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# **PROUDLY PRESENTING, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FINLAND, MASTER'S DEGREE OF BEAUTY AND COSMETICS. DESIGNING THE CURRICULUM WITH PARTICIPATIVE PEDAGOGY**

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this article is to describe the implementation of new pedagogical practices and participative methods for developing a curriculum for the first Master's Degree of Beauty and Cosmetics in Finland and in Nordic Countries. The first group of students in Master's degree of Beauty and Cosmetics began their studies in January 2018 in Laurea University of Applied Sciences (Laurea UAS).

Another aim is to describe the experiences of students and teachers by multiprofessional collaboration after programme-specific core competence studies and to describe the effect of collected feedback on the continuous development of the curriculum.

Keywords: Curriculum design, Participative pedagogy, Cosmetics, Cosmetic Science, Higher Education, Master's Degree.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Laurea University of Applied Sciences is a multidisciplinary university operating in Southern Finland with approximately 7800 students and 500 staff members [1]. Laurea has created a Learning by Developing (LbD) model - an innovative operating model based on authenticity, partnership, experiential learning, creativity and research [2]. Learning is related to development projects that are genuinely rooted in working life.

The development in this Master's Degree of Beauty and Cosmetics was done following Laurea UAS's LbD pedagogical model [2] and with close cooperation with the working life.

### **1.1 Bachelor of Beauty and Cosmetics**

Laurea UAS is the only university in Finland where the academic degree Bachelor of Beauty and Cosmetics (BBC) can be taken in Finnish language. The Bachelor's Degree of Beauty and Cosmetics in Swedish can be taken Vaasa but it differs considerably from its contents from the education offered by Laurea UAS. Bachelor's Degree in Beauty and Cosmetics is the route for higher education for the secondary degree students of both hair and beauty care. However, the education path stopped here, before the Master's Degree of Beauty and Cosmetics started in 2018.

The development of the whole education field requires adding education possibilities to the higher academic degree. A higher academic degree can be seen to increase the credibility of the education field also with the working life when students compete for the jobs of beauty care and of cosmetic field with the Master's Degree of other education fields.

One objective of the Bachelor's Degree in Beauty and Cosmetics is to become competent to be a secondary degree teacher. Among the teachers in vocational colleges the possibility for the Master's Degree was long hoped for. The teachers of vocational colleges in beauty care were in unequal position with respect to the teachers of other vocational fields regard to the progress in the working life.

### **1.2 Master of Beauty and Cosmetics**

Laurea University of Applied Sciences started a Master's Degree in Beauty and Cosmetics with a group of 28 students in January 2018 in Vantaa. The degree is the first one both in Finland and in the Nordic countries.

The aim for starting the degree existed for several years. The beginning of the degree was preceded by development work, which lasted several years; the most active development work took place for two years before the beginning of the degree.

One Bachelor's thesis [4] and one Master's Thesis [5] were made before the beginning of an actual curriculum development work. In the development work of the curriculum we utilised participative pedagogy and collaborative methods. In the workshops the contents of the curriculum were designed. The representatives of different interest groups and alumni of the university were invited to take part in the workshops.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

The development work of the curriculum was carried out according to the Learning by Developing (LbD) model created in Laurea University of Applied Sciences. LbD model works well with participative pedagogy and collaborative methods. Eugenia Mbanefo, in her research article *Participatory Pedagogy: A Case Study of Learner's Participation in Content Development* states that the focus should be on content relevance, because it is posited that content relevance should be ensured in content development since this is a sure way of guaranteeing and sustaining learner's interest. [3]

The need for the Master's Degree of Beauty and Cosmetics was preliminarily surveyed as early as in 2015 [4]. The purpose of Essi Salaoudji's Bachelor's thesis was to determine the interests of the target group, Bachelors of Beauty and Cosmetics, completing a Master's Degree. In her thesis, it was stated that the majority of the interviewees who had taken the Bachelor of Beauty and Cosmetics Degree, in other words 63%, would be interested in taking a Master's Degree (Saloudji 2015).

In 2016, Seija Larinen, in her Master's thesis, investigated the need for a Master of Beauty and Cosmetics Degree among potential students [5]. In her thesis and needs analysis, Bachelors of Beauty and Cosmetics were interviewed in order to find out how many of them are interested in a Master's Degree. In addition, their views on what the curriculum should consist of were gathered. The results of this thesis were the basis for curriculum developmental work.

Participative methods were utilized through the development of the curriculum. We wanted to involve the representatives of interest groups from different parts of the cosmetic field to the curriculum developmental work. Two workshops, for example, were held to which the representatives of the working life were invited to tell about the competence needs for the Beauty and Cosmetics field. The view of the working life on the competence needs for the new Master's degree is important. Several representatives of interest groups were invited to participate in workshops. The possible applicants for the Master's Degree, graduated Bachelors of Beauty and Cosmetics, were also invited to the workshops to develop and design the contents of core competence together with the working life. More than 80% of the invited ones participated in the occasions. Workshops were structured so that their objective was involve the participants in the curriculum development work. In the workshops the different tools, such as learning café were used.

For the workshops, there was the first prepared preliminary version of the curriculum. The workshops began with brainstorming for the objectives of core competence. The participants were asked to list the competence needs for the Master of Beauty and Cosmetics Degree. The competences were grouped according to the subject matter. Three separate subject matters formed gradually; Cosmetic Legislation, Production of Cosmetics and Management and Leadership in the Cosmetic Sector.

## **3 RESULTS**

In the result section of this article, the results of the study of the need of the Master of Beauty and Cosmetics Degree Programme is presented. The curriculum from the year 2018 is presented and the effect of students' feedback on the curriculum described.

### **3.1 Results from study of the needs of the Master of Beauty and Cosmetics Degree programme**

In 2016 a Master's thesis preceded the curriculum development work. In her thesis Seija Larinen investigated the need for Master of Beauty and Cosmetics degree and the interest in it among potential students [5]. 168 graduated Bachelors of Beauty and Cosmetics were asked their willingness to take Master's Degree in Cosmetic Science, 83.3% (140) of them planned to take a Master's degree. [5]

The importance of title of the degree, Master of Beauty and Cosmetics was studied in Larinen's thesis. Previously, Bachelors of Beauty and Cosmetics were able to take a Master's Degree in in other

subjects, such as Master of Business Administration, while there was no degree in Beauty and Cosmetics. Title, Master of Beauty and Cosmetics was considered important among the interviewees. More than half of the interviewees (93 interviewees 55,4% of the interviewees) told that the title was extremely important. [5]

The probability for taking the Master's Degree in Beauty and Cosmetics was also studied. To question How probable is that you would take the degree during the five following years?, nearly half of the interviewees answered extremely probable (78 interviewees 46% of the interviewees'). Only 16% of the interviewees considered taking the Master's Degree improbable during the five following years. [5]

In the study of the needs of Master of Beauty and Cosmetics Degree programme the core competences of the degree were investigated. In the thesis, the interviewees said their opinion what core competences of the Master's degree should include.

Cosmetic raw materials, especially new plant-based raw materials were considered important and interesting. Nutrition and the strengthening of the competence in cosmetic and food legislation were pointed out. Internationalization, sustainability and environmental competence, which contains the whole chain from the production of the raw material to the recycling of the cosmetic packages.

Core competences in Master of Beauty and Cosmetics Degree according to Larinen's thesis:

- a) Competence in cosmetic raw materials, new ingredients and raw materials and plant based materials
- b) Competence in internationalization
- c) Competence in Cosmetic and Food legislation

## **3.2 Results from collaborative workshops**

In the collaborative workshops, competence needs were analyzed together with working life. Workshops resulted in three core competence units, that curriculum 2018 was based on.

### **3.2.1 Cosmetic legislation**

Regulation (EC) N° 1223/2009 on cosmetic products is the main regulatory framework for finished cosmetic products when placed on the EU market [6]. It strengthens the safety of cosmetic products and streamlines the framework for all operators in the sector. The Regulation simplifies procedures to the extent that the internal market of cosmetic products is now a reality.

The regulation on cosmetic products defines making cosmetics and packing and packing notes. Food legislation is close to cosmetic legislation, today many functional foods are sold which affect the health of skin and hair and thus appearance of the human being.

### **3.2.2 Cosmetic business**

Studying business so that actual cases are from cosmetic business is important for students. In Laurea UAS studies are conducted according to a LbD model, where learning takes place with close cooperation with real working life.

In Master of Beauty and Cosmetics Degree the business studies will take place in cooperation with both national and international projects. In the projects the student will have the network of international actors and thus increase possibilities to be employed to the versatile jobs which correspond to their education.

### **3.2.3 Sustainability**

Sustainability is extremely important to the cosmetic industry. The sustainable cosmetic development is seen both as an ethical principle in marketing and as a significant strategic tool for both small and big companies.

The consumers are more aware than before and pay attention to the making, packing and recycling of the cosmetic product. When the environmental consciousness is made visible in the product design, the raised profile and appreciation of the whole beauty care will raise. Furthermore, cosmetic industry produces products which are of higher quality and safer than before.

### 3.3 Results from student and teacher feedback

Student Feedback was collected in the middle of core competence studies and in the final stage of the studies. Feedback was collected in the middle of core competence studies so some changes could be made already to the first curriculum during studies. The students were mainly satisfied with the contents of the study modules, except they wanted to deepen their knowledge on cosmetic chemistry. The part of the cosmetic chemistry and cosmetic raw materials was extended already during the spring.

Multidisciplinary group of teachers took part in the education. Chemistry, business, behavioral economy and jurisprudence formed versatile unity. The studies were carried out so that there were more than two teachers designing together the courses. In addition, two or more teachers were present in classrooms during the studies. The teachers designed courses and tasks together so that they supported the learning objectives of the curriculum. The students experienced teachers attendance's useful. On the other hand, the teachers' different ways in teaching was regarded confusing to some extent. Altogether, presence of multiple teachers and their core competences was considered useful.

### 3.4 The curriculum

In the current curriculum, the studies comprise 30 credits of programme specific core competence. The core competence is supplemented by Laurea's joint offer of complementary studies, where students can select 30 credits of management and development studies as indicated by their own personal needs. Master's thesis, 30 credits, can be written under supervision in Laurea's research and development projects, or in student's own work organisation. [7]

The core competence studies gives students a readiness to analyse changes in the cosmetic business environment with different tools. One objective of the studies is that the student will be able to apply the principles of sustainability in the value chain of the cosmetics. Another objective is to initiate the possibilities of the judicial regulation and the effects of different cultural environments on cosmetic business.

#### 3.4.1 *Judicial Regulation in Cosmetic Business 10 cr*

Learning outcomes;

after completing the course the student is able to:

- apply the cosmetic legislation when estimating the safety of the cosmetic products
- apply the cosmetic legislation when placing products on the EU market
- act with authorities and with other interest groups in proper way
- use the possibilities offered by the judicial regulation in the cosmetic business

#### 3.4.2 *The Strategic Development and Management of Cosmetic Business 10 cr*

Learning outcomes;

after completing the course the student is able to:

- analyze changes in the business environment and develop business models based on it
- develop new service models of the e-business and utilise different analysis tools
- lead marketing and selling while paying attention to the competition factors of the cosmetic field

#### 3.4.3 *Cosmetics Manufacturing and Business Models 10 cr*

Learning outcomes;

after completing the course the student is able to:

- apply the principles of the sustainable development in the value chain of the whole cosmetic field
- search for information about cosmetic raw materials and to estimate the reliability of the information and to use information in the planning of the cosmetic product

- develop the product development process of the cosmetic product paying attention to the market and profitability viewpoints
- analyze international trade in different cultural environments

#### 3.4.4 Effect of student feedback on new curriculum 2019

The feedback from the very first student group and their development proposals for the curriculum development work were extremely important. When feedback from the first group of students was analyzed, the need for strengthening of the competence in cosmetic chemistry arose.

Curriculum for the second group starting their studies in January 2019 has gone through some changes. Even the curriculum does not seem outwards to have changed that much, however, the teaching contents are changed based on the collected feedback.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

Laurea UAS offers 12 Master's degree programmes. A Master's degree will deepen and expand student's competence and give eligibility for roles where a postgraduate degree is required. The curriculum of the Master's Degree of Beauty and Cosmetics was developed using participative methods and working closely with working life. According to LbD, it will be continuously updated to match future competence needs in the cosmetics field.

In the Master of Beauty and Cosmetics Degree the core competence of the programme gives a student readiness to analyze changes in the business environment of the cosmetic field with different tools. One objective of the core competence module is that the student can apply the principles of the sustainable development in the value chain of the cosmetics, paying attention to the relatives of the sustainable development and the effects of different cultural environments on cosmetic business. Another aim is to initiate the possibilities of the judicial regulation in the business. In the core competence module, they are emphasized adapting of the Cosmetic regulation to the separate functions of the cosmetic production and marketing.

According to the student feedback, the students are very pleased and enjoy their studies. In the curriculum planning work, the workshops and needs analysis in master's thesis supported each other. Continuing curriculum development work makes the real-time developing of the curriculum possible. Multidisciplinary teacher cooperation is the best choice in study units.

Developing the Master of Beauty and Cosmetics curriculum has been a collaborative process, involving teachers, students, representatives of interest groups, and future students. The fundamental goal of the curriculum is to encourage students to a critical and analytical thinking and to support their development into a highly qualified expert of the cosmetic industry.

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