some follow up from this for next year, and i was thinking of having a podcast or writing blogs of people who have been here and then the students can learn from these. So that was just my idea. This not just for my thesis but also for the after part. This is really valuable for us. I have another question about what are the most important skills that teams should learn before the case competition.

W: that's a tricky question. Maybe because here it's all oral so the presentation might be the most important so you can express yourself. I would also say that I wouldn't focus that much on the subject matter, but it's about the ability to look at all angles and not be one minded. You should always have a wider view because that's how real life also works. In real life, you work in a company, and you can't say that i'm only interested in marketing and i don't understand anything about numbers and i don't know how do we get the goods here i just do the marketing. So they should have an overall picture of the business. These two things are the core.

V: he also said the same things, and he also emphasized flexibility. Also from our experience we have team, and when we follow their performance they can't be flexible enough they can't express their idea, so people here understand. So this is what we have to improve for next year's training.

W: sometimes it's hard to understand oneself. That people don't understand what am I saying. I always say that nothing is harder than communication and nothing is more often misunderstood than the message you're trying to convey.

V: also from my learning experience from school how you present yourself is the most important. I work in business, and we have customers, and they will be convinced by the idea from the first meeting, but they have to have a second meeting with us. It's important but not every student is aware of that, so they think high grade is more important in my cv than those soft skills are.

W: actually the companies sometimes say that it's more important that you know how to behave in situations than actual content because the content can come later. It convinces the people that you can deliver the content.

V: one thing about Finnish business life is the promise is really important. The seriousness that you deliver your promise is so important.

W: Because it's part of Finnish culture, not every culture is like that. So it's more general level it's a bit dizzier something like this will happen around that date. Here it's like if you have given that time that's it. No discussion.

V: Is there anything we can improve from for example yesterday?

W: now this is a really practical thing. What i learned from my experience organizing. Give information, put up signs of things you feel are clear we don't need that example toilet room that and that even if you think this is stupid or this is childish do it because people don't want to look around and be nervous about

finding things. So that's one thing I have learned. And when this grows bigger, you might consider that every team has its own ambassador.

V: we had planned that we had difficulty to find people. We reached out to all business and engineering students, and whoever and no one reached out except her. She is the only person we got.

W: i don't know what you promised, but we gave the students credits. We had some problems there so we went to the groups and talked to them and explained to them what it really means and we had a six-hour shift. So I told them part of this course is every one of them does six-hour shift and then we had different times for the shift. That way we had a lot of people helping us.

V: that's something we can do, maybe teachers should go and talk to them instead of students.

W: maybe they need more authority

W: students could explain how much fun it was. Someone who has experience could talk to other students.

## Appendix 3. Skill assessment form.

1The teams' real name was changed to protect their privacy.

Good Skills		T1		T2		T3		T4		T5		T6		T7		T8		T9			
		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	
		1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
M	Persuasion					x				x		x	x	x	x	x					
	Teamwork			x	x	x	x	x				x	x	x	x	x	x			x	
	Planning and Management		x	x		x	x			x		x		x	x	x	x				
	Goal-orientation	x	x	x	x	x						x	x	x	x	x	x				
	Decision Making					x						x	x	x	x						
E	Critical and Analytical thinking					x		x				x		x	x	x	x				
	Problem-solving		x	x		x				x		x	x			x	x				
	Personal Leadership																				
	Innovative Thinking				x							x	x			x					
T	Communications:			x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x			x	x				
	Research and Development			x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x				
PM	Self-awareness																				
	Creativity		x	x		x						x		x	x						
	Accountability																				
Improving Skills		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	
		1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
M	Persuasion	x		x	x		x	x											x	x	
	Teamwork	x	x											x							
	Planning and Management	x			x		x	x		x			x		x				x	x	
	Goal-orientation									x									x	x	
	Decision Making					x						x							x	x	
E	Critical and Analytical thinking	x	x	x			x									x			x	x	
	Problem-solving							x											x	x	
	Personal Leadership																				
	Innovative Thinking						x			x									x		
T	Communications	x	x	x	x							x	x	x	x				x	x	



Appendix 4. Creality Race Rulebook - By Mari Rytisalo and with the assistant of Van Le

## 1. COMPETITION OVERVIEW

### 1.1. About the Case Competition

Creality Race 2019 is the first national business case competition in Finland hosted by Tampere University of Applied Sciences. The organization and execution of the competition is a joint effort between students and the School of Business and Services. Creality Race 2019 is part of creating a new platform for case competitions and making business case solving a strong part of Finnish education in the field of business. Case competitions are a great opportunity to take what is learned in the classroom and apply them to real-world business scenarios. Students will learn how to analyze real-life business situations, identify critical information, and make logical recommendations to solve problems in a professional manner.

### 1.2. Competition Format

The competition will host teams divided into **three** (3) divisions, consisting of **three** (3) teams within each division. The competition will consist of two cases. Teams will be ranked by the judges. Concerning the division selection procedure, the teams will be assigned a division by a random draw.

**Case 1:** Case 1 consists of one, five-hour (5) case and will determine *two factors*:

- **(1)** After presenting case 1, the teams will be ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>. Teams will choose their presentation time for Case 2 in the order that they ranked for in Case 1. For example, a team who places first in Case 1 will be the first team in their division to choose which presentation time they want for Case 2.
- **(2)** The placement (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>) the team is given in case 1 influences the position in the final ranking of the competition.

**Case 2:** Case 2 consists of one, five-hour (5) case.

**(1)** After presenting the case, 2 teams will be ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>. The rankings in case 1 and 2 will determine the final ranking in the competition. For example, if a team is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in Case 1 and 3<sup>rd</sup> in Case 2, the total score is 5. The teams having the lowest score in their division will go to the finals.

In the event of a tie-breaker when counting the scores from cases 1 and 2, the team with a higher ranking in case 2 will be placed ahead of the team with a lower ranking.

If a team shows significant and explicit superiority in Case 2, the judging panel has a final veto in defining which team will go to the finals.

### **1.3. Case Evaluation**

Each case presentation will be evaluated by a judging panel of at least 3 judges, and there is no cap for the maximum number of judges. The judges will be provided a sheet containing standard evaluation criteria. The judges will also be given detailed information about each case. The judges will rank the teams in their appointed divisions.

## **2. ELIGIBILITY AND TEAM COMPOSITIONS**

### **2.1. Individual Participant Eligibility**

Creativity Race 2019 is offered to universities that provide programs related to undergraduate business disciplines. Each individual participant in the Creativity Race must meet all of the following criteria:

- Participants must be full-time undergraduate students of a participating school.
- Participating students must be currently studying 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year of specialized business education.

### **2.2. Team Compositions**

Participating business schools/faculties are permitted to enter a team(s) consisting of four (4) members who each meet the individual participant eligibility requirements. In the unfortunate case that some team members (s) become unable to participate, due to unexpected illness or other reasons, during the courses of the competition, the team may continue with the remaining team members. Substitutions or alternates are not to be permitted.

Each team is also required to be accompanied by one or more team coach(es) representing business school/faculty.

## **3. CASE PREPARATION**

### **3.1. General Expectations**

All materials that are submitted must be prepared in English. Presentations must be in English. Teams will have specific preparation times to craft their recommendations and will create a pre-defined outcome document to support their solution. Preparation of cases will occur at specified locations at the Main Campus at TAMK. Once the preparation time has elapsed, teams will present their recommendations to a panel of judges for evaluation purposes.

Teams will be given the names of the case companies and themes connected to the cases one month prior to the competition start date. Teams are expected to use this information and conduct substantial research before arriving at the competition.

### **3.2. Allowed Preparation Material**

**Provided Materials** - The teams will be provided with the following items during their case preparation:

- Four (4) Copies of the case in English.
- Wi-Fi – Wireless Network Access.
- A USB for delivering the outcome materials.
- One (1) Flip chart and markers to be used throughout both cases.

**Allowed, but NOT provided Materials** – The following items are permitted for the teams to have, but are not provided:

- Calculators of any sort.
- Four (4) Laptops with the ability to connect to wireless networks.
- Prepared documentation, research, notes, and other information.
- Prepared presentation PowerPoint Decks (Templates) are allowed and encouraged.

### **3.3. External Communication**

Teams are prohibited from communicating with **any** outside party during the time they are working on the case during both cases works. Mobile phones will be collected and returned after the casework.

For **Case 1**, Teams are prohibited from engaging in discussion about the case with anyone other than their team members (including their coach) until after the Question and Answer period.

For **Case 2**, teams are prohibited from engaging in communication with anyone other than their team members (including their coach) until the finalists are announced.

**Finalists** are prohibited from engaging in communication with anyone other than their team members (including their coach) until after they have completed the Question and Answer period for the final round of presentations.

## 4. DELIVERIES

### 4.1. Case 1

For Case 1, teams will provide a single-page placemat to be used for the presentation. Placemat: one single-sided color print, size A4.

- The placemat will be collected at the end of the case preparation time (at five hours) to be printed for the judges
- Judges will receive the placemat just before the start of the presentation.

### 4.2. Case 2

For Case 2, teams are required to deliver a PowerPoint (.ppt or .pptx) file for their presentation. The contents of these PowerPoints are at the sole discretion of the competitors. The amount of presentation deck slides and the Appendix slides is unlimited.

Presenting slides that have been used at another competition is strictly forbidden.

- Judges will receive the PowerPoint slides just before the start of the presentation: Color printed 2 slides/page. **Any appendix slides will not be printed for the judges.**
- When possible, teams are allowed to carry their laptops along with them to practice before their presentation time begins
- PowerPoint slide size is widescreen (16:9).

## 5. CASE PRESENTATIONS

All presentations must be made in English. Participants may not watch other teams present in division rounds at any time. Team coaches may watch any team present, at any time, and in any division.

### 5.1. Spectator Attendance

The presentation rooms will be open for other students and staff members for observing. Spectators will be allowed to enter the presentation rooms prior to

each team's presentation. Out of courtesy for the presenters, no one will be allowed to enter or leave the presentation room **during** presentations. All mobile phones and devices must be silenced or turned off. Spectators may not, in any way, interfere with the presentation.

## 5.2. Presentation time 5.2.1. Case 1

- Teams will be given **one copy** of both their single-page placemat by the Organizing Committee before entering the presentation room.
- Teams will sit at a table and give their presentations to judges directly across from them (similar to a boardroom-style setting). The total time for presentation and Questions & Answers (Q&A) is 20 minutes.
- Teams will have **up to five (5) minutes to walk judges through the placemat. When teams are finished walking judges through the placemat OR the five minutes have elapsed (whichever comes first), the remaining time left is spent on Q&A.** For example, if you finish presenting the placemat in 3 minutes, there will be 17 minutes of Q&A.
- Teams can **only use the placemat** to guide their presentation to the judges (0-5 mins.)
- In the Q&A period following the presentation, the team's responsibility is to answer questions without any pre-prepared materials.
- Judges will take into account how team members work together during the presentation and how much each member contributes to the overall performance.
- Expressing the home institution and degree program during the presentation and Q&A is strictly prohibited and results in an automatic last-place finish.

The presentation room coordinator will display a sign when there are two (2) minutes and one (1) minute remaining in the placemat presentation time. When the five (5) minutes have elapsed, the room coordinator will end the presentation regardless of whether or not the presenting team is finished.

The presentation room coordinator will display a sign when there are five (5) minutes and one (1) minute remaining in the Question and Answer Period. When the twenty (20) minutes total has elapsed, the room coordinator will end the presentation. For example, if a team is in the middle of answering a question and time elapses, the team must stop.

### 5.2.2. Case 2

- For the **Division Round**, teams will have ten (10) uninterrupted minutes to present their recommendations. After the team's ten minutes have elapsed, there will be a ten (10) minute Question and Answer period.
- Judges will take into accounts how team members work together during the presentation and how much each member contributes to the overall performance.
- Expressing the home institution and degree program during the presentation and Q&A is strictly prohibited and results in an automatic last-place finish.

The same rules apply to the Final Round presentations.

For both **Division and Final Round**, the presentation room coordinator will display a sign when there are five (5) minutes, two (2) minutes, and one (1) minute remaining in the presentation time. When the ten (10) minutes have elapsed, the room coordinator will end the presentation regardless of whether or not the presenting team is finished.

For both **Division and Final Round**, the presentation room coordinator will display a sign when there are five (5) minutes and one (1) minute remaining in the Question and Answer Period. When the twenty (20) minute total has elapsed, the room coordinator will end the presentation. For example, if a team is in the middle of answering a question and time elapses, the team must stop.

## 6. FEEDBACK AFTER CASE PRESENTATIONS

After the completion of each round of presentations, teams will be provided the opportunity to receive feedback from the panel of judges. Only the team and their team coaches are allowed to participate in the feedback session. Teams will **not** be told their ranking before or during feedback but will be allowed to ask questions of judges or just listen on ways to improve for the future.

## 7. THE FINAL ROUND

The team from each division with the lowest final score calculated from Case 1 and 2 will advance to finals. In the event of a first-place tie inside a division, the team with the higher ranking in Case 2 will advance to the finals.

If a team shows significant and explicit superiority in Case 2, the judging panel has a final veto in defining which team will go to the finals.

Each division winner will present their solution for Case 2 to the final panel of judges. The final round will determine the overall winner of the competition.

### **7.1. Lag Time**

After receiving feedback from Case 2, each finalist will have some lag time before presenting their Case 2 solutions in finals. During this time, finalists are permitted to rehearse their presentation or modify their delivery based on feedback but will **not** be allowed to modify their slides in any way.

## **8. CONSEQUENCES FOR RULE VIOLATIONS**

The Organizing Committee reserves the right to disqualify any team for violating any of the above rules. The right to disqualification extends to areas of competition not explicitly outlined in this Rule Book such as general conduct throughout the competition. Decisions by the committee and the judging panel are binding and non-negotiable.

## Appendix 5. Creality Race Agenda

CREALITY RACE AGENDA			NOTE
Day 1	9:00-10:00	Opening brunch - Y Campus main lobby Getting ready to welcome teams and getting ready with venue/decoration	
	10:00-11:00	Opening of CR, Welcoming words, Case company presentation & case distribution - Y Campus main lobby	
	11:00-16:00	Case working - 9 class rooms in C2 (if possible)	
	14:00	Lunch, coaches, and judges	Judges can arrive at 1:30
	15:00	Debrief	For judges
	16:30-18:00	Case presentations - 3 class rooms (monitoimitila) Snacks and drinks while waiting at Y Campus main lobby	
	18:30	Announcements - Y Campus main lobby	Make the slides
	Evening Activity	all teams go straight to Dinner at 7:45 at Inez by bus	
Snacks and drinks are served during the case solving in classrooms			
Day 2	8:00	Case distribution - Y Campus Paja	
	8:00-13:00	Case working - 9 class rooms in C2 (if possible)	
	11:00	Lunch	Sandwiches for teams, judges arrive at 10:45
	12:00	Debrief, judges, and coaches	
	13:30-15:00	Case presentations - 3 classrooms. Snacks and drinks while waiting at Y Campus main lobby	
	15:30	Announcement of finalists - Y Campus main lobby	
	17:00-18:30	Final presentations - Olympiakortteli	Judges can arrive at 16:45
	19:00	Announcement of the winner - Olympiakortteli	
Sandwiches and drinks are served during the case solving			