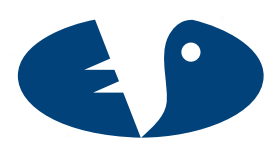




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Encounters13 Conference: Passion, Flow & Transformation



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# In This Issue

Encounters13 Conference: Passion, Flow & Transformation .....	6
<i>Annica Isacsson, Project Manager</i>	
Developing Passion and Risk Taking-Pedagogy.....	7
<i>Heli Potinkara, Tarja Römer-Paakkanen, Maija Suonpää &amp; Suvi Kiviniemi</i>	
Teams as a Tool for Regional Innovations in Professional Education .....	19
<i>Soile Juujärvi &amp; Kaija Pessa</i>	
Enhanced Communication by Multi-Voiced Dialog - Impressions from Project's First Cycles .....	30
<i>Ikali Karvinen, Eva Laine, Ann-Marie Suvisaari &amp; Tarja Kantola</i>	
Inquiry Learning in Practice – Information Sharing Among First Semester Tourism Students and Supervisors.....	39
<i>Annika Konttinen &amp; Niina Moilanen</i>	
Inquiry Learning and Team Leadership at Porvoo Campus .....	50
<i>Evariste Habiyakare &amp; Johanna Heinonen</i>	
Methodological Approaches to Branding with a Focus on Tourism as a Process of Change and Innovation.....	62
<i>Marica Mazurek</i>	
Presenting Porvoo Campus – Creating Business, Tourism and Wellness.....	76

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# Encounters13 Conference: Passion, Flow & Transformation

*Annica Isacsson, Project Manager*

HAAGA-HELIA and Laurea Universities of Applied Sciences organised an international conference on research and learning methods in sales and service development at Porvoo Campus during 21-22 March 2013. The third conference was a follow-up conference to two previous successful Encounters Conferences held in 2008 and 2011, bridging audience from cross-sectoral fields. The 3rd Encounters conference focused on methods on sales and service development with themes on: Creative/innovative research methods, Learning methods in transformation, Sales and service development and Passion in practice.

The idea of the conference was to convey a sense of passion, flow & transformation. The conference sessions were not arranged according to formal conventions, instead, Campus Encounters13 encouraged discussions, meetings, encounters and surprises in innovative workshops, paper and poster sessions, business panel, networking activities, lunches, wellness centre, gala dinner, wine tasting and sightseeing that was arranged for the benefit of the participants.

The conference was honoured by key notes held by well-recognised professors: Professor Dimitrios Buhalis – Bournemouth University, the UK, Professor Cihan Cibanoğlu – University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee (USFM), the US, Professor Kirsti Lonka, University of Helsinki, Finland and Vice President Teemu Kokko, HAAGA-HELIA UAS, Finland.

Approximately 100 delegates visited our conference from Greece, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Russia, the US, the UK and Finland.

It was a conference filled with joy, professionalism and knowledge. Our students added to the value of Campus Encounters13.

For further information concerning the conference, please contact  
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# Developing Passion and Risk Taking- Pedagogy

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## Abstract

This paper focuses on the project that aims to enhance students' passion and risk-taking during their studies and learning processes. The main target is to create a preliminary model for "Passion and Risk-taking" -pedagogy for entrepreneurship education as there is a need to enhance students' entrepreneurial behaviour and mindset.

To understand, which critical elements affect in the process of adapting entrepreneurial mindset and behaviour, we have interviewed students, study counsellors and teachers. The main concepts are passion, curiosity and risk-taking in learning.

According to the results passion is one of the most important elements in entrepreneurial learning. Curiosity is something which not necessarily needed in studies, but if you are willing to learn you are curious. Risk-taking belongs to entrepreneurial learning, but even in school system you need to take risks in learning. In this paper we present preliminary results of concept analysis and framework for Passion and Risk-taking pedagogy.

## Keywords

Entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship pedagogy, higher education



## Introduction

There is the need for citizens to be well prepared to manage the complex and non-linear transitions that mark contemporary education, training, and working pathways. In future, the question is whether the difference between successful performance at school and successful performance in business life can be discerned in time. Kupferberg (2003) emphasizes that creativity is more meaningful than competences. He believes that education and training are going to meet new challenges, which are more than plain competences. Insight is an integral element of competence, bringing into play such characteristics as willpower, intuitive thinking, spirit, and communication skills that impact on ability to manage practical problem solving situations. The ability to learn from experience is valued and taken as part of the broader learning process. (Munch & Jakobsen 2005).

The European Union (EU) is strongly in favour of entrepreneurship, as it has defined entrepreneurship as one of the key competencies of life-long learning. In that context entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. According to this framework, entrepreneurship supports all citizens in everyday life at home and in society and helps employees gain awareness of the wider context of their work and capitalize on opportunities that arise. It also provides the foundation for special skills and knowledge that entrepreneurs need when starting a social or commercial enterprise. (Commission of the European Communities 2005, 18.)

The project of Passion and risk-taking pedagogy has been created for developing a framework and model for vocational and higher education teachers and vocational teacher education, which need some tools and pedagogical models to fulfil the above mentioned challenges that they face in the near future.

## The challenge of entrepreneurship education

The Finnish government policies for entrepreneurship education are derived from the EU's entrepreneurship education policies. The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture as a responsible actor for entrepreneurship education has designed development priorities for all levels of education institutions. The development priorities in Finnish higher education are, to inculcate entrepreneurial attitudes, generate innovations, nourish entrepreneurship during studies, perform joint research projects together with industry, and to promote growth-oriented business. To support the implementation entrepreneurship education activities, work-based learning environments are developed to integrate entrepreneurship more into learning situations. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2009, 23-24.) A key task in the future is to encourage educational institutions to adopt a more entrepreneurial operations culture, which is flexible and encourages creativity, innovativeness, risk taking and cooperation where everyone needs to learn to work entrepreneurially. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2009, 16-17.)

One of the challenges of entrepreneurship education, not only in business schools but also in other higher education institutions (HEIs), is the narrow view of entrepreneurship as the creation of new ventures. The emphasis of teaching is on the technical knowledge of new business creation through the use of lectures, case studies and business plan projects rather than on the development of students' entrepreneurial mindset and skills. (Wilson & Twaalfhoven 2005, 316; NIRAS Consultants et al. 2008, 128). Entrepreneurial learning is a holistic process. Koiranen and Ruohotie (2001,103) argue that the focus in entrepreneurship education should not only be on the development of students' cognitive capabilities, but also affective and conative areas need to be developed. The broad definition of entrepreneurship as promoted by the EU is not only about new venture creation, but also about the development of an individual's generic competences to identify and act on opportunities as well as to plan and manage goal oriented

projects (e.g. Commission of European Communities, 2005). Entrepreneurship, defined in this way, promotes entrepreneurial behaviour at the individual, organisational and national levels.

Entrepreneurial pedagogy originates from research on how entrepreneurs learn. According to Gibb (1997), entrepreneurs learn by copying, problem solving, learning from mistakes, experimenting, and discovering. Entrepreneurial learning is experiential and contextual (Cope 2005; Politis 2005; Carswell & Rae 2000). Entrepreneurs learn from critical events, which trigger reflective behaviour (Cope & Watts 2000, 104). Entrepreneurs acquire knowledge from several external sources such as reading newspapers and trade magazines, as well as attending seminars. They also visit business associates, private individuals and other professionals, such as accountants, bankers, lawyers, and other consultants. (Young & Sexton 2003, 156.)

Entrepreneurial people are described in many ways and using many definitions, but the most common terms that are used are: Entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial behaviour, entrepreneurial drive, and entrepreneurial spirit. According to Lumpkin and Dess (1996, 137) the key dimensions that characterize entrepreneurial orientation include: A propensity to act autonomously, a willingness to innovate, a willingness to take risks, a tendency to be aggressive toward competitors, and acting proactively relative to marketplace opportunities. Florin, Karri and Rossiter (2007) have found that the preference for innovation, non-conformity, proactive disposition, self-efficacy, and achievement motivation promote entrepreneurial behaviour. Entrepreneurial drive means pro-activeness, innovativeness, willingness to take risk, and enlarge business (Chirico 2007a, 58; Chirico 2007b, 142). Westerholm and Sinkkonen (2010, 126) found out that perseverance and pro-activity are the most important competences for small entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurial spirit is widely used in articles and everyday language but there is no exact definition of it. Römer-Paakkanen, Pekkala and Koironen (2011) use the concepts of

entrepreneurial spirit and entrepreneurial drive as synonyms in their studies. According to them entrepreneurial spirit arises from positive self-esteem and entrepreneurial attitudes as people grow to entrepreneurship in a long learning process that starts already in childhood. Becoming an entrepreneur depends on entrepreneurial spirit, on attitudes, skills, and motivation.

To promote entrepreneurial ways of learning and behaviour, action orientation and creativity are emphasized in a learning environment that is holistic, complex, and changing, and where students are at the centre of learning (Kyrö 2008, 2005; Remes 2003). In contemporary teaching practices, action orientation and enhancement of students' creativity are the main challenges in teaching entrepreneurship at the higher educational context due to the lack of tools needed to guide students' learning processes. Many teachers have been trained to transmit knowledge rather than to support students learning. (Carrier 2005, 152.)

In general, learning and teaching entrepreneurship require changes in the roles played by teachers and students in learning processes (e.g. Jones & Iredale 2010, 13; Kickul & Fayolle 2007; Kyrö 2005a; Gorman, Hanlon & King 1997). Hence, a move from a teacher centred learning approach toward a student centred learning is needed. A student centred learning focuses on both the content and process of learning to achieve learning outcomes. Knowledge is not transmitted to students, but it is often skill-related and aims at personal development. (Carrier 2007, 155.)

We support Dey and Steyaert's (2007, 3) thoughts that knowledge creation and learning can no longer be understood under the spell of a rationalistic, programmatic and instrumental paradigm. Rather, it must be enlivened by an understanding of knowledge and learning that establishes a nexus with passion and permits a more holistic perspective which highlights knowledge as an embodied and fully concentrated process. The hierarchical role of a teacher, when moving from the teacher centred approach to the student centered approach, changes the way knowledge is created. (Dey & Steyaert, 2007,3.) Nowadays the responsibility

for the organisation of knowledge should be more with the students. Knowledge is problem-oriented and contextual rather than context free or based on a specific discipline area. Each student is allowed to understand knowledge and learn competence at a different rate rather than having a teacher setting the pace for learning. The role of a teacher is to facilitate students' learning through guiding students' understanding during the learning process. (Kickul & Fayolle 2007, 2-7.) A shift from teacher centred to student centred learning does not mean that business theories or models become obsolete but are applied when students learn by doing. Knowledge is not seen as an objective substance owned and transferred by a teacher to students, but it is created in students' active social processes in action. Hence, knowledge is contextual and subjective. (Kyrö 2005; Kirby 2007.)

In this project we do not have any explicit expectations or theoretic presumptions, but we have some practice-based intuitions what kind of elements could be involved in passion and risk-taking –pedagogy. We have in our practical work recognized that knowledge transmission (knowledge about entrepreneurship) does not enhance students' entrepreneurial behaviour. We are implementing the social constructivist learning theory which according to Suonpää (2013, 44) is a student centred learning approach involving both individual and social aspects of learning. It assumes that students learn when they socially construct knowledge in interaction with other students within the context of its use. The role of the teacher is to create a learning environment which supports students learning and personal development. Students take responsibility of their learning and they define what they learn and how they learn. Hence, in this approach students are capable of developing their entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attitudes, and their professional development.

Also our intuition and pre-understanding had confirmed after being involved in several entrepreneurial and pedagogical projects and also the results, products and practices of them are implemented and further constructed in this project.

## Target of the paper and research questions

It is argued that a prerequisite for stimulating and enhancing entrepreneurial spirit of young people is that we must better understand the way they think and how they go about choosing a career (Henderson & Robertson 2000). Adopting entrepreneurship as a career option does not depend solely on individual's knowledge of the field, but also on attitudes and the willingness in adopting it as a way of life. We have noticed that there is a need for some practical tools and models to help teachers to maintain and enhance students' entrepreneurial behavior and passion during their studies and during their learning processes. Passion and risk-taking –pedagogy refers to entrepreneurship education that aims to enhance students' entrepreneurial behaviour, mind-set and spirit. Passion and risk-taking –pedagogy also aims to enhance students' growth to become entrepreneurial and support their professional development. It also helps students to employ themselves as entrepreneurs.

In this project the purpose and aim originate from the need to understand, what are the critical elements, that affect in the process of adapting entrepreneurial mind-set and that influence in the processes of teaching and learning entrepreneurship. So in this paper we present the preliminary results of the conceptual analysis that we have made by interviewing the students, teachers, and entrepreneurship coaches. We conducted the interviews to extend our understanding of the phenomena related to above mentioned broader research topic. In this first stage research our research questions are:

- 1) How do the interviewees understand the phenomena of passion, curiosity and risk taking?
- 2) What are the other critical elements that affect in the process of adapting entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial behavior?

## Methodology

Our interest is on developing passion and risk-taking pedagogy but first we had to investigate what we mean by passion and risk-taking in

learning. So we followed the explorative research approach, as we were interested to find out how students and teachers in higher education understand the phenomenon like passion, curiosity, risk-taking, and entrepreneurial behaviour. According to Arbnor and Bjerke (1997, 86) in several research areas significant hypothesis are missing, which means that many exploratory studies must be undertaken before hypotheses can be formulated. Such explorative work is an inevitable part of any effort intended to develop better knowledge about certain phenomena. According to Krishnaswamy, Sivakumar and Mathirajan (2009, 183) exploratory research consists of getting information from literature, secondary sources, and from knowledgeable persons. The study design is flexible and emerges as the study progresses.

In this project we do not have any explicit expectations or theoretic presumptions, but we have some practice-based intuitions what kind of elements could be involved to passion and risk-taking –pedagogy. Our intuition and pre-understanding also had confirmed after being involved in several projects on this field: HAAGA-HELIA has had several entrepreneurial and pedagogical projects and also the results, products and practices of them are implemented and further constructed in this project. Examples of these projects are PedaLab, YVI, and Get a Life.

In PedaLab-project teachers developed and tested different entrepreneurial learning methods. Each participant developed his or her own model tested it in practice and the results were reflected and evaluated in PedaLab discussion forums and workshops. (HAAGA-HELIA 2013.)

YVI-project (The virtual learning environment for entrepreneurship education) is an innovative, reciprocal learning environment for the developers of entrepreneurship education within different educational institutions and within business-life and within different organizations. The purpose of this virtual learning environment is to develop both basic and vocational teacher education. Moreover, there are activities, which focus on strategies and curricula development and strengthening teachers' pedagogical

competencies of entrepreneurship education. YVI is designed to tackle lack of information, lack of learning material, and lack of networking in entrepreneurship education. (Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2011, 25; YVI-project 2010-2013.)

“Get a life” –project provides a future-oriented simulation tool for the students as well as guidance tools for the counselling personnel. The scientific outcome of the project was a holistic counselling model, whilst the practical outcome was a virtual handbook for the counsellors. The project also predicted some long-term future scenarios on the development and changes in working life. As a final product the project provides an online simulation tool that the students can use in their career-planning process. (Römer-Paakkanen 2011; Get a Life-project 2009-2011.)

## Data collection and analysis

The data were collected by visiting HAAGA-HELIA's different campuses, where we randomly interviewed some students and teachers. Those interviews were short, semi-structured, and more or less open-ended. The aim was to get the participants to express their understanding, ideas and additional perspectives to our research questions. Some vocational teachers were interviewed in the meeting of HOPE -project. Also some actors, coaches, and students at the incubator and Team Academy of Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences were interviewed. All together in the data of this paper there are 60 interviews.

Each interviewer recorded the interviews and made her own notes of them. The data were analysed by content analysis method (Eskola & Suoranta 1996). All notes are downloaded to Moodle -virtual learning environment, where they are available to each project member. The focus in this paper is to define how the students, teachers, and coaches understand the concepts of passion, risk-taking, and curiosity and what kind of meanings the interviewees give to them in learning.

Based on our pre-understanding and the data, we created the very first version of framework for

passion and risk-taking pedagogy. The preliminary framework is presented in the next chapter of this paper.

## Results

In this chapter we present our preliminary results of concept analyses of passion, curiosity, and risk-taking. The result of concept analyses is answer to the first research question. We also present some other critical elements, which rose up in the interviews and which are affecting to the process of adapting entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial behaviour. According to the explorative method we use earlier research findings and theories to strengthen or enrich the results.

### Phenomena of passion, curiosity and risk-taking

#### Passion

According to the interviews and discussions with the informants we could argue that passion is one of the most important powers that motivate the entrepreneurs and makes the students to learn and to graduate. As we stated the focus of our project, we applied the Merriam-Webster's definition of the term passion as they defined passion as a strong feeling of enthusiasm or excitement for something or about doing something. Passion is understood to be a powerful emotion, such as love, joy, hatred, or anger. (Merriam Webster 2013; Oxford Dictionaries 2013; Wikipedia 2013). Linstead and Brewis (2007) use the term 'desire' to subsume that of 'passion' with passion broadly indicating a focused, powerful emotion, whereas desire stands for something more general and intransitive. Passion can be seen in relation of to otherness, it is passion for something or someone. Passion has close relation for the concept of desire, which is a flow the passion for not knowing. (Linstead & Brewis 2007; 353) Gherardi, Nicolini and Strati (2007, 320) would specify that the term 'passion' does not denote some univocal and easily definable phenomenon.

When talking about passion it is necessary to consider motivation as a part of the process to be passionate. Motivation and enthusiasm make it

possible to engage students to their studies and they are also essential when aiming graduation. One of the teachers answered that the most important task of the teacher is to bring the passion to studying especially in the end of the studies so that the students are able to graduate.

According to Williams and Williams (2011) motivation is probably the most important factor that educators can target in order to improve learning. Numerous cross-disciplinary theories have been postulated to explain motivation. While each of these theories has some truth, no single theory seems to adequately explain all human motivation. The fact is that human beings in general and students in particular are complex creatures with complex needs and desires. With regard to students, very little if any learning can occur unless students are motivated on a consistent basis. The five key ingredients impacting student motivation are student, teacher, content, method/process, and environment.

Students want to be heard of their own learning and on-going studies. Individualization of the studies was considered important at least in the level of students' own study group. In groups where communication and dialogue with teacher and among the group were in higher level, the students felt themselves more passionate about their studies. Team Academy is a good example of taking dialogue, group dynamics, and individualization very seriously and through that students are very committed to their studies. Also authenticity of learning environment, connections to working-life as well as well-functioned, aesthetically pleasant physical learning environment like HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo Campus, were considered as inspiring factors. Some of the teachers answered that it is almost obligation of the teacher to be passionate. Otherwise some of the teachers had a feeling that it's quite hard to talk about passion in their work because there are so many restrictions due to different schedules, resources, and curricula.

There seems to be a number of students who feel, that it is someone else's business to be passionate. They knew friends who had found "their thing", who were passionate in what they were doing, but they did not see it as their alternative, until not now.

## Curiosity

An opportunity to be curious is available in studies in some student opinions. Otherwise students seem to think that they don't need to be curious in any peculiar way because studies are kind of a "whole package" despite of some formal choices you may make. When asking about curiosity from teachers some of them considered it as a basic attitude of an enthusiastic teacher. In order to inspire your students you have to be inspired yourself and curiosity can be seen as a part of that.

## Risk-taking

Risk-taking in school environment confused most of the students. Should studying include risks? What are the risks of studying and who is taking them? For the teacher the risk seems to be giving freedom to the student. Risk is also to allow "trial and error" in learning. There should be a promise to fail, but it is a risk to give it. But is it possible that too much control creates an illusion of safeness which conflicts with the demand of authentic learning environment? This is a dilemma for the teachers. Students who had a lot of work experience or had enterprises of their own felt, that the studies had very little or nothing to do with the "real-life". The students felt that students' life is very safe when comparing it to entrepreneurs' life. Students saw many possibilities in project-based and problem-based learning but they felt that there was a lack of guidance and counselling and communication with teachers. Teachers should have more competence and resources to pay attention to group dynamics and dialogue.

## Other critical elements that affect in the process of adapting and entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial behavior

To become an entrepreneur is a long process, and the goal in entrepreneurship education and training is not to try to make the students just rush into becoming entrepreneurs, but rather to provide students with tools that enable realistic student self-evaluations even after several years (Römer-Paakkanen 2006, 196). The versatile data have given us many ideas and our understanding of the phenomena has expanded and deepened as we contemplated and

investigated how different actors define the phenomena as a result of their instincts, drives, and experiences. Following the data we found that entrepreneurial pedagogy rests on activity, learning by doing, and especially learning from mistakes. Above mentioned findings correlate with Thompson's (2006, 115) ideas of entrepreneurial learning, as she states that entrepreneurs do not predominantly learn in classroom contexts but there is a clear emphasis on experimental learning. Acquired knowledge, mastered skills and making sense of other people's experience are closely interrelated. In Thompson's words: "We can all benefit from the help and support of others – if they are the "right others"!"

According to our informants learning environments should be as authentic as possible, which includes multi-professional and cross-unit actions. Römer-Paakkanen and Pekkala (2008) found that the students themselves create their personal learning environments on the basis of their backgrounds, experiences, and studies. In this very environment, there are other actors/factors, like family members, teachers, other entrepreneurs, supervisors, and coaches, who can have meaningful roles: They can either support or slow down or even forestall the student's growth to entrepreneurship. Social values are provided in family circles, the educational system, and studies provide the structure that supports the growth to entrepreneurship and hobbies develop self-esteem and passion for action.

As the role of the educational system and studies should provide the structure that supports students entrepreneurial behaviour and spirit it is quite alarming if the student informants of our study tell that they feel that: "*The structure always comes first...*" In the school context there is a great risk for entrepreneurship education if the students feel that they must take the given curriculum as such and that the curriculum in practise is not flexible enough and does not allow them to make their own choices and create their personal learning plans. Some of the student informants told that personal planning is allowed and even recommended but of course it is quite demanding and sometimes it is easier to just follow the mainstream. Some foreign exchange students and those Finnish students that have

experienced student exchange told that experiencing the culture, living and studying in an authentic environment where the foreign language is spoken, provide the student something that cannot be learnt in classrooms. They also felt that maybe if you kind of broke the ice and once take a risk to do something in a different way, you get the courage to take other challenges too.

It seems that communication, dialogue, and face to face situations both with individual students and with student groups are the foundation and canvas for the confidence and trust that can encourage students to risk taking and meet the challenges that they face in all fields of their lives. From pedagogical point of view this means that the curriculum and learning processes should be flexible and unique.

## Summary of the results

The preliminary framework that consists of the main concepts of passion, risk-taking and curiosity emerged in the explorative interviews. In the interviews there also rose some other elements like commitment, trust, freedom, and dialogue which are linked to these main concepts. The elements that are presented in this paper form the preliminary framework for Passion and risk-taking -pedagogy.

Communication, dialogue and face-to-face situations create confidence and trust and they are the basis of the pedagogical process. Activity, learning by doing, authentic environment, and especially learning from mistakes seem to be suitable pedagogical practices. Students should have freedom to choose those options that fit for one's individual needs, challenges and visions in order to encourage curiosity. After these conditions students are able to take risks. Outcomes of the process are empowerment and creativity that support and create entrepreneurial behavior, entrepreneurial mindset, and entrepreneurial spirit.

## Conclusions

As the society and the business environment are ever changing we also must develop our teaching and learning processes and pedagogy to answer to the challenges. In our project we take the first steps to develop and create a practical model to help the teachers, counsellors, and supervisors to enhance students' entrepreneurial behaviour and personal and professional growth. In our preliminary construction of Passion and risk-taking -pedagogy passion, risk-taking, and curiosity together activate and maintain the entrepreneurial learning process. In entrepreneurial learning both the students and the teachers are learners who are curious to find new solutions, conclusions and new ways of doing things. In Passion and risk-taking -pedagogy learning takes place in collaboration with teachers, students and with the real life actors in enterprises and other organizations. In this kind of learning process teachers are the facilitators of learning and the students' most important task is to find the opportunities around them. The teaching-learning system affects students' learning performance and outcomes. Our data shows that in this system there might be different elements and spaces for learning that affect in the entrepreneurial learning process.

This is an on-going project and we do not have any final model for risk-taking pedagogy to present in this paper but we will work further with this project and with our topic. In further development process we focus more deeply on passion, risk-taking and curiosity and we also will explore how the other elements function in the entrepreneurial learning process. We will develop the model further with experts like entrepreneurship researchers, teacher educators, entrepreneurship counselors, students, and the project team.

The results can be implemented in entrepreneurship education both at vocational and higher education institutions and in vocational teacher education in Finland or internationally.

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# Teams as a Tool for Regional Innovations in Professional Education

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## Abstract

Innovativeness has been regarded as a key-driver for development in the society that professional education should contribute to. Accordingly, the aim of the project Koulii (2010–2012) was to enhance educators' innovation competence by using a regional living lab environment. As an outcome of the project, a model of innovation activities was created. The core of the model is the inner circle, a cooperative team in charge for pedagogical and innovation activities that is supported by the outer circle, consisting of students, experts and working life partners. The ultimate circle consists of a team's network in a Living Lab environment: users, utilisers, enablers and providers. Educators' networking skills in particular should be enhanced and educational institutions should dedicate more resources to team-building and networking inside and outside the organisation.

## Keywords

Cooperative learning, innovations, networks, professional education, teams.

## Introduction

Innovation competence has been regarded as one of the important factors to improve competitiveness and productivity in the Finnish society. Students represent future workforce, and therefore, their innovation competence should be advanced by educational institutions at all levels (Kansallinen innovaatiostrategia 2008). This, however, requires that educators have a high degree of innovation competence in the first place, and consequently, their competence to create new ideas, services and products shall be enhanced (Koulutus ja tutkimus vuosina 2011–2016).

In the common language of educational institutions, 'innovation' usually refers to new

ideas or products of brainstorming, whereas according to the scientific definitions, new ideas must also be implemented in a way that creates economic or social value (see Siltala 2010). Innovations are novel insights resulted from exploration and learning, and in working life, they are realised as new products and services, as well as new ways to produce products and services (Ala-Soini, Liftänder, Rouhiainen & Salmenperä 2002). Even though an innovation refers to a novelty, it does not have to be historically new in the universe. An innovation can be, for example, a new way to use existing tools, or a new approach for a specific geographical area that is already familiar in another area (Taatila, Suomala, Siltala & Keskinen 2006.)

In educational institutions, the above mentioned concepts of creativity, innovation and innovativeness are often mixed up. It is also usual that innovations are plainly seen as products of creative individuals. According to the current view, however, innovations are usually outcomes of cooperation and collaborative learning between several people (Tautila 2009). Innovation competence can thus be defined as the ability to create innovation “by navigating effectively together with others in complex contexts” (Darsø 2003). Siltala (2010) found that the elements of cooperative learning, such as individual accountability, positive interdependence and promotive interaction, were characteristic for successful innovation businesses. Siltala further argues that innovativeness connected to cooperative learning seems to make creation of innovations possible. This idea was central in the Koulii project whose primary aim was to enhance educators’ innovativeness.

## Process

The project Koulii (Innovation and Integration of Education) was a collaborative project of Laurea UAS and Omnia (the Joint Authority of Education in Espoo Region) in 2010–2012. The project’s primary target group was educators whose innovation competence was enhanced through team-building and Service Design education (see Juujärvi, Pessa & Räsänen 2011). Innovative activities were focused on Suurpelto, a new urban area in Espoo, that served as a Living Lab for the project. The concept of living lab refers to physical regions or virtual realities where stakeholders form public-private-people partnerships (4Ps), including enterprises, public agencies, development institutes and service users, all collaborating for creation, prototyping, validating, and testing of new technologies, services, products and systems in real-life contexts (Westerlund & Leminen 2011). Living Lab activity is characterised by principles of user-drivenness and open innovation (Orava 2009).

Suurpelto is located in the middle of the City of Espoo, between main traffic routes, originally including 325 hectares forest and park. The mission of the Koulii project was that educators, students and other actors in the area would develop and experiment services and products

suitable to the needs and life situations of users in interaction with them. Suurpelto was considered to become an ideal platform for a regional living lab, because its community development was at an early phase: the first inhabitants were just moving in when the project started. In addition, the construction process has been guided according to the vision and values created by the city of Espoo. The city, construction firms and private land owners have made substantial investments in the infrastructure before construction in order to make planning effective. Suurpelto is one of the biggest construction projects in the Metropolitan area and attracts a lot of public interest (Juujärvi & Pessa 2012, 2013)

Following the principles of cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson 1999), teams were chosen as the main work method for the project Koulii and interventions were planned to support such team-building. Consequently, 3–8 educators, representing different educations and organisations, formed a team based on a shared innovation idea on the voluntary basis. Innovation ideas originated from individual and group brainstorming sessions and they were focused on creating new services in Suurpelto. As a result, seven teams with various innovation intents were established. The teams’ goal was to carry out the innovation process as a whole, with the support of coaching and continuous Service Design training. The training focused especially on learning various methods, such as Business Canvas Model, that could be applied in particular innovation processes. Networking seminars and workshops were regularly arranged to promote teams’ networking with potential innovation partners. The aim of the present paper is to describe the results of the project from the perspective of Realistic Evaluation (see Methodology Section). The research question can be formulated as follows: how are innovation activities best organised, supported and managed in the context of higher education and vocational training?

## Methodology

This study employed Realistic Evaluation (RE) as a research strategy (Pawson & Tilley 1997). The concepts of ‘model’ and ‘program theory’ are essential to RE. A program theory is a theory

about “what works for whom and in what circumstances” (see Pawson & Tilley 2007). It involves a basic idea of how goals are achieved, explanations for expected influences as well as grounds for future measures. Its function is to help researchers to evaluate a project, plan interventions and redirect activities towards a project’s objectives. For instance, a program theory can be a model based on previous studies or a hypothesis based on experiences. A program theory is created and sharpened in the research process through continuous comparison with empirical observations, that is, abductive reasoning (Pawson & Tilley 1997, Anttila 2007.)

It is worth pointing out that even though a program theory serves as a theoretical framework in guiding research, it is also an outcome and the main result of the research process. For this reason, it is presented in the Results Section, combined with theoretical explanations and empirical observations to justify it. People involved in the project were conscious of the evolving program theory and contributed to it by giving feedback. In other words, we created a model for educators’ innovation activities which was tested and modified in collaboration with them. Besides the empirical observations, the present program theory was derived from previous studies on innovation teams (Darsø 2003, Taatila 2009, Siltala 2010) and the theory of practice-based innovation (Harmaakorpi 2008) and was later on enriched by the concept of Living Lab actors (Orava 2009, Leminen, Westerlund & Nyström 2012).

For research purposes, the data was collected from 30 team members involved in the Koulii project through focus group interviews in spring 2012. Interviews were semi-structured, based on themes mapping team development, innovation process and networking. The participants also drew a map of their team and its network. In addition, the video data collected from seminars and workshops has been utilised in observing the construction of the program theory.

The transcribed interview data included 321 pages (line 1.5, Trebuchet 11 p.) The data was analysed by the theme-based content analysis that has been regarded appropriate for heterogeneous data typical of evaluation

research (Robson 2000). To ensure reliability and trustworthiness, the analyses were cross-checked. The preliminary results have been presented to the participants in order to check the validity of our analyses and the interpretation of the results. It is worth pointing out that we as authors have been involved with the teams as action researchers and project management that inevitably influence our interpretation of the results (Juujärvi & Pessa 2012).

## Results

### *Model of innovation teams as a program theory*

A model of inner and outer circles by Vesa Taatila (2009) was used as a framework for the interventions in the project. Taatila argues that successful innovation teams consist of two parts: the *inner* and *outer circles*. The inner circle typically involves a key person or a small group of 2–3 people that forms a core for innovative activities. These people are enthusiastic and highly committed to their innovation idea and ready to work hard to implement it. They are actively helped by other members of the inner circle. The inner circle as a whole typically consists of 2–8 members and it is characterised by mutual trust and continuous positive interaction. The outer circle consists of people whose expertise is utilised on the temporary basis but who are not continuously engaged in the inner circle’s work. Finally, the team members’ personal contacts form a *social network* of the team and are potential resource-providers for the team (see Figure 1).

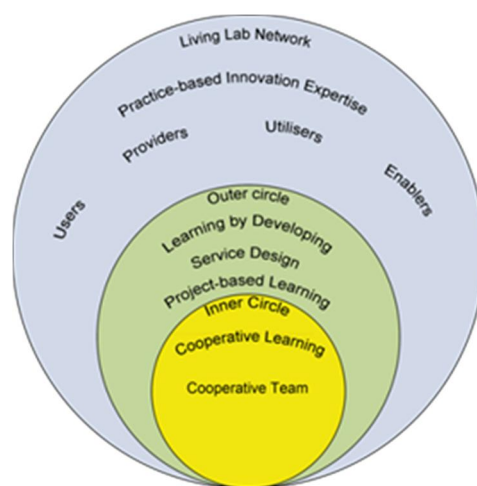


Figure 1. The model of innovation teams

In line with Taatila (2009), the importance of the inner circle has been noted by other innovation researchers. Siltala (2010) observed that team activities of economically successful innovation enterprises followed the principles of cooperative learning: individual accountability, positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, group processing (assessment), and interpersonal and small group skills (Johnson & Johnson 1999). Darsø (2003) investigated teams of a big international company and found that the quality of relationships has a great influence on the results of innovation teams. Team members need to know each others' personal interests and expertise, as well as to trust each other. Darsø (2003, 2012) emphasises that a chaotic early phase, called *preject*, is characteristic for a successful innovation process. A *preject* means prolonged goal-seeking and the emergence of divergent thinking in open decision space. Mutual trust and honest communication is needed for venturing into areas of new possibilities. It is important that team members can share their knowledge as well as reveal their ignorance that especially nurtures innovative thinking. This period was planned to take some months but, in many teams, it took more. Enthusiasm and high motivation were characteristic for the teams' work (Juujärvi & Pessa 2011).

A cooperative team is not usually enough to produce innovations alone, but extra expertise and resources are needed. Experts and partners at the outer circle are available at request within the limited time (Taatiila 2009). We expected that the role of the outer circle would be critical in our project, because the educator teams, even multi-professional ones, would represent too homogeneous knowledge to generate innovations. As the next step, the teams had to find partners who can help in realizing innovation intents. They had to also recruit students into the project. After two months from the start, the project organised the first networking seminar where the teams presented their innovation intents to potential partners and students. The teams received feedback and the first contacts were established. Later on, two more networking seminars were arranged in order to promote networking and public interest.

In the context of professional education, networking typically means that one should find enterprises or public service providers to test the proposed idea and develop it further. Those partners usually represent the respective professional field with similar values and language. Harmaakorpi (2008), however, points out that social relationships in innovation networks tend to vary in terms of their strength, that is, the invested amount of time, intimacy and reciprocal services. Strong ties represent connections between similar kind of groups and people, including a common language and a high level of trust, whereas weak ties are directed to dissimilar groups with different languages and aims (Granovetter 1973, 2005). Strong ties have naturally been seen beneficial to innovation, but the significance of weak ties has not yet been fully recognised in the field of professional education: Weak ties enable the flow of novel information that is crucial especially for radical innovations (Burt 2004, Harmaakorpi 2008).

Social capital refers generally to the collective value of all social networks and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other (Putnam 2000). Kallio, Harmaakorpi and Melkas (2010) have further elaborated the concepts of *bonding and bridging social capitals*. Bonding social capital refers to the ability to connect with members of homogeneous (strong ties) and build an atmosphere of trust. In turn, bridging social capital refers to the ability to create connections across diverse groups and exploit novel information over those connections (weak ties). Based on previous theoretical ideas, we encouraged the teams to make contacts with diverse actors. The project personnel acted as facilitators for networking but the main responsibility was remained for the teams themselves.

As the Koulii project progressed, the need of both types of social capitals became urgent. The teams had difficulties to find enterprises and service providers that would have shared the similar goal to develop region-specific services. They considered Suurpelto still a too small area for investments. City planning authorities represented useful weak ties that enabled creative cooperation, for example in terms of establishing garden allotments for residents. In spring 2012, the regional network of all the

teams included 60 different actors or groups, of which about one-third (20) represented weak ties. The newcomer weak ties represented construction firms, local associations, and enterprises or projects focused on promoting sustainable development.

The ultimate circle in the model represents a remote social network that consists of team members' personal contacts who joined the development process (Figure 1). In our case, we have named it *Living Lab network*, because these contacts typically shared some interest in developing the region: users, utilisers, enablers and providers. Users are ordinary people that want to solve their real-life problems, such as residents, housing companies or hobby clubs; utilisers are firms and service providers that want to develop their businesses; enablers include various public-sector actors, non-governmental organisations, and financiers, such as a city or an area-development organisation; providers represent various developer organisations, such as universities, educational institutes and consultants and they provide tools for development (Orava 2009, Leminen, Westerlund & Nyström 2012). The Koulii project represented a provider-driven Living Lab aiming at enhancing regional development. Over time, it became critical to identify and understand the roles of other multiple actors in the area. From the perspective of project management, we realised that all types of actors are needed, and the roles of actors need to be clarified from time to time. We also noticed that the conceptualisation of the Living Lab roles was premature for some teams, obviously due to their slow progress in networking.

#### *Critical factors in team development*

The focus-group interviews were purported to map the team members' views on team development through open-ended questions about a team's history, a team's strengths and weaknesses, cooperation and networking. The theme content analysis yielded seven themes which are briefly explained as follows.

*Educators build a cooperative team.* It is important that educators have regular time and facilities to get to know each other in order to build a cooperative team. Members may represent the

same field, e.g., social and health care, but their expertise should be complementary, rather than identical or totally different. In the Koulii project, collaboration between UAS educators and educators from vocational training provided excellent examples for this. In order to find an appropriate role for everyone, it is important to know each other's expertise and resources. The majority of the teams had a key person who took more responsibility than others for communication and networking. A team should have a shared goal that can be a bit "dim" in the beginning, but sharpens across time through reflective discussions. Trainings on Service Design provided by the Koulii project had helped the teams to clarify their goals a great deal.

*Long-term commitment.* The implementation of a single innovation process may take several years and therefore requires a long-term commitment from educators and students. The length of study units and the study year set artificial limits for implementing development processes properly. This became evident when some members left their teams after a year's work and as a consequence, the teams went in a vulnerable state: they lost the ideas, concepts and critical contacts possessed by leaving members. The teams were also quite unanimous that members should be committed to team work on the long-term basis, possibly for many years, and students should also be engaged in the project for lengthy periods.

*Students' role in teams.* Students' participation in innovation processes is essential, but how should it be arranged? The teams employed two main strategies. According to the first one, students formed teams of their own and carried out subprojects under educators' supervision. Students and educators had regular check-point meetings. According to the second strategy, students were involved with a team's core work and were accountable for all development activities, whereas educators acted as their coaches or tutors. These student-driven teams however got stuck in the innovation process, sometimes even in an early beginning, due to the lack of students' expertise, commitment and time limits. The first-mentioned teams placing students at the team's outer circle were more successful in innovation activities than those placing them at the inner circle. They were also



more aware of students' contribution to development work. The wide student participation in the project also raised questions about their guidance and tutoring: who is responsible and for what? The educators recognised the need to intervene students' group conflicts in order to help them to progress in their learning and projects. There was a big variation in opinions about the sufficient amount of the educators' guidance. Some interviewees felt that other colleagues left students to drift around and called for a greater accountability in taking care of students' learning.

In some teams, there were a few students as full members of the inner circle, as they were involved with team activities through their thesis work. The educators emphasised that creative and highly motivated students should be given a more central role and challenging tasks in innovation activities. On the contrast, routine activities and "back-stage" tasks should be directed to those students who see innovation projects just as an obligatory way to get the required credit units. Unmotivated students are also a risk in collaboration with users and other stakeholders, because they give a fuzzy impression about the school and its activities.

*Experiments are important.* Several teams pointed out that it is important to experiment with innovation ideas in practice already in the early phase. In the Koulii project, the region Suurpelto provided a platform for experiments. The teams arranged different kind of service experiments, workshops and events in order to get user-feedback from inhabitants. The few number of inhabitants and stakeholders, and a lack of properties posed challenges in the new housing area. However, the interviewees emphasised that even small-scale experiments are important because it is the only way to get a clue about users' needs. Experiments also give information about whether users are interested in further participation in service development. It is important to learn to discern users' superficial wishes from their real needs and commitment. Some interviewees pointed out that experiments are important for students' learning because they nurture creativity in them. How innovative were the created service concepts? The teams tended to think that their service concepts were based

on users' usual needs, but the ways they were planned to produce were rather unusual.

*How can we get expertise and resources we need?* In some teams, the realisation of ideas required expertise or other resources from outside the team. These ideas typically tried to combine social thinking and technology in a novel way and the teams were stuck in their development process due to the lack of expertise or business partners. The heading above is presented as a question, because these teams did not have a definite answer or a plan how to handle this problem that slowed down or even stopped their innovation development.

*Crossing boundaries is important.* With regard to the question above, it is important to cross several boundaries in order to find partners with the required expertise and resources. These boundaries existed between project teams, organisations and professional fields. Crossing boundaries is, however, inconvenient to educators whose traditional role is to "know better" and teach others. It is difficult to leave the safe area and step out "in the cold water".

Some teams realised the need for collaboration with other experts and stakeholders only after facing difficulties in the implementation process, whereas some others were actively seeking partners outside the team from the early beginning. The Koulii project arranged three seminars in order to promote networking and get in touch with potential partners. According to the interviewees, informal meetings and events however provided the best opportunities to make contacts. Some interviewees maintained that collaboration with new and different people across professional fields was the best personal benefit from the Koulii project.

*Educators' role in networking.* The interviews revealed that the participants had different viewpoints on the educator's role in networking process; the educator can be proactive or passive, limited to regular contacts within his or her own professional field. Alternatively, networking can be left to students, or the project personnel. The teams' networking with other actors had progressed to a varying degree. Some teams were confused about who were accountable for recruiting partners: the project

manager, students or educators? Although the Living Lab model provided a general framework for the Koulii-project, many teams lack explicit understanding about different actor roles in a Living Lab (users, utilisers, enablers, providers). Some interviewees pointed out that practice-based innovation activity requires the recruitment of all types of actors, and therefore it cannot be carried out through ordinary school-based projects that typically involve only utilisers (e.g. enterprises) or users (clients) as partners. They maintained that the educators should assume the full responsibility for networking and that the educators' narrow interpretation of their roles only as educators has radically inhibited development process.

## Conclusions

In terms of Realistic Evaluation approach, it is important to develop a program theory for guiding project measures. In our case, we chose the model of innovation teams proposed by Taatila (2009) for a program theory in the first place. The model worked successfully by helping us to understand on-going processes in the project. The core of the model is an inner circle, that is, a cooperative team in charge for pedagogical and innovation activities. Around the team there is an outer circle that consists of students, working life partners and Living Lab actors engaging in close cooperation. The outer circle provides its expertise to be used by the inner circle, within the limited time. The team's network at the ultimate circle, in a Living Lab environment, consists of team members' relationships with other actors: users, utilisers, enablers and providers (Leminen, Westerlund & Nyström 2012). Practice-based innovation activity in a regional Living Lab requires the involvement of all types of actors. With regard to the role of students, we recommend that students in general should be placed at the outer circle, because their motivation and involvement usually takes place in the limits of their study units. Exceptionally, students preparing their theses or developing their own businesses can be full members of the inner circle.

The results showed that the Koulii project succeeded well in establishing cooperative teams as a tool for innovation activities. The teams were characterised by creativity and a high

degree of internal cooperation: a shared goal, positive interdependence, mutual trust and open communication (Juujärvi & Pessa 2012). The project provided the most important resource needed in team-building: regular time, space and facilities to meet each other and work together. Secondly, the teams were formed on the voluntary basis which can be viewed as a requisite for the commitment to innovation work. Taatila (2009) observed that creative individuals are committed to ideas of their own and prepared to carry out the whole innovation process in order "to give a birth to their child". Quite often they are key people who take the ultimate responsibility for the team's progress (Taatila 2009). In the present project, group process and creativity were enhanced by various brainstorming methods and allowing a plenty of informal time to the teams. The provided training on Service Design methods, especially concerning concept-building, helped the teams to shape and sharpen their goals. The project management also constantly emphasised the significance of experimenting for cooperative learning and encouraged the teams to take even risky actions in the Living Lab environment.

Promoting bridging social capital posed a big challenge to our project, because some teams did not seem to progress as expected in the construction of their networks. The interviews indeed revealed that the educators' views on their roles as networkers were mixed: while some were very proactive, some others remained passive, supposing potential partners to take a contact or students finding them. Some interviewees pointed out difficulties to cross the borders of organisations and to get involved with "the outside world". This observation is rather surprising from the perspective of the recent R&D strategies at universities of applied sciences that emphasise dialogue with the operating environment (e.g., Tutkimus- ja kehitystyön strategia 2009–2012). The interviews also brought up the confusion about the students' role in innovation work. The educators tended to interpret the "student-driven development" (ibid.) in various ways, meaning that all responsibility was given to students at the extreme.

In terms of evaluation, the Koulii project succeeded well in team-building and utilising

social bonding capital, whereas the project partly failed in enhancing bridging social capital. Bridging capital is essential, because designing new services in a certain region requires the engagement of all Living Lab actors, especially users, service providers and enterprises. Consistent with this conclusion, only a half of the teams ended up with realising or piloting intended services, that is, found the relevant partners. On the other hand, this can be considered a satisfactory outcome within the project's time limits (two years). We tried to promote networking by arranging seminars and facilitating contacts. Reflecting afterwards, we however think that the teams and individual members would have needed more personal feedback from each other and the project personnel. Many drawbacks were recognised but not directly communicated. In the context of cooperative learning, giving and getting feedback should take place with regard to individual responsibilities that in turn should be identified and addressed in a team (see Johnson & Johnson 1999). The question can be raised whether the scarcity of personal feedback is a part of the Finnish culture, or paradoxically, the culture of educational institutions. Abundant and honest feedback is nevertheless vital to innovative teams (Darsø 2003) and we need to change our mind-sets with this regard.

What lessons can we take from the results to managing innovation activities in professional education? Firstly, we should advance innovation culture and spirit of creativity in our organisations. Sami Inkinen (2012) accurately points out that PowerPoint presentations and memos listing the goals for innovativeness too often forget that the issue is closely related to human and social action. Innovations are created by individuals whose creativity should be supported and nurtured. The key innovation driver is maximising serendipity, that is, the likelihood of accidental, unplanned encounters at all levels. The organisation should cultivate the mind-set that everyone's actions can add overall

value of the organisation's offerings and everyone is proactively engaged in innovation thinking as a part of their daily activities (Kumar 2009).

Secondly, the educational organisations should dedicate sufficient resources to innovation processes on the regular basis, as well-managed R&D projects do. Educators and students need shared space and time for brainstorming and face-to-face-contacts. It is also important to promote frequent collaborations among people with diverse expertise by bringing them together. Local practices for this should be created in each institution. Thirdly, managers should encourage educators to develop their networking skills and to connect with people representing various fields and competences, in order to enable novel knowledge to flow into the organisation. Individuals who possess a lot of bridging social capital could concentrate on networking (Kallio et al. 2010). Darsø (2003) even recommends that every organisation should have an innovation gardener who is responsible for nurturing relationships inside and outside the organisation.

As the last recommendation, we think that professional education organisations should reconsider their role and strategies in the national innovation policy. The role of university of applied sciences in the Finnish innovation system is still fragile and innovativeness is called for (Korpelainen 2010). It cannot just be done by overusing the word "innovation" uncritically in R&D strategies. Especially, the roles of educators and students in innovation processes need clarification. Do we really think that educators' and students' task is to co-create and co-produce new services and products? Or should we concentrate on learning and disseminating knowledge created by others? Our findings suggest that if educators are expected to be serious innovators, the educator's role should be expanded and renegotiated to cover all phases of the innovation process.

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# Enhanced Communication by Multi-Voiced Trialog - Impressions from Project's First Cycles

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## Abstract

This article summarizes the experiences of ongoing development work on communication in social and health care project. This development work has the features of Action Research (AR) and it aims to develop the method of Trialog as a learning tool for quality communication in health education (the 'How to learn to learn approach'). The method of Trialog is based on the development work on social-psychiatry and key elements of this method are obtained from there. Within educational context Trialog simply means a casual gathering which promotes democratic discussions and possibilities of change of the point of view. This action research develops the ways of communication by searching the essence and core of good communication through seminars and specific Trialog-seminar. Five cycles of development work are introduced and discussed. According to the results, the method of Trialog seem to be the relevant method of training in health education but it must be further developed to be more suitable for use as the pedagogical model.

## Keywords

Communication, Trialog, Health, Action Research, Salutogenesis, Sense of Coherence

## Introduction

Western social and health care system faces several challenges at the same time. The parallel processes of multiculturalism, system change from traditional services towards eHealth services and the severe lack of social and health care providers challenge it to examine the core of the good care. Within this development and

research work good communication is considered as a sign of quality social and health care. Moreover it is argued that good communication arises from the understanding of the holistic view of human being and from supporting the equal opportunities to communicate for everybody. It is intended that in this article the philosophical background as well as method of Trialog as a vehicle for quality communication are discussed.

This paper aims to describe the process of development work rather than evaluate it. The development work is introduced with the language of action research.

## Literature review

The theoretical framework of good communication is not easy to introduce as both the meaning of “good” and “communication” depends on the people’s scientific background. We as a health and social scientists understand the good communication as a principle for the good caring relationship. Within this project Antonovsky’s Salutogenic Framework (Lindström & Eriksson, 2006) as well as Erikssons’ Caritative Caring Theory (Eriksson, 2007) is considered as a theory which promotes good and caring relationship. Antonovsky highlights the importance of seeing the health beyond the illness. This Salutogenic perspective focuses on the problem solving rather than to the realization of current situation. Secondly, the Salutogenic orientation focuses more to the resources than their lack. This serves the sense of coherence (SOC) which is an overall capacity of keeping up the positive and supportive structure of life (Lindström & Eriksson, 2006, 2010). Within this project, the communication is considered powerful tool which can promote the understanding of underlying strengths of sick and needy person. Needs of the sick one are not only physical as Eriksson (2007) states, but also spiritual and emotional. These needs can be recognized only by carefully listening. The listening can only take place in equal and impartial discussions between care providers and patients or clients. However in a hectic health care the deep discussions are not always possible. For to ensure deeper and equal discussion and a forum for real exchange of the ideas between the close relatives, the care providers and the clients the method of Trialog is used in this project.

The method of Trialog is based on the development work done in early social-psychiatry in German (Bock 2007, 29-39). Trialog was meant to be the movement against the hierarchical social-psychiatry where the voices of patients were not audible. Bock started to invite patients to the joint seminars to discuss their experiences of the psychiatric care with students

and health providers. This was the beginning of the Trialog-seminars (Miteinander sprechen – voneinander lernen) which are now used as a communication method in more than 120 German-speaking areas in Europe. As a method the Trialog accepts that psychiatric illnesses are human processes (menschliche) which needs the understanding of something which is unfamiliar to the health provider. Trialog-seminars do not have therapeutic objectives but rather it is aimed to be learning situation for different participants. (Bock, 2004; Buck, 2004)

In our context Trialog means a casual gathering of three parties of patients, next of kins and health providers in a joint seminar. Different groups are not related to each other. Within this gathering the topic of discussion is democratically chosen and discussed anonymously in a neutral place. This gives all participant possibility to show their real full selves with all the potential strengths, vulnerability and personal knowledge. All participants are given possibility to share without danger to be judged. The main objective of Trialog-seminar like this is to share emotions, opinions and knowledge. (Karvinen, 2012) The understanding of knowledge is in this context based on a hermeneutic and phenomenological understanding of the world (Hussler, 1995; Gadamer, 2005; Huttunen, 2007; Phillips, 2005) where the real understanding is meant to be a process which is jointly and openly build in communication with other people. As a method Trialog values the practical and personal knowledge beside the professional and scientific knowledge.

## Research questions

This development project can be understood as an openly designed action research which aims to enhance the good communication in social and health care by developing the method of the Trialog to be the educational tool in the higher education learning institution. The leading research question is to find out how the method of Trialog can be modified to be a practical tool of enhanced quality communication in health education. The method of Trialog is meant to be used both pedagogically as a method of instruction and later as a method of communication in the clinical settings. Answers



are looked for in collaboration with lecturers, students, social and health care providers in the pilot occasions of Trialog-seminars and other relevant events.

## Methodology

### Paradigms and development cycles

This development work has the features of Action Research (AR). It aims to integrate knowledge from social and health sciences to participants' practical actions (Somekh, 2006, 1). According to O'Brien (2001) AR is used in real, rather than in experimental studies. More specifically this research can be seen as an Educational Action Research as its practitioner

operates from higher learning institution and are focused on improving the curricula in the field of communication in health education (O'Brien, 2001).

The early stages of this development work can be understood as the five cycles of Action Research where the cycles can be defined as following:

- Cycle one: Early Mapping of Available information (Literature search) (table 1)
- Cycle two: Trialog-seminar one
- Cycle three: Trialog-seminar two
- Cycle four: Mapping of relevant partners (HEI's, Health Providers, Students)
- Cycle five: Joint pilot seminar on good communication

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Table 1. Literature references.

## Process and produced Data

This development and research project started with the mapping of the available information of the Trialog (2011 - 2012) and with the designing

of the network. Neither are these processes linear or complete but rather continuous and burgeoning. Within the first stage of this project, the original development work plan was designed with international partner HEI (Hellige

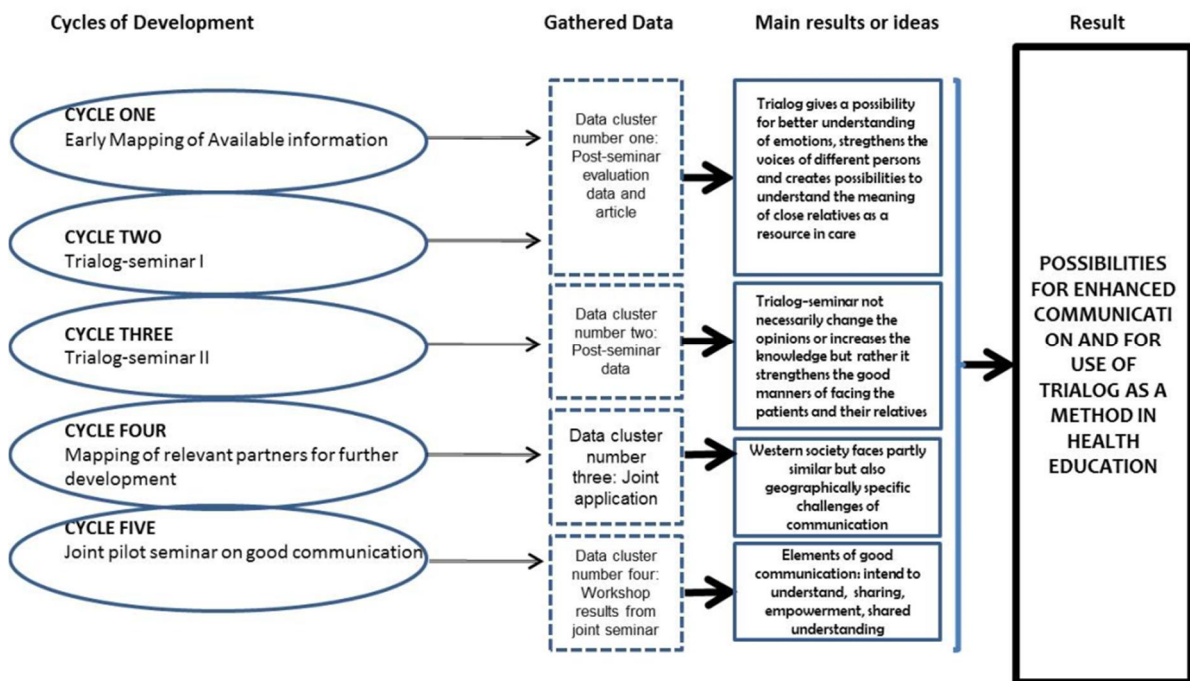
& Laine, 2011) and more developed with Finnish collaborative HEI's. Information of Trialog as a method was gathered and the possibilities of it as an educational tool were discussed. Moreover the philosophical background of Trialog and Good communication was aimed to be mapped.

As a second stage the first Trialog-seminar (2012) was held with nursing students, their instructors, patients and (close) relatives. The topic of the seminar was "The nature of support needed in health care". Evaluation data was gathered both right after the seminar and two weeks after the seminar. This post-seminar data and produced article (Karvinen, 2012) of cycle number one and two are considered as data cluster number one in this article. The evaluation survey was designed based on the survey used in partner HEI in German. The evaluation survey was semi-structured and it included open questions.

Cycle three (2013) was similar to the cycle two but more advanced due to the experiences obtained in the first seminar. Once again the post-seminar data was gathered and that was considered as a data cluster number two in this article. Post-seminar survey was similar to the survey done after Trialog-seminar one.

Cycle four (2013) was the network building process where the relevant partners were located for wider international project and the premises of Trialog as a multi-voiced method were further discussed. The development of application for funding is seen as a jointly created document where the desirable stage of communication is introduced and this is why the application document is seen as a data cluster number three in this article. Finally, the fifth cycle consists of the joint pilot seminar on good communication held in Porvoo in 2013 where both the representatives of collaborative health care settings, experts and students were thoroughly discussing on communication and Trialog and their implication for future work. Jointly produced workshop results are producing the data cluster number four for this article. This joint seminar is comparable to the search seminar introduced by O'Brien (2001) as the joint seminar gathered participants from different levels of health systems.

The cycles and their participants as well as the nature of gathered data is presented in figure number one.



## Data analysis

Since this AR is based on the development project, the nature of data differs from one cycle to another. Different cohorts of data were differently analyzed or classified. The method of analyses and classification is based on the hermeneutic understanding of reality and the qualitative content classification and analyses made according to Colaizzi. (See Saaranen-Kauppinen & Puusniekka, 2006.) The qualitative data from questionnaires (N=61, n1=12, n2=49) were transcribed and read and the most meaningful expressions were selected for the analysis. The nature of the data does not allow deep content analyses as it consists of brief writings or brief answer for the evaluation forms. When the data consist of evaluation materials authors have been highlighting the most important issues according to their understanding of the importance of the issue. That might be the repetition in several answers or the similarity. That is not based on the preconceptions or the theoretical framework. Moreover when the data consists of the used documents (application and article) it was classified according to the relevance of the research aim and objects by seeking the answer for the questions of the understanding of the questions of good communication and Trialog as a method. (See Perttula, 1996; Turunen, Perälä & Meriläinen, 1994) The data analysis was done by several people in different stages of the process.

## Results

### Results of Cycle one and two

The early mapping of Available Information included the Analyses of the concepts of the Trialog and the Trialog-seminar. The first Trialog-seminar was a part of the Elderly care Study unit in health care education and it is evaluated at the seminar and two weeks after the seminar. This data was gathered to the article authored on the topic of Trialog. In this article, the following features were mentioned as the key elements of Trialog-seminar:

- Trialog brings together patients, (close) relatives and care givers in informal

settings. Students can be part of the seminar.

- Trialog-seminar values different kinds of knowledge as equal knowledge
- Trialog gives possibility to look things from different perspectives
- For patient Trialog-seminar gives the sense of empowerment (and possibility to be a specialist in his or her own life)
- For health provider it gives possibility to forget his or her own role as an expert which promotes the possibilities to talk about emotions and own feelings
- Trialog-seminars promotes equal, impartial dialog between different types of people

After the first Trialog-seminar where 15 participants were involved they had also possibility to give post-seminar feedback after two weeks of the seminar. According to the evaluation, the size of attended group was relevant and the atmosphere was supporting the dialog.

### Results of Cycle three

Post-seminar evaluation was asked after the second Trialog-seminar by the survey. More than 20 people gave feedback. According to the evaluation data Trialog-seminar does not contain so much new information but gives an opportunity for participants to realize new perspectives of the topic of discussion. According to the evaluation it did not either change that much emotions or practices but strengthens the good manners of communication known before. It was also mentioned that the discussion of the topic of 'how to meet the patient' was good. Someone had understood, for instance, the meaning of the used terminology in their conversation with the patient. Many suggestions of further development of Trialog-seminar were given, such as:

- Policy makers should take part of Trialog-seminar
- More patient representatives are needed in the seminar
- More actual health care providers are needed in the seminar
- The question of anonymity should be thoroughly discussed

- Smaller group could support the discussion

## Results of Cycle four

As a result of the mapping of the relevant resources for this project, the international network was established. The international network consists of partners from three Nordic countries and from German and they present both the academic and the health care sector. Jointly designed application presents the premises of this developmental work and the view of the good communication among the partners. The following key-elements can be concluded from the rationale of the joint application:

- Western social and health care service meets the challenge of lacking resources, immigration and aging.
- Furthermore new positive possibilities as eHealth services force the service systems to change.
- Even though many western countries shares the idea of universal social and health care services all clients have no equal possibilities to use services, not only because they may not afford them, but due to their poor understanding of the language used in the services.
- That might be the problem of understanding about actual spoken or professional symbolic language. Often the symbolic language and symbolic space is strange or even frightening for the patient and clients.
- Communication is always part of the human interaction and by good and fitting communication many challenges are possible to overcome. The application did not lead to the funding.

## Results of Cycle five

This joint pilot seminar produced results from two sessions of small groups or individual work. The first produced material was so called Trialog-tree including the opinions of good communication. According to the core idea written to the Trialog-tree the basic need is the feeling **that one is met** in the communication situation. It includes the idea of getting to be

understood, being visible and having worth in the eyes of others. The needs of other person are not always seen in communication and that can lead to loneliness and frustration. Moreover the good communication allows addressing the worries and gives time to be together, to pause. According to the participants, good communication also shows interest of other person.

Second small group work gave participants possibility to address their opinions on good communication and this project from different points of view. As a highlight it can be raise up the appreciation of different kind of experience knowledge, cultural sensitivity and the holistic feature of communication including the aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication.

## Conclusion of the results

This development process has been the cyclic process where data has been gathered in different occasions by different formats of the topics of 1. Good communication and 2. Trialog as a method towards good communication in social and health care. An important focus has been the aim of trying to develop Trialog to be a pedagogical method in the higher learning institution. As a conclusion of all result areas it can be said that:

- Good communication allows time for genuine participation in the dialog of different parties
- Good communication is more than only language, it is a way to see human being holistically and the Sense of Coherence (SOC) and wholeness serves building the structure of life
- The method of Trialog seems to be suitable method for health education as a pedagogical method, but it needs to further develop
- The atmosphere at the Trialog-seminar was mentioned being open and good
- According to the students from the first group, the Trialog-seminar was meaningful, eye-opening and good way to learn
- According to the second student group the Trialog-seminar opened up new horizons and supported the professional

growth. According to the students, policymakers should participate to the events like this.

## Ethical issues

O'Brian (2001) introduces the following ethical considerations according to Winter (1996) on Action Research:

- *“Make sure that the relevant persons, committees and authorities have been consulted, and that the principles guiding the work are accepted in advance by all.*
- *All participants must be allowed to influence the work, and the wishes of those who do not wish to participate must be respected.*
- *The development of the work must remain visible and open to suggestions from others.*
- *Permission must be obtained before making observations or examining documents produced for other purposes.*
- *Descriptions of others' work and points of view must be negotiated with those concerned before being published.*
- *The researcher must accept responsibility for maintaining confidentiality.”*

This developmental work has been based on the collaborative searching and learning process of different actors from different organizations. Different opinions have been taken into consideration. The Project activates both clinical workers, students and their instructors. All of them have had a possibility to influence the

work. The critical point is the research and ethical approval: This development project has not been introduced to the research or ethical commission since it is originally formally designed to be the development project. Nonetheless this work has been guided by the joint steering commission who guides the work done in the project. All seminar participants have also given their permission to use collected data in the publication and this data is anonymously gathered and processed. Project group did not obtain written consent forms.

## Conclusion

According to Kuula (2006) Action Research aims to change the current situation towards a desirable future. This development work started from the understanding about the current challenges of communication in social and health care. The process got the features of Action Research as the evaluation and other data was gathered in the different cycles of development. This development research has activated participants to change the current patterns of communication in social and health care and it aims to further develop the method of Trialog as a tool of quality communication learning possibility in health education at its different levels. This development work has given a ground for future development and research work on the communication and method of Trialog. The process has led to use of Trialog as one instruction method in one study unit. Within this context, the students are mainly studying the meaning of support in health services.

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# Inquiry Learning in Practice – Information Sharing Among First Semester Tourism Students and Supervisors

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## Abstract

One of the applications of inquiry learning is problem-based learning (PBL) and it is practiced by the Finnish Tourism programme at Porvoo Campus. Students start with PBL-tutorials during their first semester and get accustomed to information sharing from the beginning of their studies.

The aim of the study was to define and discuss the instances for information sharing (student-student, supervisor-student, supervisor-supervisor) inspired by PBL-tutorials.

The methods of the study were observation and content analysis of written and oral sources relating to information sharing among students and supervisors. The data consisted of over 120 tutorials and encounters between 550 students and 10 supervisors over 11 first year semesters. The data collection was carried out between the autumns of 2007 and 2012.

The results of the study indicated that PBL-tutorials provide a fruitful platform for information sharing as they teach students important meta-competences, such as meeting skills and an ability to engage in network learning. Furthermore, tutorials encouraged all participants to interact and share expertise in other situations as well.

## Keywords

inquiry learning, problem-based learning, information sharing

## Introduction

Today's employers value new kinds of skills when they look for potential employees. It is no longer enough to be an expert in a subject, but one needs

to be in the possession of a whole spectrum of different meta-competences. The megatrends of today, such as technological development, demographic change and network organisations (Copenhagen Institute for Future Studies, 2006)



mean that people need to be in command of entirely new competences. In order to provide students with the skills needed in the information society, Lonka, Hakkarainen & Lipponen (2004) among other scholars, have developed inquiry-based learning which is a collaborative method used in both basic and higher education. The pedagogical strategy of HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences in Finland is inquiry learning and the degree programmes at Porvoo Campus have taken the issue even further and based their curriculum on the following four meta-competences: project management, research and development, coaching, creative problem solving and innovation. (HAAGA-HELIA, 2011; HAAGA-HELIA, 2010.) One of the applications of inquiry learning in use on the Campus is problem-based learning (PBL).

PBL-tutorials are not a new approach at HAAGA-HELIA. In fact, they have been practiced in different degree programmes for years, and Porvoo Tourism programme got its training from the Degree Programme in International Business in Helsinki during the time the university was still called Helia. Porvoo supervisors got really interested in and enthusiastic about the method and developed it to suit their own aims. First, it was introduced to the second semester students, but it was not an instant success among students who had already become familiar with another style of learning during their first semester studies. As the Tourism DP began with a new curriculum during the autumn of 2007, the PBL-tutorials were introduced already to the first semester students. As it was a new school and a new method at the same time, it was much easier for students to embrace it. In fact, the success rate of the PBL-tutorials has been rather phenomenal. Throughout the semesters since the autumn of 2007, an average of 1-2 students out of 40, i.e. less than 5 percent, have not enjoyed the PBL-tutorials. However, they, too, have acknowledged that the tutorials have taught them valuable skills. Of course, as years and semesters have gone by, supervisors have also learned more about their role in tutorials and have become more experienced as supervisors. Without a doubt, that has made an impact on the learning experience of the students as well.

The way HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo Campus interprets inquiry learning includes the following six phases (J. Ritalahti, presentation, September 6, 2012):

1. Setting up the development task
2. Building up the goals and content
3. Agreeing on theoretical framework
4. Working together to build knowledge
5. Reflection
6. Knowledge sharing

As can be gathered from the above, a core value in the HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo Campus curriculum is information sharing, which takes place between students and supervisors. Although there are several studies of inquiry learning, there has been a lack in research regarding the implications and instances of information sharing. As networking has become such an important factor in today's society, new ways of sharing and collaboration are worth a closer look.

Therefore, the aim of the study is to define the instances for information sharing (student-student, supervisor-student, supervisor-supervisor) inspired by PBL-tutorials. The main research question is: What are the instances of information sharing inspired by PBL-tutorials? In addition, the following question was studied: Do the tutorials encourage participants to interact outside the actual tutorial sessions? The focus group of the study consists of first year Finnish tourism students at HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo Campus.

## Literature review and conceptual approach

As stated by Muukkonen, Hakkarainen & Lakkala (1999), Hakkarainen et al. (2004) and Hakkarainen, Lonka & Lipponen (2004), inquiry learning provides students with a possibility to take responsibility for their own learning, while giving them a chance to construct new knowledge by tackling and solving authentic problems from the real world. This type of learning requires "the socially shared character of inquiry" (Muukkonen, Hakkarainen & Lakkala, 1999) and provides the students with skills needed to survive in the information society of today and tomorrow.

An essential part of inquiry learning and especially problem-based learning, is to set up questions or problems that guide the process of inquiry (Muukkonen, Hakkarainen & Lakkala 1999). As students learn to integrate the content of different subject areas, they also learn many important skills

in the process. The possibility of attaining meta-competences by taking part in inquiry learning and PBL-tutorials has been reported by e.g., Hmelo-Silver, Duncan & Chinn (2007), who argue that skills such as collaboration are not measured on achievement tests but are important for life-long learners and citizens in a knowledge society.

Problem-based learning is centered around “a problem, a query or a puzzle that the learner wishes to solve” (Boud, 1985). At HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo Campus, students are given an active role and ideally they gain confidence to think critically and solve the problem together in a group. Students learn how to learn, become more self-directed and learn how to apply problem-solving skills in their future work life. The role of the teacher is to act as a facilitator, guide, co-learner or professional consultant. HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo Campus has recognised that learning is not just a process of acquiring knowledge, but being an active participant in the process of growing up to a social community (as stated in Muukkonen, Hakkarainen & Lakkala, 1999). The participants are both students and supervisors operating in the purpose-built spaces of the Porvoo Campus.

One of the joyful outcomes of inquiry learning and problem-based learning is the condition of flow, which can be reached when the skills of the participants are coupled with challenging enough tasks to complete (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). According to the researcher Lauri Järvillehto (presentation, January 18, 2013), flow is taking place when the speaker's brain activity is spatially and temporally coupled with the listener's activity: The brain activity of the listener mirrors the activity of the speaker, and thus their “brains are dancing at the same time”. In ideal situations, the nature of PBL-tutorials helps students to reach the state of flow. Towards the end of the first semester, the topics get increasingly more demanding thus keeping the level of interest and challenge high enough. During further studies, a more challenging form of problem-based learning emerges, as the students are engaged in real-life projects where the project itself acts as a trigger and motivates and guides their learning.

In many inquiry learning studies, the instance of “knowledge sharing”, “information sharing” or “expertise sharing” has been recognised. For example, Muukkonen, Hakkarainen & Latvala

(1999) state that all aspects of inquiry (e.g. setting up research questions, searching for new information, constructing working theories, assessing explanations) can be shared with others. They also continue to argue that collaborative learning advances shared understanding of issues as cognitive diversity and variation of expertise promote knowledge advancement through social interaction. It has been argued by Hakkarainen et al. (1999) that explaining a problem to others can deepen one's understanding of the issue.

In order to fully understand the steps of PBL-tutorials, they are explained here in brief. The way PBL-tutorials are conducted at Porvoo Campus has been strongly influenced by PBL-tutorials in the DP in International Business in Helsinki and by the progressive inquiry model (PI-Model) presented by Hakkarainen et al. (1999), and it has then been further developed to fit the specific needs of the Campus curriculum (HAAGA-HELIA, 2010; HAAGA-HELIA, 2012). Thus, each tutorial on Campus follows the following stages in an ongoing cycle:

1. *Setting up the context* (All PBL-tutorials have their subject matters which are presented in form of a trigger. The students read, watch or listen to the trigger and clarify unclear terms in it. During the first semester there are 10 triggers based on the core subject matters of study: Tourism as a phenomenon, Tourism Motivators, Customer Service, Project Management, Trends in Travel and Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Intercultural Communication, Destination Finland, Tourism Industry and Organisations, Russia as a Tourism Destination and Country of Origin of Tourists.)
2. *Presenting research problems* (Together the students decide what the concept/phenomenon/problem behind the trigger is and devise a question to which they try to answer through brainstorming their current knowledge and understanding.)
3. *Creating working theories* (The students conduct a post-it brainstorm session to create their own interpretations of the issue in question. The contribution of every member of the tutorial group will be represented, as even shy students can get

their opinions heard, and get more confidence as their ideas are supported.)

4. *Critical evaluation* (In co-operation, the students construct an outline of the conceptual framework. For the purpose, they use flip chart sheets/walls as a shared learning environment. As a result, they set objectives for their independent study to be carried out before the next tutorial.)
5. *Searching for deepening knowledge* (The students study the new research questions during a week of independent study by collecting data and studying literature. In the next tutorial they first state the learning objectives from the previous tutorial and then generate new knowledge in group discussion, by examining and comparing their understanding of the particular phenomenon based on the sources they have studied during the week. This collaborative learning ideally leads into expanding students' understanding of the issue, deepens their knowledge and develops their capabilities. This is the section where reaching the state of flow is most likely as all participants have already immersed themselves in the subject matter and their shared knowledge of the issue has increased)
6. *Developing more intricate problems* (This stage takes place as each subsequent PBL-tutorial gets more difficult and more intense study is required. Furthermore, for example in case of project management the students need to apply the theory further in practice when organising an event for exchange students during the semester.)
7. *Expertise / information sharing* (This phenomenon takes place throughout the process and during each of the six stages mentioned above. New forms are developed as the PBL-tutorial cycle goes on.)

This study aims to concentrate on the last part, information sharing, in order to shed light into the interesting phenomenon taking place during and because of PBL-tutorials.

## Methodology

The main research question is: What are the instances of information sharing inspired by PBL-

tutorials? In addition, the following question is studied: Do the tutorials encourage participants to interact outside the actual tutorial sessions?

The data collection has been carried out between the autumn of 2007 and autumn of 2012, accounting to a total of 11 first year semesters and over 120 tutorial sessions with 550 students and 10 supervisors. The data consists of observation and self-assessment forms filled by students and supervisors in PBL-tutorials collected by the supervisors in the end of the tutorial. In addition, development discussions between students and supervisors as well as portfolios written by students and the written feedback provided by students through the official university feedback channel are studied. Supervisor-related information is based on recollections and discussions between supervisors about experiences during the semesters included in the study. The contents of the data are analysed and grouped into three categories: student-student, student-supervisor and supervisor-supervisor. The most often mentioned instances of information sharing are included in the study. Several quotes from the data are included in the paper to provide more clarity and illustrate the main research question.

## Results

The results of the study are introduced by presenting the contents of different forms of data collection.

**Self-assessment forms** (student-student encounters) are filled by students during each PBL-tutorial once the subject has been closed. The students often remark that listening to others gives them a deeper understanding of the subject under discussion. They also point out that sharing information expands their knowledge. As the self-assessment forms are filled directly after the closing of the subject in a PBL-tutorial, the memories are still fresh on the mind and revelations about reaching flow can be found in these forms.

The most difficult part of the self-assessment form seems to be the part where the students are asked whether they received and gave feedback to each other. As Finland is a low-context culture, overt displays of giving feedback might be frowned upon. Therefore, giving and receiving feedback are issues which the supervisors often have to address and

stress. In the beginning, giving feedback “on purpose” is encouraged so that it will become a normal occurrence later on in the PBL-cycle. Also, the presence of an official observer within the group, will make giving feedback more professional as the PBL-tutorials continue.

**Observation** (student-student/student-supervisor encounters): In the end of each PBL-tutorial, both the observer and the supervisor give the group and its members feedback about their performance. The observers use specific forms devised for the purpose and comment on group performance, reaching the learning objectives, and carrying out various roles (chairperson, secretary, scribe/recorder). That way students also learn how to give and receive constructive feedback and share such information among their group members. The safe and motivating learning environment is a prerequisite for giving such feedback. Having a student observer, not just the supervisor, give feedback has proved to be a useful method of getting the message across. Very often the observations of both the student observer and the supervisor are very similar, and hearing a peer state an observation may come across as more compelling than hearing it from the supervisor alone. This way the group and its individual members get both peer assessment and supervisor feedback about their performance as well as learn meta-competences such as coaching when they take turns as observers.

Hakkarainen et al. (1999) state that groups which consist of members having different but partially overlapping expertise are more effective and innovative than groups with homogeneous expertise. Therefore, different points of view in PBL-tutorials are encouraged. This is something that has to be stressed from the beginning in the observational feedback by the supervisor, so that all PBL-group members feel that their ideas are valuable even if they differ from the mainstream. All contributions generate more shared knowledge.

During the orientation days (student-student encounters) in the beginning of the first semester studies, senior students often share their experiences with the newcomers and describe the PBL as a very good method to learn more by listening to the ideas of other students and constructing knowledge together. During one recent orientation, a student tutor told the new

students that his abilities to search information were boosted a great deal by taking part in PBL-tutorials. This occurred in front of supervisors, but there are numerous chances for more free information sharing about learning practices between new and senior students.

Similarly, the **checkpoints** during the semester and **feedback sessions** (student-student/student-supervisor encounters) are another encounter where students and supervisors have a chance to exchange information and assess the semester together. The feedback sessions are organized by the students and take place in the end of each semester. The programme director and commissioner are invited, too. The aims of the sessions are enhanced supervising practices and improved lines of communication. The sessions follow a certain procedure and instructions are given to the students in the first semester handbook (HAAGA-HELIA, 2012). The students have a chance to describe and reflect on their motivation and learning process, state what they have learnt and give constructive feedback for supervisors concerning the contents, implementation and methods used during the semester. Usually the PBL-tutorials receive positive feedback in the session and the students are capable of reflecting on how well they have reached their aims.

Furthermore, **the official feedback channel in Winha** (student-supervisor encounters) also proves the positive attitudes towards PBL:

*“PBL-tutorials were my personal favourite of the semester, I was allowed to use my own brains and share my views in form of discussion. The tutorials supported my learning process well”.*

**Portfolios** (student-supervisor encounters) can be a valuable source of learning-related information. Portfolios aim to steer and guide the learning process of the students. In the reflection part of the portfolios, students tell about similar things as in self-assessment forms, but they also reveal more individual thoughts and ideas as there is no list of questions to answer but room for own thinking. In general, they write that problem-based learning is a good way to learn and how much they enjoy the excellent group dynamics and sharing knowledge with their peers. They tell about how the PBL-tutorials have inspired them to set up study groups

(student-student encounter) in their living quarters. As an example, student S states the following in her portfolio:

*“As we were all so completely lost in the beginning, getting support and ideas from each other made a huge difference. We have learned to give each other support, share information and become friends in the process. It has been particularly nice since we have learned many important team working skills. Of course, I have always been very social, but in high school I did all my studying on my own. However, now I find myself going to see my neighbour or spend time with my roommate in the kitchen or ask others to come over so that we can study together. The burden of studies will not grow too big when it is shared with others. Together we can achieve great things. I want to trust my group and be trusted myself.”*

Students tell how their perception of learning has changed from studying books on their own to more social and interactive forms such as sharing information and comparing ideas with other students. Based on the reflection in her portfolio, an introvert student H feels that she has needed to act more independently than in her previous studies, and take more responsibility for her own learning. In addition, she says that she has learnt a lot from the others as everybody contributes to the learning process. She states that through PBL-tutorials she has learnt “group work, time management, critical evaluation of information sources, writing official documents (i.e. memo, agenda), expressing opinions and sharing knowledge”. She also feels that it was very difficult for her in the beginning to share her thoughts even if she had studied many sources, but it became easier all the time.

A more active student (student L) writes in her portfolio:

*“I understand that some people do not want to share their thoughts – some are shy, some are not interested, some are embarrassed to talk, some do not want to talk on top of others, they all have their own reasons but sometimes I find it annoying when some people don’t take part and I feel that I want to involve them and motivate them to take part more actively”*

It needs to be pointed out that PBL-tutorials are not a dance on a bed of roses for everyone, every time. As there is a procedure to follow and a core subject matter to address, the sessions can impose

a clear constraint to creativity. Student L shares her thoughts on the subject:

*“I cannot take part as actively as I could, because then I feel that I dominate too much. I do not feel welcome: we are expected to arrive at a certain result, which is clever but not as creative as it could get.”*

It is not just creativity that can cause problems for students. It can be the more often heard criticism against inquiry learning, such as this comment made by student J, who goes on to praise the method, nonetheless:

*“Somehow this PBL-learning has been very challenging to me. In my previous studies, teachers have given me the questions straightaway and I knew instantly what kind of answers I was supposed to be looking for. This type of learning is very different to my earlier experiences. In my opinion, this style gives us students more freedom and flexibility, but brings along motivational difficulties. Sometimes it just feels too difficult to start everything from the beginning and start asking questions ourselves. On the other hand, it increases our willpower and enthusiasm to look for answers. And if we manage to reach a conclusion, it makes us all feel good about ourselves!”*

Each semester, supervisors can read many positive comments about PBL-tutorials and inquiry learning in the portfolios. The following (a conclusion to the above reflection made by student J) is an example of such encouraging outcomes of PBL-tutorials as experienced by students:

*“The PBL-tutorials were an amazing way to learn and understand new issues. I feel that I learned more in those meetings than I would have by studying for weeks on my own. It was wonderful to notice how the opinions of others enriched my own ideas...it was an amazing discovery! In a way, I feel that I may actually continue using this method in some way or another...Even though the meetings are now over, it does not mean that the methods cannot be used in the future.”*

**Discussion forums** (student-student, student-supervisor encounters): During all the semesters under study, supervisors have read in the portfolios that students have established Facebook groups to discuss assignments and share information regarding studies. Such interaction may not be a direct result of PBL-tutorials, but it goes to show that there are several ways to interact and share

knowledge between students. A few supervisors have also become members of Facebook groups established by students, but it can be argued that it might be a good idea to leave a channel or two just for student use only. For example, Moodle is another platform for collaborative learning. There are many discussion forums there, where students and supervisors may exchange ideas and give comments to each other. Moodle has become a more official channel of information sharing (not just of lecture material, but of discussions and uploading of assignments) between all actors, whereas social media sites are more informal channels applied for student-student information sharing. Moodle is a supplement to contact lectures and seeing students both in PBL-tutorials and introductory lectures, gives supervisors a wider perspective regarding the level of the knowledge attained. During PBL-tutorials, students also become individuals with names and characters, not just nameless statistics as can be the case in normal lecture settings with dozens of students to teach. PBL-tutorials enable better interaction between students and supervisors as straightforward lines of communication have been established in a more intimate setting.

**Development discussions** (student-supervisor encounters) take place after a couple of months of studying. During the discussions with a supervisor, the students are provided constructive feedback on their individual performance in tutorials, commenting on their activity, notes and performance as well as contribution to the construction and sharing of knowledge. Even though the individual development discussions are short (taking just a quarter of an hour), the format of the discussion (based on a set of questions regarding PBL-performance, experiences with studies on the Campus so far, needs for further assistance etc.) allows for a flexible sharing of information between the student and the supervisor. However, the discussions need to be carried out carefully in order to create a positive and supportive experience for a student. In fact, just prior to the discussions, giving and receiving feedback have been discussed with the students in class in order to assist making the development discussions go as smoothly as possible for both parties.

Interestingly, many of the statements made in portfolios and self-assessment forms are repeated

in development discussions. The development discussions also give an opportunity for those who are more prone to voice their opinions in speech rather than writing. One very extrovert male student, who did not enjoy reflecting in the portfolio at all, revealed that the “PBL-tutorials are the most efficient methods of study at the school”. Another female student went on to say that “she does not mind getting up early on Monday mornings to go to PBL-tutorials” as she finds the “sharing of opinions and ideas so invigorating”. Development discussions have revealed that the meeting skills learned during PBL-tutorials have been put to good use in other projects also in later studies.

**Information sharing among supervisors** (supervisor-supervisor encounters). Recently, in the frequent discussions among supervisors, it was revealed that senior students have applied the brainstorming method of the tutorial when they have needed to find new solutions to problems requiring innovative thinking (as professed in the fourth semester blog by students in <http://luontomatkalla.blogspot.fi/2012/11/inspiraa-tioviikko.html>):

*“Our studies at the moment mainly consist of lectures and working on our project work and we sit, listen and read a lot. That is why we have tried to find methods to keep our spirits high and we ended up digging up post-it stickers and organising a good old PBL-tutorial. As a result we came up with a product which can freshen up the supply of leisure time services....”*

On occasion, it has been stated by students (in their portfolios especially) that teachers have no important role in inquiry learning and PBL-tutorials as they seem to “just sit in the background”. That is a clear misunderstanding made by some students (and can be corrected by pointing it out during the development discussions as well as in tutorial sessions themselves) as the role of the supervisor is to observe and make sure that the atmosphere of the meeting is as open and allowing as possible. It takes time and effort to reach such a state. During the very first PBL-tutorials, supervisors should pay close attention to the cohesion of the group and to the interaction among its members, and intervene if a need arises. With inquiry learning, and especially with problem-based learning, supervisors have to transform from traditional teachers to facilitators of new forms of learning and interaction. The focus

moves away from teaching towards learning, among all participants. That can be a difficult lesson to teachers with a long history of lecturing behind them. With inquiry and problem-based learning, information sharing becomes a learning experience for all parties and is not one-sided as in traditional teaching. If supervisors are facilitators of learning, both supervisors and students are co-creators in the collaborative learning cycle. The supervisors encourage the students to search for information, support them in various stages of a tutorial, stimulate reflection and help them to assess themselves critically (with help of self-assessment forms). Just like it is with students and their peers, having the support and shared experiences of other supervisors is of vital importance.

Supervisors are also co-learners and it is a continued learning experience for all people present in PBL-tutorials no matter how many tutorials one has attended. There is an ongoing process of sharing expertise of PBL-tutorial supervision skills. The collected expertise and shared experiences mean that there is no need for any new supervisor to start from scratch. In the new curriculum of DP in

Tourism, the collaboration among the supervisors is encouraged and the semester teams work very closely together to assess the previous semester based on the student feedback and self-assessment, and to plan and develop the following semester based on the feedback received. In the beginning of each semester, a couple of days are reserved for the planning process of the first semester studies.

Furthermore, problem-based learning tutorials have resulted in increased information sharing among supervisors themselves as they discuss the tutorials and student performance there with each other before and after sessions. Also, the load of reading dozens of portfolios is shared between all first semester supervisors, making all of them aware of important issues relating to the success of study methods and experiences

Table 1 presents the ways of information sharing influenced by problem-based learning tutorials on Porvoo Campus.

Table 1. Information sharing influenced by PBL-tutorials for first semester students in DP in Tourism on Porvoo Campus.

<b>Co-creators</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Channels</b>
<b>Student-Student</b>	Exchanging ideas and information, peer assessment, feedback, coaching, co-operation, sharing knowledge and expertise, learning from each other	Discussions, project meetings, observations, orientation days (information sharing by senior students), study circles, discussion forums in Moodle and groups in Facebook
<b>Student-Supervisor</b>	Exchanging ideas and information, assessment, feedback, coaching, co-operation, sharing knowledge and expertise, learning from each other	Development discussions, portfolios, discussion forums in Moodle, observations, self-assessment forms, checkpoints during the semester, feedback sessions in the end of the semester
<b>Supervisor-Supervisor</b>	Exchanging ideas and information, sharing knowledge and expertise, co-operation, coaching and learning from each other (e.g. training and supporting each other in the PBL-tutorial practices)	Discussions before and after PBL-sessions, reading portfolios, planning sessions in the beginning of the semester

Regarding enhancing the opportunities for further information sharing, the development discussions, observations during PBL-tutorials and the findings in student portfolios suggest that learning spaces play an important role in making information

sharing a bigger success. One of the main reasons for the creation of Porvoo Campus was to design the spaces so that they could be ideal for learning in the future, being a “Living Lab for creativity, learning and innovations” (J. Ritalahti,

presentation, September 6, 2012). After moving in to the new campus, there have been plenty of opportunities to have tutorials in professional-looking meeting rooms. Almost without an exception, student feedback of such locations has been positive. They tell that meeting rooms make the sessions more professional and also affect their conduct making them behave in a more professional manner. The table and chair formations in such meeting rooms also ensure that all students can see and hear each other, when groups are small enough.

Regarding PBL-tutorial group sizes, there have been experiences with bigger and smaller groups. The largest groups have been 14 students and the smallest 8 students. The ideal number is 10 students, allowing for a few absences. Smaller than that can be dysfunctional if not all members are present in tutorials. When groups have been larger, with 12 or more students, getting everyone actively involved in the information sharing can be challenging as there often are more vocal members in the group and getting a word in can be difficult for the quieter members. In smaller groups, there seem to be more room left for everyone to take part in the discussions and sharing of information.

Besides spaces and group sizes, the easy access to computers and the basic knowledge of the possibilities provided by social media are of vital importance in order to increase the instances of information sharing. All first semester students are provided with a lap-top computer as they start their studies on Porvoo Campus. The computers are much appreciated by the students as they make information sharing a lot easier among all co-creators on Campus and beyond.

## Conclusions

The results of the study indicate that problem-based learning tutorials seem to provide a fruitful platform for information sharing as they help students learn important meta-competences, such as meeting and project related skills, coaching and engaging in network learning. Furthermore, tutorials have been found to encourage both students and supervisors to interact and share expertise in other situations as well. As stated earlier, students brought up increased learning

opportunities due to exchanging ideas during tutorials and other ad-hoc meetings with their project studies. In addition, collaborative learning practiced in tutorials inspired some students to apply their new skills to form study groups and share study-related information in social media sites. Regarding further research, it would be of interest to ask the students directly how they use the skills and meta-competences they have learned through PBL-method in their later studies and work life.

In conclusion, inquiry learning in the form of PBL-tutorials seems to provide an impetus for sharing information and expertise. They are important skills to new students and possessing them will make their further studies in a collaborative learning environment even better. Therefore, the authors strongly believe that in the beginning of the studies it is well worth the effort to engage the students in a formal PBL-tutorial setting, as learning and sharing the basic skills will allow the group and its members to be more creative in their later studies. To further increase information sharing, it is important that group sizes remain small, the access to information technology solutions is easy and the most appropriate spaces are used for tutorials.

Over the years, there has been a conscious training of tutorial supervisors in the Finnish Tourism DP in Porvoo. That means that most tourism lecturers can now supervise tutorials, which makes replacing a colleague in case of temporary absence easier as all colleagues know what the tutorials are all about. Having more supervisors available for the task has also made planning and organising semester timetables more flexible. In fact, the authors recommend that even more supervisors, even from different study programmes, get involved with PBL. As the evidence has been almost entirely positive, the authors can only recommend this method for others as well. As more supervisors are involved with PBL-tutorials, new ways of sharing information among all parties surface. New approaches for information sharing are always welcome and definitely worth exploring as they can be used in later studies by students and lead to further improved learning experience for all participants.



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# Inquiry Learning and Team Leadership at Porvoo Campus

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## Abstract

Porvoo Campus has introduced inquiry learning as its pedagogical approach. The learning takes place through different projects commissioned by companies here after called commissioners. This paper aims at evaluating students' view of about inquiry learning and students' expectations from the different educational actors. In order to find ways of improving the effectiveness of inquiry learning, we conducted an internal survey with students from six study programs at Porvoo Campus. In addition, we also conducted interviews with Project Commissioners, Team Leaders and Teachers in order to find out their attitude toward inquiry learning and why projects may fail. The results show a clear difference between programs. For instance, students from the Finnish Tourism and Business programs seem to be more satisfied with their inquiry learning process than the English and Swedish programs. The project failure were attributed mostly to bad communication, lack of clear instructions, lack of motivation, lack of cooperation and lack of time management skills. Yet, the study found that there was a clear difference between students within the same program depending on the year of enrolment. In all programs, the results show slight increase in the level of motivation and satisfaction about inquiry learning through increasing number of projects.

## Keywords

Inquiry Learning, Team Leadership, Porvoo Campus

## Introduction

In today's educational world, where the connectivity and the market interdependences are accelerating, different educational institutions are struggling to find a right balance to satisfy students, employees and external customers. There are several factors which affect either directly or indirectly student's level of learning. Today's learning does not only acknowledge the uniqueness and complexity of the learner, but actually

encourages, utilizes and rewards it as an integral part of the learning process (Wertsch 1997).

With this paper, we aim at evaluating and analysing the inquiry learning at Porvoo Campus. Furthermore, in order to enhance students learning through projects, it is appropriate to find out students' expectations from team leadership, teachers and project commissioners. Our study combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect and compare data from six different study programs at Porvoo Campus.

More specifically, this study aims at finding answers to following research questions.

- What are the current students' perceptions of inquiry learning through projects at Porvoo Campus?
- How can projects be better integrated in the inquiry learning in a more efficient way to ensure success and positive learning outcomes?

Before discussing linkages between project leadership and learning, let us turn our analysis on the interaction between learning and the learning environment.

## Learning and learning environment

Learning is a permanent change in performance or performance potential which is derived from previous experience and interaction within the world (Law, Ireland & Hussain 2007, 30). In this perspective, learners take the substance to learn something new from their previous experience and use it to obtain new skills generating to a change in their performance. Learning is more than a simple aptitude, it constitutes of variety of abilities and knowledge. The attribute of learning whether in teaching, training, coaching or mentoring is considered to be universal. In order to learn, one must internalize a set of skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that are new to the individual (Ibid).

Debates on how learners acquire knowledge in a controlled environment such as schools, have generated conflicting views: **The traditional** view emphasizes learning as a passive process or a gradual absorption of knowledge aiming at increasing learner's own knowledge base. **The second** view emphasizes memorizing knowledge through active role. However, in this view, memorized information is hard to internalize and transfer across domains. **The third** view consists of acquiring facts or procedures to be used. Accordingly, this may lead to acquisition of skills like reading, writing, and mathematics. This view also emphasizes using and practicing the acquired knowledge and skills so that the actions become automatic. **The fourth** view is about learning as making sense and understanding reality. In this perspective, reality may be self-constructed.

Learner makes active attempts to abstract meaning while learning and using new material to update and modify existing beliefs. Trying to understand things and to acquire the ability to explain them, not just remember them (See Bransford, John D., Ann L. Brown, and Rodney R. Cocking, 1999).

According to Law et al. (2007, 31) the power of an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning is its potential to increase intellectual engagement and foster deep understanding through the development of a hands-on, minds-on and 'research-based disposition' towards teaching and learning. Inquiry honors the complex, interconnected nature of knowledge construction, striving to provide opportunities for both teachers and students to collaboratively: build, test and reflect on their learning. It is crucial to recognize that inquiry-based teaching should not be viewed as a technique or instructional practice or method used to teach a subject. Rather, inquiry starts with teachers as engaged learners and researchers with the foundational belief that the topics they teach are rich, living and generous places for wonder and exploration.

Inquiry is not merely 'having students do projects' but rather strives to nurture deep, discipline-based way of thinking and doing with students. Enquiry learning tackles real-world questions, issues and controversies through several processes such as:

- Developing questioning, research and communication skills
- Solving problems or creating solutions
- Collaborating within and beyond the classroom
- Developing deep understanding of content knowledge
- Participating in the public creation and improvement of ideas and knowledge

Thus, it acts as an umbrella for different types of learning such as: problem-based learning, project based learning and Design-based learning (Ibid.) As contrasted with more traditional forms of teaching and learning, inquiry emphasizes the process of learning in order to develop deep understanding in students in addition to the intended acquisition of content knowledge and skills. Inquiry draws upon a constructivist learning theories where understanding is built through the active

development of conceptual mental frameworks by the learner (Bransford et al. 1999).

Inquiry learning through projects adopts this last view because the essential factor in learning today is to be able to comprehend matters and understand larger entities as well as connections between them rather than learn things by heart. In that perspective, the metacognitive skills such as problem solving skills, critical thinking and self-directed learning, are considered to play a decisive role in learning (Ibid.)

In this perspective, the responsibility of learning should reside increasingly with the learner because learners construct own understanding. Learners look for meaning and will try to find regularity and order in the events of the world even in the absence of full or complete information (Glaserfeld, 1989). Furthermore, sustaining motivation to learn is strongly dependent on the learner's confidence in his or her potential for learning. These feelings of competence and belief in potential to solve new problems are derived from first-hand experience of mastery of problems in the past and are much more powerful than any external acknowledgment and motivation (Prawat and Floden 1994).

Kukla (2000) argues that reality is constructed by our own activities and that people, together as members of a society, invent the properties of the world. Knowledge is thus a product of humans and is socially and culturally constructed (Prawat and Floden 1994). Ernest (1991) agrees that learning is a social process. He further states that learning is not a process that only takes place inside our minds, nor is it a passive development of our behaviors that is shaped by external forces and that meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities. Learners with different skills and backgrounds should collaborate in tasks and discussions to arrive at a shared understanding of the truth in a specific field (Duffy and Jonassen 1992).

Since learning environment should be built to support learning, next we shortly describe and analyze the characteristic of learning environment and social collaboration. Learning environment consists of five dimensions which are physical, social, local, technological dimensions and prerequisites as well as of pedagogic characteristics. The physical dimension of learning

environment refers to the school buildings and space. Social dimension is based on human interaction whereas local dimension consist of places and areas outside the school. Educational use of information and communications technology represents the technological dimension. Pedagogic characteristics of learning environment refer to the support in learning process in form of pedagogical challenges and learning material. Effective learning environments are derived from learner's needs. They enhance individuality and are multidimensional by content and enable social interaction between learners. (Gamoran, A, Secada, W.G., Marrett, C.A (1998).

The concept of social equity in community of learning is based on the idea that with active interaction and social networks trust can be created which promotes the functionality of the learning community. The social equity in community of learning can be measured by looking into the sense of the community, participation within the community, equality, and parity. According to the social equity, the important factors in teaching include pleasant, interactive, teaching, studying and assessment methods. To develop the social equity, consciously produced actions and structures as well as pedagogic leadership with professionals sharing their competence are needed. Within this social community, knowledge is first constructed in a social context and is then appropriated by individuals (Bruning et al., 1999; M. Cole, 1991; Eggan & Kauchak, 2004). Accordingly, the process of sharing individual perspectives-called collaborative elaboration, results in learners constructing understanding together that wouldn't be possible alone (Bruning et. al.1999).

## The context of inquiry learning

**The context** in which the learning occurs is central to the learning itself (McMahon 1997). The learning environment should also be designed to support and challenge the learner's thinking. (Di Vesta, 1987). According to Gulikers, Bastiaens & Martens (2005, p. 509-510), an authentic learning environment "provides a context that reflects the way knowledge and skills will be used in real life."

"This includes a physical or virtual environment that resembles the real world with real-world complexity and limitations, and provides options and possibilities that are also present in real life."

(Gulikers et al. p. 509-510) in Engeström (1994). Inquiry learning and the development of learning environment in vocational education emphasizes cooperation with companies and advocates for a student-centred approach to learning. The objective in inquiry learning is to create learning environments in which students may acquire professional skills to cope with working life. Given the fact that students have different background, inquiry learning emphasizes that the learning environment must respond and support diversity. All in all, the aim of the learning environment is to support the content and goals of each degree program. In inquiry learning, the learning environments are supposed to resemble more and more the ones of working life and cooperation with real work places is accentuated.

In order to achieve the optimal learning experience, the learning environment should be safe, complaisant and exciting. These characteristics of learning environment would make the learner active and use eclectic attentiveness effectively. Learning atmosphere plays an important role in what is actually possible to learn. If the learning environment is safe enough the learner can feel free to take risks and question his/her own thinking as well as others. To be successful, project-based inquiry learning fosters social interaction and that is acknowledged to have a greater impact on the learning process as well. For instance, there is no doubt about the fact that, interaction either in form of conversation or acting together reveals individuals' thinking processes. This creates a foundation for learning from other students and an opportunity to reflect one's own expectations and notions. In this perspective, both individual features and social equity and interaction within social networks may have profound influences on individual development (Kerzner, 2009).

## Inquiry learning and institutional characteristic

Educational institution together with the project commissioner (either a company or any other organization), have to consider such factors as students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles, current level of knowledge and skills while formulating the project related tasks. It is important fact that educational institution has to provide many ways to create opportunities for

learners who have different preferences in learning processes: learn well visually, verbally, interpersonally, and so on and should encourage active learning, or learning by doing (Dewey, in Bransword, et al, 19, p.77).

To be successful inquiry learning has to meet all stakeholders' expectations. Each stakeholder has a contribution to the project and should be taken into consideration during different phases of the project (initiation, planning and implementation). In inquiry learning through project, it is possible to identify different groups of actors: the project manager, responsible for achieving project objectives by managing key constraints; the project team including all team members involved in the project and functional management, the instructor, the sponsor and the customer. Those different actors and stakeholders have different expectations and responsibilities (Kerzner, 2009).

Next, let us turn our discussion to the project implementation process from a leadership perspective. By doing so, the ultimate goal is to lay ground for discussing how project could be better managed to enhance inquiry learning.

## Team Leadership in inquiry learning

According to Harris (2012), teamwork can be defined as the contribution of members within the team, building up the concept of assisting each other at the same time fulfilling own personal responsibility toward the same goal(s). Teamwork involves not only team members (members and leaders) but also other outside factors can strongly affect the effectiveness of teamwork. There are several factors which are closely related to the above mentioned topic, some of them are: interdependence, clear roles and contribution, satisfaction from mutual working, mutual and individual accountability, realization of synergy and empowerment. (L. Harris, 2012). Project management literature elaborates on the necessary qualities of a good project manager and leader. At least, a non-exhaustive list of good leadership qualities include: inspiring, shared vision, communicator, integrity, enthusiasm, empathy, competence, ability to delegate tasks, coping with stress, team-building and problem-solving skills (Barry, 2008).

Murch, (2011) classifies leadership skills into wider categories such as personal skills (motivating, solving problems, and assisting team members), technical skills (knowledge of the project, computer skills) and management skills (understanding the business aspect of running the project, leadership, planning, risk management, budget control etc.). Without promoting different merits of manager versus leader, a successful project manager ought to combine good leadership and managerial qualities. In addition s/he is expected to fulfill at least four (4) main functions of a management: planning, organizing, leading and controlling (Murch,2011).

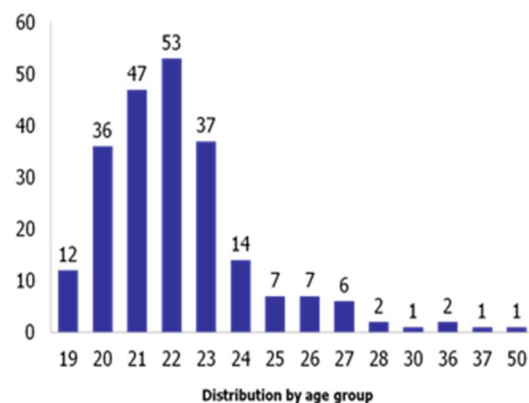
According to Byrnes (2009) and Chavrat (2002), project leadership includes team building and motivating the members. In addition, project leader must solve personal conflicts within the team efficiently in order to proceed with the given task the best possible way. The tasks and personal responsibilities should always be clearly communicated towards the rest of the team. The best is to create a “Communications Plan” in the beginning of the project to establish the communication strategies, member roles and basic rules for team meetings.(Chavrat, 2002). Naturally, no project manager could do an excellent job without a committed team behind him, so team building is a crucial skill which every professional project manager should possess. Team members should show responsibility to the project and complete their roles with determination and positive attitude. When it comes to team-management, the so called “Twelve Cs” should be followed, which are: Clear expectations, Context, Commitment, Competence, Charter, Control, Collaboration, Communication, Creative Innovation, Consequences, Coordination and Cultural change. (Heathfield, 2012). At last but not least, if the project has budget, financial skills are a great asset too. Next, let us present the key results from the empirical research.

## Quantitative Research on Team Dynamics and Project Leadership at Porvoo Campus

In the spring term 2012, a quantitative survey on project team leadership and team dynamics was conducted at HAAGA-HELIA UAS Porvoo. The aim was to find out the opinions of students in different

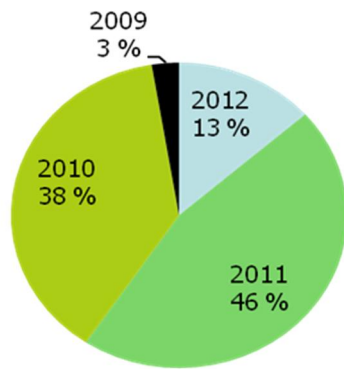
degree programmes and different stages of studies. Survey questionnaires were distributed to all degree programmes (Business and Tourism in English, Business and Tourism in Swedish and Business and Tourism programmes in Finnish) and to all the starting years that were to reach. Most of the students on the upper level were already doing their work placement or exchange year or thesis somewhere else, therefore the number of them is lower.

During two weeks’ time, 230 responses were collected from all the degree programs on Porvoo Campus. Most responses came from Finnish speaking business program and Finnish speaking tourism programs, which also have the biggest annual intakes. 65 % of the respondents were females and 35 %, which follows quite closely the gender distribution on campus. Majority (75 %) of the respondents were 20 – 23 years old, which is also very representative to the age distribution on Porvoo campus. Most of the respondents were Finnish, but also Russians, Vietnamese, Chinese and other nationalities were represented



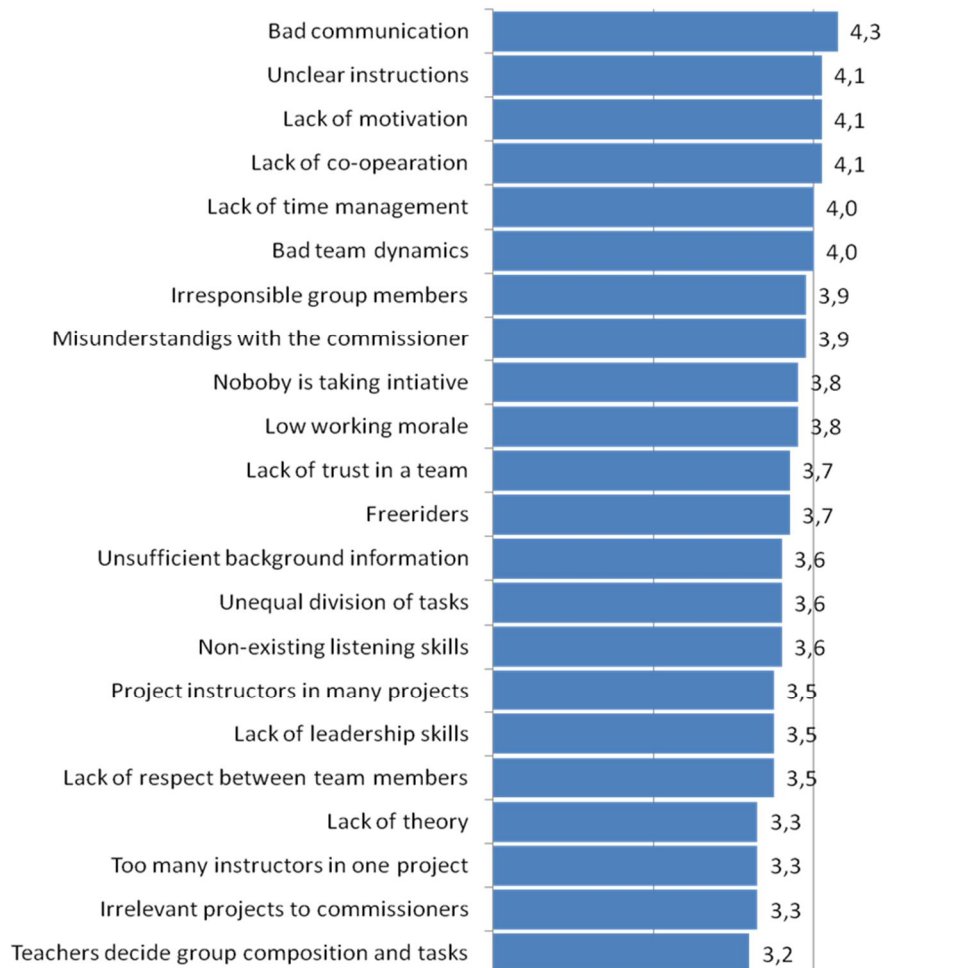
Most of the respondents studies in Porvoo for their second or third year. All of the respondents had been active in at least 2 projects and almost 10 % had been doing 5 projects or more during their study time. In these projects the most common role was the ordinary group member (42 %), but also task responsible (25 %), project managers (14 %) and secretaries (16 %) were well presented. In the research also the satisfaction of the students were asked and one could see that the longer students had studied and the more experienced they had got with projects, the more satisfied they felt with inquiry learning in general. According to the survey this way of learning enhances the students’

communication, information search, and problem solving skills.



**Distribution by year of study**

Why is it then so hard to adapt to this way of learning in the beginning? What are the biggest issues that cause dissatisfaction and unmotivated students. This was found out by studying the biggest reason why projects fail. Students were asked to tell their opinion to different statements about the failure of projects on scale 1 to 5, where 1 was “Not at all important” and 5 was “Uttermost important” One of the most interesting findings from this survey was that projects at HAAGA-HELIA UAS Porvoo seem to fail mainly because of bad communication, lack of co-operation and motivation, unclear instructions, bad team-dynamics, and time management issues.



**Reasons for project failure**



One could assume that with the increasing number of solved projects also the students' study satisfaction would rise. Yet, the survey gave reason to believe that this is not the case. Inquiry learning does not seem to enhance the level of study satisfaction: The level of study satisfaction hardly increases respectively does not rise with an increasing number of absolved projects. Based on the reasons for failure this is also quite obvious – the more students learn from group work, team dynamics, leadership and project management, the easier they realize the flaws in the system and start wondering why nobody is doing anything to these.

However, the quantitative research neither offers clear explanations why this phenomenon exists. Arguably, quantitative researches are limited to certain extent: They do not allow deeper insights and explanations as data is primarily gathered through structured questionnaires with closed questions and pre-determined response options (Bradley 2007, 304 -305). This is where the need for more focused qualitative research arises.

## Qualitative research

During autumn 2012 a qualitative research was implemented. The idea was to find out explanations to the problems discovered in quantitative research at HAAGA-HELIA UAS. In the qualitative research was several in-depth interviews were conducted as well as on focus group interview. The interviewees were taken from the following five groups: Administration of HAAGA-HELIA UAS Porvoo (1 person), teachers (2 persons), commissioners (3 persons); students (6 persons), and exchange students (4 persons), which are working, learning, studying, and collaborating with HAAGA-HELIA UAS Porvoo. Mutual interactions, actions, and communication between these stakeholders mainly define the quality of everyday work routine, study routine, and learning routine at HAAGA-HELIA UAS Porvoo. By interviewing these groups the aim was to get as holistic view of the situation as possible. The persons were chosen based on their experience in inquiry learning – those students, teachers and commissioners who had done more projects were considered to have better knowledge than those with only few projects. As a comparison a group of exchange students who based their answers on one semester studies in inquiry learning (but several years with traditional one in their home universities) were chosen. Also one person from

administration was picked to give ideas how the administration sees and experiences the effects of inquiry learning.

Questions stated in the interview were mostly centred on students, but formulated in a way that they could easily be adapted for the other stakeholder groups as well. A certain core for questions were created to all groups but as natural to the qualitative research some new questions arise from the answers and created their own paths to interviews.

Summarizing the perspective of administration, it can be said that suggestions on how to improve the inquiry learning experiences at HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo Campus are the following: a holistic approach (that would need to involve administration, teachers and students), recruitment and retention of the right students (social media can be a powerful tool here), paying extra attention to freshmen (and especially on applying the correct information on them), embracing and practicing the concept of co-creation and "return of investment". Last but not least, different ways to measure development and success more frequently would need to be found since according to RA1 no measurement took place yet.

According to the teachers involving students, helping them to understand and therefore making them stay at the school is probably the most important issue the institute is facing right now. The constant improvement of (internal and external) communication is crucial in order to make this happen. Applicants should make an informed and conscious choice when applying to the school, new students should already have a purpose when starting their studies there, and the current students/teachers should help them adjust to inquiry learning as smoothly as possible.

When it comes to external communication, the active usage of social media channels seems to be an effective way, and the influence of the fresh graduates and the alumni should by no means be underestimated, as they can both improve the image of inquiry learning and its challenges internally and externally. At the end of the day, it all comes down to co-creation, where all sides are actively involved, responsible and motivated to make a change for the better.

Based on the interviews, it seems that the key motivators for students are course-relevant projects, qualified commissioners, gaining skills and projects they could include in their CV, the working environment in Campus. The main problems identified lack of involvement and motivation from commissioner's side, the lack of structure when it comes to timetables and planning and some difficulties when reaching out to teachers with issues.

Commissioners are in general very satisfied with the environment and the support/co-operation with the teacher team. They are also mostly happy with the results the students delivered to them during projects. However, communication (student-commissioner, school-commissioner) definitely needs to be improved along with the marketing and the school's presence in the media. HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo Campus should be always clear towards the commissioners about what they can expect from students and there should always be an active, two-way conversation between the sides, based on a mutual understanding about the requirements and expectations.

The exchange students seem also to be satisfied with the working environment and the support they receive from the side of the school. They have gained some valuable experiences during they stay here and they clearly recognize the benefits of the inquiry learning method. However, they wish there was more structure and discipline in the system, in order to avoid confusion, prevent the appearance of free-riders and motivate the students in general. They have also mentioned the unconventional ways of teaching and the low power distance between students and teachers. The amount of theory learned during a course depends on the individual student, which is sometimes not a satisfying amount. Therefore theory taught at lectures could be better balanced with the actual project going on, to produce the best results.

## Conclusions and recommendations

When the quantitative research revealed that the more project student had experienced with, the more suitable they felt towards inquiry learning, but satisfaction level towards the learning method stayed still low. It was also stated that main factors

for failure are communication and motivation – all the facts that also came up in interviews in qualitative research. The qualitative research also helped to get a deeper understanding of these problem areas.

Based on the two researches it could be suggested that school should provide a variety of projects with different commissioners. All the instructions and goals should be set in advance, and commissioners should participate actively in project. The project goals should be clear all the way from the beginning and all teaching and assignments should be connected with projects as well. Teacher's role as the information provider and "teacher" is highly appreciated and expected. Project managers or team leaders should engage group with commissioner through more active communication to different directions.

As conclusion, those outcomes revealed that communication and motivation are the matters that is still lacking in this learning module. Co-operation between teachers, students and commissioners are the subject that needs an intensive focus. By harnessing the communication and gaining student's motivation will help to enhance motivation in inquiry learning in HAAGA-HELIA.

It means that students (and also new staff members) must be taught to the method all the way from the beginning. Thus, the studies at the first semester need to be extremely well-planned, as in this stage the student is fully dependent on the university, when it comes to the choice of courses (free-choice courses do not concern the freshmen yet). The projects need to deliver results, but also need to be simple and clear enough for first semester students in order to avoid confusion and allow them to feel successful at the same time.

Based on the researches it can be stated that co-creation needs to be emphasized and practiced more on Campus. That means regular meetings between students and teachers, involving students to teacher's meetings even, and finding different ways of involving them in the decision-making process (for example when interviewing new students). Students should act in a responsible and mature manner, as they were brand ambassadors. Older students may mentor the new ones, when

they face any kind of problems related to inquiry learning.

It is also mentioned in the researches that it is hard to concentrate on many things at the same time. This covers both students and teachers. Therefore it is recommended that all the assignments and tasks during one semester should be connected to the semester project instead of giving different extra tasks that do not contribute the project outcome. It would also be good if teachers could concentrate on one or two projects per semester (role of project manager and resources for that) instead of involving in 5 or 6 semesters and even more projects at the same time. By giving both teachers and students time to concentrate on one big thing, it would help communication, co-operation and co-creation as well it would motivate and engage people more to their tasks.

HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo Campus should offer an informational package to the commissioners and students, in which it tells what kind of services the school is able to offer, and also what may be expected from students in different stages of their studies. This would help commissioners to understand the new system better and set their expectations correctly. Also the existences of two-way, active conversations are very important when it comes to finding and retaining new commissioners. In this conversations both HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo Campus can share what their needs are and prospective commissioners could also share different cooperation possibilities.

As HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo Campus promotes inquiry learning as the most efficient teaching method, it has to make sure that this promise is going to be fulfilled in the end. Moreover, inquiry learning is the main concept that the campus differentiates itself from other HAAGA-HELIA premises; therefore it is extremely important that the concept works efficiently and without major problems. Stakeholder satisfaction will ultimately result in brand improvement as well, realizing that, a couple of suggestions have been given below on how the inquiry learning system can be improved further. The development and success in the implementation of the new system should be measured more often and different ways of measuring success should be found.

Based on all the answers respondents have been given and all the analysis and recommendation one can come to a conclusion that project management process on Porvoo Campus is not clear nor visible yet. In order to improve effectiveness, satisfaction and measurement it is advisable to create a clear, step-by-step flowchart of the project management process for all the participants in a project. By creating a flowchart for project management all the steps in process will become visible to all the participants in a project. It will also help to implement the project in a way that communication improves and results are easier to measure. It is clearer to the commissioners as well as students what is expected from them.

A suggestion to such a flowchart is presented below. This is one way to show all the participants what is happening in each step along the planning and implementation. It is also an attempt to show who should be active in which stage and how. By engaging all the participants to the project already during the first steps motivation should increase and also commitment to the project. Planning of the project as well as setting goals should be done together and their implementation should be followed carefully all the way. Clear measurements should be stated and followed. Various tools should be used in order to implement the project and also visibility in the usage of these tools should be thought. Even though students should be responsible for the project, teachers should understand their role as teachers, active providers of the basic theories as well as supporters and mentors in the process. Also commissioner's role should be emphasized – instead of just giving basic information and expressing his/her feelings he should actively participate in the process and be part of that. All these elements are gathered to the model below.

The model presented is the first step to improve inquiry learning on Porvoo Campus. Even though steps have their grounds in the researcher done during year 2012, it also follows theories from leadership, group dynamics and project management. It is general enough to be suitable to all projects, all degree programmes and all semesters. It should work as a starting point for a discussion of improvements and increased satisfaction among all the participants in the end.

	STAGE of PROJECT	PURPOSE	PARTICIPANTS	ESTIMATED TIME	TOOLS
1.	Project idea	Idea	Commissioner / student / teacher	Before semester start	***
2.	First contact and evaluation discussion	To discuss the idea and evaluate if it is suitable to teaching and to which semester Background information to the commissioner of the working ways	Commissioner & Porvoo Campus contact person	Before semester start	***
3.	First meeting about the goals, needs and implementation	Introduction of the project and its goals Setting common goals with the teaching Deciding guidelines for implementation	Commissioner, teacher team & student representatives	Before semester start	email, telephone
4.	Start of the project Division of groups and defining tasks	Introduction of the project and semester Discussion of the tasks and group division based on preferences and students choices Setting common goals	Teachers and students	First week of semester	LeaP, Moodle, email, telephone, social media(?)
5.	Commissioner presentation and project meeting <i>Presentation of project plan</i>	Meeting with the commissioner and getting to know him/her Discussion of the project and how students see it	Teachers, students and commissioner	Second week of semester	LeaP, Moodle, email, telephone, social media(?)
6.	Weekly consultations & implementation of project Theory teaching to support project Weekly memos to the commissioner	Teaching the theory needed in / related to project Helping students with the project and giving them insight to the area as well as constructive and guiding feedback Informing commissioner	Teachers and students Commissioner has possibility to join consultations	1. - 4. week of semester	LeaP, Moodle, email, telephone, social media(?)
7.	First checkpoint meeting & presentation	Discussion of the project and its proceeding Chance for new ideas and questions Measurement and evaluation	Teachers, students and commissioner	4th week of semester	Webropol for evaluation of group work
8.	Weekly consultations & implementation of project with the support Theory teaching to support project Weekly memos to the commissioner	Teaching the theory needed in / related to project Helping students with the project and giving them insight to the area as well as constructive and guiding feedback Informing commissioner	Teachers and students Commissioner has possibility to join consultations	5. - 8. week of semester	LeaP, Moodle, email, telephone, social media(?)
9.	Half-way meeting	Discussion of the project and its proceeding Chance for new ideas and questions Measurement and evaluation	Teachers, students and commissioner	8th week of semester	Webropol for evaluation of group work
10.	Weekly consultations & implementation of project (Theory) teaching to support project Weekly memos to the commissioner	Teaching the theory needed in / related to project Helping students with the project and giving them insight to the area as well as constructive and guiding feedback Informing commissioner	Teachers and students Commissioner has possibility to join consultations	8. - 12. week of semester	LeaP, Moodle, email, telephone, social media(?)
11.	Check point meeting and presentation	Discussion of the project and its proceeding Measurement and evaluation	Teachers, students and commissioner	12th week of semester	Webropol for evaluation of group work
12.	Weekly consultations & implementation of project (Theory) teaching to support project Weekly memos to the commissioner	Teaching the theory needed in / related to project Helping students with the project and giving them insight to the area as well as constructive and guiding feedback Informing commissioner	Teachers and students Commissioner has possibility to join consultations	12. - 15. week of semester	LeaP, Moodle, email, telephone, social media(?)
13.	Final presentation / implementation	Finalizing the project	Teachers, students and commissioner	15th week of semester	***
14.	Internal feedback	Giving feedback about team dynamics, group work, teaching and internal processes	Teachers and students	16th week of semester	Webropol for evaluation of group work
15.	Project feedback	Giving feedback about the project management, success of the project, commissioner's role and engagement as well as students behaviour	Teachers, students and commissioner	16th week of semester	***
16.	Development discussion and evaluation	Gathering feedback and planning what could be done better in the future Evaluation and measurement of the project Future planning	Commissioner, teacher team & student representatives	16th week of semester	***

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# Methodological Approaches to Branding with a Focus on Tourism as a Process of Change and Innovation

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## Abstract

The study deals with two principal topics, methodological approach to tourism and especially to tourism destination branding and use of different paradigms, methods and methodologies during a specific period of time, which allows to understand continual transfer of approaches to tourism generally and to tourism branding research. The article explains how tourism has been studied and generally how these paradigmatic changes to tourism and consequently to tourism destination branding influenced the approach to studies of tourism and tourism destination branding. This might be even more important and significant as a consequence of dramatic changes in a society in the economic, political, and social sphere, for example economic crises or political or environmental changes in the world. For this reason, the article has to be understood as a discussion of changes due to the competitive forces, innovation and its influence on tourism studies and research and consequently tourism in real settings.

## Keywords

Innovation, paradigms, methods, methodology in branding

## The paradigmatic development in innovation and tourism competitiveness

Crucial to further discussion on innovation, competitiveness and knowledge importance is an understanding of the present state of development, which has started approximately in 1994 and has been determined as a phase of prosperity and innovations (Kondratiev called it the fifth wave). Generally, the 20th century should be significant with the development of

technology, inventions, and innovations, which would be even stronger visible in the 21st century. In order to understand the development of changes based on cycles explained by Kondratiev, the following figure (Figure 1), originated by Sundbo (1998), enables to understand the reason of innovation in this period of time and especially be able to understand the development of paradigmatic changes in tourism studies as well as tourism practice approach.

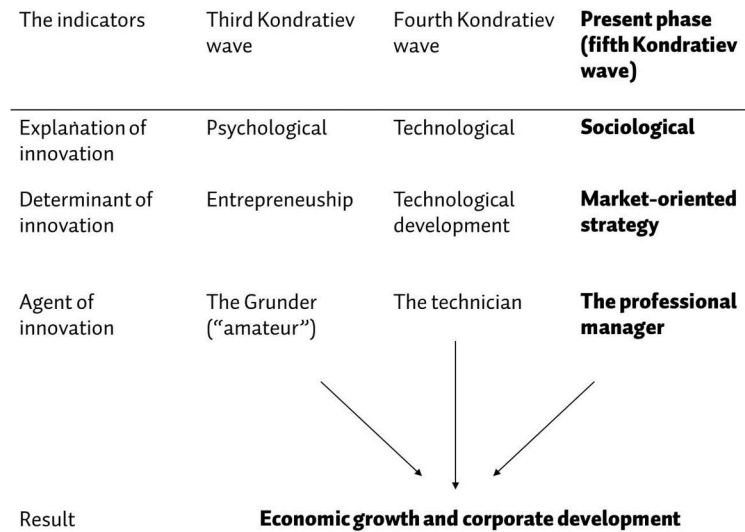


Figure 1. Potential paradigms in the innovation cycles (Source: amended after Sundbo, 1998.)

It is interesting to mention that the changes of paradigms and approaches to studies of tourism appeared in cycles. For explanation, the empirical research in the third decade of the 20th century contained topics predominantly dealing with the negative consequences of industrialization and the economic crisis of 1929 (the third Kondratiev wave). Popular were the ideas dealing with the economic interventions (Keynes) and social problems topics (Durkheim, Weber), which embraced major themes in a society and influenced research on innovation and tourism. The cyclical development of similar themes is visible because after this third wave (based on psychological explanations of innovation) and more technocratic fourth wave (due to industrial revolution). The contemporary period and cycle is again influenced by specific events as economic crises (similarly as in the period of the third wave). Explanation of innovation is based on sociological grounds and marketing and managerial skills become crucial for this period generally and also in tourism destinations.

For innovation in tourism destinations, the second innovation phase (the fourth Kondratiev wave) was more important because a rapid technological development occurred. The paradigmatic influence of technical and natural sciences, engineering and the incremental growth of innovations led to the enormous

economy growth. Technical developments and innovations and economic growth boosted the development of tourism resorts and infrastructure. Fordism and Taylorism shifted the paradigmatic focus on the positivist and post-positivist theory of knowledge. A majority of innovations was focused on the increase of productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency in industry, creation of new destinations and mass development in tourism. Competitiveness, for this reason, became an indicator of quantity and productivity, and significantly influenced the mass development of tourism resorts and the use of comparative advantages without strict rules of planning and regulating.

Most radical changes in shifting of paradigms and approach occurred; however, in the fifth phase (Kondratiev wave) due to shifting the paradigms of innovation to the behavioral sciences (Sundbo, 1998). Typical for this period was a change in consumer thinking and preferences, and growth in the importance of positioning and segmentation in marketing. The changes in consumer behavior were characterized by a predominance of the service sector businesses and growing interest in tourism, leisure and recreation. The service sector development stressed the importance of such disciplines as marketing, management, sociology, psychology, and culture. Disciplines,



such as marketing (Kotler, 1984; Cooper, 2005), strategic management and dynamic management (Shipley & Newkirk, 1998) and innovation management (Katz, 1988; Mintzberg, 1989; Andersen, 1990) became dominant in this period. The creation of strategic alliances, networks (clustering), quality of services, visioning, branding, environmental protection, crises and disasters, sustainability, community participation embraced significantly the innovation and competitiveness paradigms in tourism. The former industrial character of development at the beginning of the 20th century has been transformed to a phenomenon focused on the consumer's well-being and needs. The experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) embraced the ideas of competitiveness achieved through innovative approach to consumer behavior.

In 1970, Kuhn introduced innovative themes in the tourism studies embracing a multidisciplinary rather than an interdisciplinary approach (Jenings; 2007; Leiper, 1981; Echtner & Jamal, 1997; Tribe, 1997, Walle, 1997), which significantly influenced the character of paradigms in tourism studies. Research in tourism as well as competitiveness and innovation and branding research are still dominated by the post-positivist paradigms despite the existing critique of the mono-disciplinary approach. For example, in the research of destination policy as a factor of the competitive advantage, the "explication of multidimensional philosophies" (Crouch & Ritchie, 2003, p. 178) designates the epistemological content, which means the evaluation of the economic and managerial conditions as well as the environmental assessment. A question in a research of tourism competitiveness is not only about the use of a dominant paradigm, but how to reflect to the global forces influencing competitiveness and innovation. Tourism, in a new millennium, has a totally different character as tourism in 20th century and new forces (improving or destructing) have significantly influenced tourism research. For example, global forces originated a need of tourism research and innovative responses of governments and tourism destination representatives to the growing threats of inflicted crises as terrorist attacks. New situation in a society and global

world influenced also tourism, and researchers focused on crises and disasters management need to apply a new paradigmatic approach to competitiveness in their research of practice, for example the authors (Paraskevas & Arendell, 2007; Prideaux, Laws & Faulkner, 2003) who blended different methods in their research.

The changes of environment, society, economy, and especially the internationalization, growth of ICT and information, saturation of knowledge opened the opportunities to compete and innovate, but created also a controversy. This fact also influenced a character of research of competitiveness and innovation, especially the transfer of focus from the dominant western epistemologies to more insightful and multicultural approaches, as discussed by (Scheurich, 1997; Matias et al, 2007 & Jennings, 2007). Academics as Jennings (2007), Kozak and Rimmington (1999) discussed the methodological approach to tourism studies and admitted possible dual methodological approach to tourism studies depending on the studied question. Important is the epistemological approach to tourism and a way how tourism and branding is perceived from the epistemological stance. This might be also a decisive point for methodological approach.

## Tourism epistemology and brand knowledge

Tourism, as a phenomenon or a subject of study, has been discussed in several academic sources (Tribe, 1997; Echtner & Jamal, 1997; Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Shepperd, & Wannhill, 1993; Jaffari & Ritchie, 1981), and the main focus of their inquiries was the sources of tourism knowledge and the characteristic of tourism as a discipline.

Tribe (1997) distinguished two main sources of knowing about tourism as the "propositional knowledge", in which truth has to be validated against the criteria provided by academic disciplines, for example psychology, sociology, or geography. The second epistemological source of tourism, based on Tribe (1997), which highlights the professional practice of tourism management and marketing (e.g., branding from a managerial perspective), is the "procedural knowledge" that

leads the managerial activities in tourism. Thus, branding, as a part of managerial studies in tourism, belongs to procedural knowledge, which lacks the character of a discipline due a deficiency of theoretical underpinnings. However, even in branding research there exists a blurry boundary between both concepts – propositional and procedural knowledge. For example, if a researcher is interested in consumer image, and attitudes, the source of knowledge is based on theoretical underpinnings of the first concept – procedural knowledge or “knowing that”, e. g., the psychology (consumer psychology).

The epistemological and ontological groundings of branding as the professional practice of management in tourism seems to be a challenge not only due to a dual view of the sources of epistemologies, but also due to scholarly disagreement on the disciplinary nesting of tourism knowledge and questioning of tourism’s status as a field or an entire discipline. For example, Jafari and Ritchie (1981) presented a model of tourism studies, which includes only part of the entire tourism knowledge. Hirst (1993) introduced a model of the creation of tourism knowledge, demonstrating the epistemological origins of such professional practices as tourism marketing, and management, where branding is a part of marketing and management practices in tourism. Tribe (1997) explained that the knowledge claims require for each discipline a specific methodology. Blending knowledge claims for different disciplines is a reason why researchers are unsure whether tourism is a discipline. The interdisciplinary character of tourism complicates holistic understanding and a unified research approach.

An interdisciplinary character generates knowledge, which is, based on Gibbons, Limongues, Nowotny, Schwartzman, Scott and Throw (1994), “characterized by the explicit formulation of a uniform discipline – transcending terminology or a common methodology” (p. 651). In other words, an interdisciplinary approach requires possible mutual agreement about common methodological approaches and borrowing of methods from other disciplines. The question involves not only being able to define brands and their position in management and marketing

practice generally, but also in tourism, which might be significantly different in comparison with products. A constraint might be to grasp the main theoretical approaches to how brands are understood and studied, and this epistemological distinction could contribute to the explanation of a blurry boundary between the forms of knowing in tourism. For example, branding concerns not only business and management studies, but also non-business studies, which are not linked together, only through tourism, as discussed in Tribe (1997). This fact enlarged the cultural scope of branding, especially by the implication of such perspectives as anthropology (cultural differences) or biology, and sociology (gender differences in consumption patterns). The development of paradigms in branding has been strongly influenced by the philosophy of Kuhn (1970) and later Bernstein (1991), especially by the fact that they highlighted the interdisciplinary character of tourism and its incommensurable character, meaning that the process of understanding and communicating might be complicated due to different perspectives and the incongruence of the content. The incommensurability creates obstacles in the measurement of branding as a result of insufficient common indicators or standards.

Bernstein (1991) criticized that tourism is predominantly approached from post-positivist stance, based on strict adherence of scientifically accepted methods. Changes needed in the approaches to marketing and management research have been discussed by Jennings (2007), who noted that “research in tourism economics and management has been predicated to western-based epistemological lenses and a positivist/postpositivist hegemony” (p. 10). However, there have been significant changes recently, and the following discussion sheds light on some developments in branding research during the past twenty years in order to explain the changes in epistemological stances, new methodological approaches, and problems with the application of certain methodological tools influencing the efficacy of research.

## Branding paradigms and the shift of methodological approaches

The development of paradigms in brand management during the last twenty years has been influenced by a significant paradigmatic shift from post-positivist to constructivist or interpretive perspectives. However, these paradigmatic approaches have been applied according to the focus and intent of specific researchers. The focus might be a tourism destination with its attributes (and the owner and creator of a brand) or the consumer with certain motives, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs. Heding, Knudtzen, and Bjorke (2009) explain that “the positivistic stance implies a notion of the brand being owned by the marketer, who controls the communication to a passive recipient/consumer” (p. 21). Thus, brand management and brand equity research is focused on the supply side – a destination, and the post-positivist paradigms are more frequently implemented. However, research on the relationship between the creator of the brand and the consumer more frequently implies constructivist paradigms. The dominant rule of post-positivist approaches is rooted in classical branding theory based on relational and network marketing. Brands represent the ownership of brand owners – the creators of brands – a tourism destination and its entrepreneurs.

More recently, a different approach to brands has been implemented, and the sensual and emotional content has been recognized in the form of a so-called decompositional approach to brands (Doyle, 1994), which is a methodological approach used to analyze the consumer’s perception of brands where brands evoke senses and emotions of consumers. The approach can be explained by the implementation of concepts of decision heuristically based on Tversky (1972) concept used in psychology and focused on human decision-making behavior. Recognition of heuristic approaches and the importance of individual differences in human decision-making behavior, for example perception, risk-taking propensities, and social value orientation, mean an enormous step ahead in branding management and an epistemological approach to branding.

From a managerial perspective, but also in academic research, perception of brands has been shifted from the brand owner and creator of a brand (a destination) to the relationship between the brand owner and the consumer. The mind of consumers and the human behavioral differences in decision-making processes have become a target in brand management research, especially in brand equity inquiries. Understanding how consumers decide and where their decision is rooted, emerges as a need in a competitive environment.

A continual shift from brand-centric to customer-centric brand equity building (Keiningham et al., 2005) followed by a change of epistemologies came with the creation of two different equity structures because the classical type of marketing contains stronger tangible features, and consumer-based branding requires stronger measurement capabilities due to the intangible character of brand equity model variables.

Brand equity studies, developed during the last twenty years, have applied major paradigmatic approaches - from the positivist (the economic, identity, consumer-based, and personality approaches) to constructivist (the personality, relational, the community, and cultural approaches). Demand or supply side perspectives and epistemology shape the character of paradigms used in the brand equity concept, as developed Wood (2000).

Any investigation of branding means the understanding of branding and use of proper methodology and methods. In the case of branding equity models and their development, the epistemological switch is evident as well as scholarly attempts to achieve a holistic approach.

The economic approach (the so called product paradigm), based on the classical communication of the owner of a brand as a part of the marketing mix, lacks the active communication and participation of the consumer in the branding process. Main brand definitions are rooted in the use of promotional attributes such as logos and slogans.

Further branding developments introduced projective paradigms (based on the brand

identity approach), the consumer-based adaptive paradigm, and the relationship-based paradigm. The relationship-based paradigm stems from the interaction between creation of brand value (internally) and brand meaning (externally) and originates in a dynamic and strategic process involving a relation between consumer and brand (Heding, Knudtzen, Bjerre, 2009). Dynamic changes significantly affect brand creation and perception of a brand, thus influencing managerial tasks and research techniques.

The taxonomy used in models of brand equity (Kapferer's brand prism model, Aaker's model, Keller's consumer-base brand equity model, Cai's model and Konecnik's model) embraced Kuhn's philosophical perspective, which explained the continual shift during tourism pre-science period. Kuhn (1970) admitted the conceptual chaos and blending of different methods, paradigms as a mixture of different beliefs, values, techniques, models in marketing and managerial studies. Tourism research still involves the co-operation of disciplines (psychology, geography,

anthropology, economics, and marketing). For example, the economic approach to brand equity has been used as the theoretical base of transaction cost theory (a neoclassical microeconomic approach). The consumer-based approach is rooted in the theory of reasoned action (Fischbein & Ajzen 1975) and the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985, 1987, 1991), in consumer psychology. A critical and holistic approach to branding requires interplay of the methods and methodologies of different disciplines.

Louro and Cunha (2001) explained that four ruling paradigms and two discriminators are crucial for systematic research of brand equity: "the role of the consumer in the branding process (customer centrality) and whether the brand should hold a tactical or strategical position (brand centrality)" (p. 251). Fig. 2 visually documents the dimensions and brand management paradigms, which enables better understanding of the necessity of different approaches to the studies of brand management.

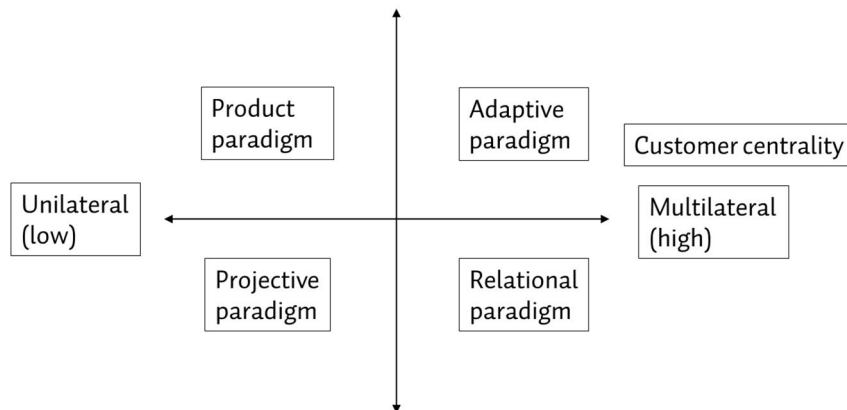


Figure 2. Two dimensions and four brand management paradigms (Source: Louro and Cunha, 2001.)

Heding, Knudtze and Bjerre (2009, p. 85) stated that the "consumer is seen and analyzed through a lens grounded in cognitive psychology and information economics". This fact confirms our opinion that effective marketing and branding strategies have an enormous effect on consumer's preferences and consequently on brand equity. Although this process is one-dimensional, (consumer-based), the marketer's role and the congruency between the intent of a marketer (sensory input) and the mind of the

consumer (brand choice) are also important. The taxonomy of brand management has been proposed by several other authors including Goodyear (1996), Louro and Cunha (2001), and Holt (2004) and in some concepts of Kuhn's approaches and Louro and Cunha's paradigms. Table 1 compares the categorization of taxonomies of brand management, and clarifies methodological approaches to branding, and especially to brand equity.

Table 1. Comparison of brand management categorization (Source: Hedding, Knudtze, Bjerre, 2009.)

<b>Categorization</b>	<b>This taxonomy</b>	<b>Goodyear (1996)</b>	<b>Louro and Cunha (2001)</b>	<b>Holt (2004)</b>
Discriminators	A Kuhnian analysis of research paper	Macro-level analysis of market evolution	Customer centrality and strategic priority (in lit.)	Widely used branding models
Comparable brand categories	The economic approach	Brands and reference	The product paradigm	(in literature and practice)
Comparable brand categories	The identity approach	Brand as company	The projective paradigm	
Comparable brand categories	The customer-base approach	Brand as personality	The adaptive paradigm	Mind-share branding
Comparable brand categories	The personality approach	Brand as personality	The relational paradigm	Emotional branding
Comparable brand categories	The relational approach	Brand as personality	The relational paradigm	Emotional branding
Comparable brand categories	The community approach			Viral branding
Comparable brand categories	The cultural approach	Brand icon + brand as policy		Cultural branding

The following discussion will evaluate the typology of data used in branding depending on methods and methodology.

## The evaluation and typology of primary and secondary data sources for destination branding

The type of theoretical perspective, embedded in the methodology, requires a new approach to the study of destination brands and branding. However, although qualitative methods are generally more suitable for capturing the holistic character of branding model constructs; for example, image, research conducted by Pike (2002) revealed the predominance of quantitative research methods and a post-positivist approach to branding (a theoretical perspective).

Empirical research in branding and consumer behavior is a common technique, and the inductive approach – through collection of data, information and observation, is dominant in most branding studies. This type of research involves both types of questions: academic and practical. The theoretical model developed from research questions stems from the body of existing literature and contains theoretical constructs

and observed variables. In the first stages of research, qualitative methods are more appropriate (e.g., surveys containing open-ended question, experiment observation, case studies, focus groups). Quantitative methods (experimental research, and surveys) are still the most common research methods in empirical research, even for branding.

The variety of disciplines shaping knowledge of branding requires a holistic approach, which is based on a dual approach to research. Of concern to outcome are the implications of the methodologies (strategies of linking methods to the result) and methods (techniques of research) used. To understand the epistemological shift and the appropriateness of new methodological approaches, Goodyear (1996) explained the concepts of classical and postmodern branding. The former is rooted in the creation of logos, and slogans; and a brand owner has a dominant role. The postmodern approach allows brands to develop complex identities and a consumer to own a brand.

The studied literature on branding reveals, that names, symbols, and logos are not sufficient representations of tourism destinations, and a holistic approach combining qualitative and quantitative approaches and mixed methods can

be more usefully applied. Inductive analysis means that researchers search for multiple realities, and qualitative research allows researchers to search for multiple realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This critical approach is a novel to the methodological approach, and mixing of different paradigms (concepts) and methods and methodologies, for example sociological, geographical, psychological paradigms and methods, which helps researchers to avoid a subjective approach. Researchers tend to borrow particular techniques from different disciplines used in clinic settings (health care and leisure studies), and business environment. These techniques can be valuable (especially in the first stages of image research for branding and imply a qualitative research approach. The disciplinary mosaic is one typical characteristic of branding research.

The dual approach to research requires the implementation of such quantitative structured methods (primary research) as survey, Lickert scale, and semantic differential, which allow researchers to explore image and attitude perception among visitors (demand side) and a qualitative approach using unstructured methods for research of attitudes of potential visitors, visitors, and post-visitors. Such methods include in-depth interviews, focus groups, projective techniques, repertory grid techniques, content analysis, case studies, clustering methods, and triangulation techniques.

Triangulation allows the implication of common ontology and epistemology. However, such authors as Fielding and Fielding (1986) have questioned the validity of the results obtained by researchers using the triangulation techniques. Davies (2003) added that the picture might be more complete, but definitely not more objective. The complementarity of quantitative and qualitative data obtained through a combination of research techniques of research has been praised by Uysal and Crompton (1985), Opperman (1995). In qualitative and quantitative research, the timing and order of methods is important. Miller and Crabtree (1994) suggested the simultaneous use of both approaches (concurrent design possibility), with the use of qualitative method first and

quantitative methods later (sequential approach).

Content analysis is suitable for the initiation of research, especially more comprehensive empirical research. It involves the analysis of secondary data, such as academic journals and books on branding, conference materials, documents, marketing materials, websites, guidebooks, brochures, academic sources, government materials, statistical information, and photographs. Most important seems to be a combination of verbal and visual techniques, for example the use of photographic media. Bryman and Bell (2007) agreed that photographs are suitable also for interviews. Content analysis method can help researchers avoid the one-sided visioning by respecting different stances. Content analysis also uses the results of primary research to evaluate of the research outcomes of focus group research, consumer surveys, and Dephi methods in branding. Jenkins (1999) noted that by the implication this methods categorization process needs to be transparent, and the subjectivity of a researcher and his personal impact on the research must be avoided. Evaluation of primary research results involves various methods of coding and measuring of reliability. Authors such as Oppermann (1995) and Pearce (2001) discussed the possible use of an innovative approach to collecting data and measurements, which does not mean simply combining quantitative and qualitative techniques, but the improved coding and measurement of data. Crossvalidation and linkage between systematic planning and collection methods (primary and secondary data) have been stressed by Opperman (1995) and Davies (2003).

A method of using case studies in a mixed method approach is also common in branding research. The majority of authors of case studies agreed that just as important as the creation of brands, is the ability to see a holistic picture of it, for example the image in gestalt. In the study of images, this fact is crucial because it allows researchers to monitor the consonance of specific branding constructs with the images created in the minds of consumers.

For case studies from a multicultural perspective Mullen (1995) recommended the application of

standardized constructs and scales valid in different settings. Thus, brand measurement techniques could be applied as the implication of international measures of brand equity for the assessment of multivariate attitudes. However, applying standardized constructs in primary research might be a challenge because the cultural specifics of countries differ, which complicates the application of standard scales or models. Some authors, including (Blain, Levy & Ritchie, 2005; Henderson, 2007; Ekinci & Hosany, 2006) recommended such methods as cultural psychology for the improvement of research results.

The case study method brings variable results, and different contrasting case might be studied similarly (Veal, 1992). The advantage of the case study method is the existence of plentiful data sources and the creation of a vivid picture of a scene. Case study research can be conducted in multiple stages. For example, in later stages case study research can be either a survey based on a random sample dispersed in the destination among visitors, or focus-group interviews.

In addition to the structured or semi-structured interviews, Laws, Scott and Parfitt (2002), recommend an indirect (projective) approach to motivation measurement, which has also been discussed by Kelly (1955), and Reilly (1990). Projective techniques are common in branding research, and the authors Westwood, Morgan, Pritchard and Ineson (1999) advised to use attitudinal scaling and conceptual mapping. The indirect (projective) approach consists of four stages that construct a matrix: selection, rating of elements, cluster analysis and evaluation of results (comparison of the constructed and real world elements).

A world of construction is rather subjective, and as Crotty (2003) concluded in this subjective constructionism or constructivism approach “we do not create meaning; we construct meaning” (p. 44), thus the world has been constructed (Berger and Luckmann, 1967).

Hankinson (2004) discussed some specific problems with the use of conventional image measurement techniques in branding image research. These problems include the measurement of images and dispute about

blending of methods between positivists and constructivists. Hankinson (2004) admitted some subjectivity by the implication of an open ended approach to the interviews; however, the use of constructed questionnaires means to approach the research from the researcher's point of view. In order to overcome this constrain, primary research should consist of two stages (structured and unstructured). Hankinson recommends in-depth interviews and structured questionnaires.

In the case of destination branding, grasping the complex character of destinations with the more or less compound elements and simultaneously evolving characteristic of meanings for visitors as well as for a destination, might be a challenge. Crotty (2003) recommended a combination of objective and subjective approach, an approach used in constructionism. Thus, the methods and methodologies recommended in constructionism or constructivism (individual stance) are suitable for branding research; however the type of question is a decisive characteristic for a theoretical perspective (post-positivism, interpretivism).

Different cultural backgrounds for consumers in tourism destinations might influence evaluation of a destination's qualities, consumers' expectations, the process of matching expectations with tourism destination reality. For this reason, Crotty (2003, p. 64) added that “we need to recognize that different people may well inhabit quite different worlds. Their different worlds constitute for them diverse ways of knowing, distinguishable sets of meanings, separate realities.” Consequently, branding strategies might be slightly different for different cultural groups, and there might be difference between the strategies used for domestic and international markets”, as developed in the studies of Hofstede (1980).

In order to overcome subjectivity, Crotty (2003, p. 48) suggests that researchers turn “phenomenology from a study of phenomena as the immediate objects of experience into a study of experiencing individuals.” The individual experiences might be a valuable source of research information in branding, especially for the construction of further measurement and research tools used in questionnaires, Lickert

scale measurements and semantic differential measurements.

In branding, especially for the application of branding concepts as brand equity (models), but also for brand identity and personality concepts, a researcher has to be extremely creative in the research approach and use a mixture of different methods, if possible. Crotty (2003) called such researchers, the “bricoleurs” who need to be real “inventors” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 51) capable of measuring branding image and customer awareness, but also of understanding the type of image or attributes visitors expect. In some cases, the measuring techniques in primary research and especially the construct of the questionnaires do not allow researchers to obtain useful information, and the results might be biased, subjective, or not applicable.

In order to capture a holistic image, Echtner, Ritchie (1991) and Jenkins (1999) advised the use of structured and unstructured methods. A dominant character of structured methods, such as Lickert scale measurement and semantic differential in the image research, is the need for supplementation by unstructured techniques such as content analysis, repertory grid analysis, focus groups, or unstructured surveys.

In some disciplines, for example in the environmental studies, in image research is used a mixture of methods, for instance visual effects as photographs and maps. The qualitative methods implementation has been critically approached and also criticized for their biased feature, which might be an obstacle for two independent researchers to achieve similar outcomes (Walmsley, Young, 1988). To avoid this complication, Walmsley and Young (1988) recommend to implement the technique of repertory grid analysis (RGA) as a method of elicitation. The advantage of RGA is that it allows the implementation of both - parametric and non-parametric statistical analysis, for instance, factor analysis and idiographic measure.

One efficient research method recommended in qualitative research is method of construct elicitation, for example the triadic method, which is based on the choice of three elements constructed specifically for research. This type of method applies the implementation of repertory

grid techniques. Repertory grid techniques are used in clinical settings, in business research, health care studies, leisure studies (Boterril & Crompton, 1987), and tourism research (Embacher et al, 1989).

The method was originally used in clinical psychology, and its ability to capture people’s perception of destination images constitutes its advantage in branding research. RGA method can be implemented in different ways, for example in a triadic method, or full-context form, and the methodology might be factor analysis or content analysis. For example, in research on brand equity the differences between individual and holistic constructs may be more fairly easily reconciled and analyzed. Interestingly, the method of repertory grid analysis in combination with structured interviews allows blending of qualitative and quantitative analysis because the results of the qualitative research can be further used in the quantitative methods approach, especially in the second phase. Typical is the Lickert scale method (five to seven-point) or semantic differential. The method is useful for researchers wanting to define a positioning strategy and segmentation. In branding, positioning and segmentation are important concepts of the tourism destination competitiveness and improve the effectiveness of marketing strategies.

The authors Pritchard and Havitz (2006) discussed one method that could be useful in branding research - importance-performance analysis (IPA). This method has long been known as it is used for evaluation of consumer preferences (Martilla & James, 1977). Pritchard and Havitz (2006) explained the application of the method, based on Crompton and Duray (1985) who recommended its use as “a three-step process for developing attitude rating scales and collecting and assessing evaluative information” (p. 27).

This approach allows researchers to apply qualitative and quantitative research methods and to allow a holistic view. The process consists of three parts – empirical research (literature, secondary data sources – documents), primary data sources – surveys, and Lickert scale implication (primary research) in measuring the level of importance of the particular attributes.



Importance-performance analysis, discussed by Pritchard and Havitz (2006), offers valuable insights on the new approach of the measurement of attributes of brand equity.

## Conclusion

The competitive and innovative developments by the end of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century highlighted emerging streams as the importance of knowledge and knowledge economy and the experience economy as well. Knowledge economy is embedded in the codified and tacit abilities of humans, but also in other forms of knowledge, for example a cultural knowledge. In tourism, new post-Fordist development embraced a growth of global forces, rivalry among tourism destinations offering similar comparative advantage for more educated and sophisticated consumers. New paradigmatic approach has been applied in the studies of tourism competitiveness and innovations due to the growing need to introduce new managerial and marketing approaches. The consumer behavior and experience economy approach are dominant paradigms of marketing and strategic management in tourism.

In practical settings of tourism, tourism destinations started to apply strategic partnership approach, methods interconnecting

companies not only on a base of location, for instance clustering methods. Visioning, strategic planning, and management became more common in successful tourism destinations. Lack of knowledge of competitiveness and innovation in service sector, which is predominant in tourism destination product offer, could be an impulse for the further research, not only as the interest of service quality and benchmarking (supply side), but also from a perspective of consumers. Global environmental, social, political and economic changes, and negative signs, especially in the last decade, significantly influenced competitiveness of tourism and initiated innovative approaches and changes in tourism policy, management, and environmental protection. For this reason, tourism as a studied discipline and tourism in practical field had to respect continual changes and shifts in the paradigmatic approaches and the article discusses these shifts. The focus was especially on tourism destination branding research because branding is one of the possible innovative approach of tourism and the creator of added value for tourism destinations. For this reason, understanding of branding and brand management in tourism from practical and theoretical side might be useful for the improvement of competitiveness of tourism destinations.

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## Contents

Encounters13 Conference: Passion, Flow & Transformation.....6 Annica Isacsson	
Developing Passion and Risk Taking-Pedagogy .....7 Heli Potinkara, Tarja Römer-Paakkanen, Maija Suonpää & Suvi Kiviniemi	
Teams as a Tool for Regional Innovations in Professional Education.....19 Soile Juujärvi & Kaija Pessa	
Enhanced Communication by Multi-Voiced Trialog - Impressions from Project's First Cycles .....30 Ikali Karvinen, Eva Laine, Ann-Marie Suvisaari & Tarja Kantola	
Inquiry Learning in Practice - Information Sharing Among First Semester Tourism Students and Supervisors .....39 Annika Konttinen & Niina Moilanen	
Inquiry Learning and Team Leadership at Porvoo Campus .....50 Evariste Habiyakare & Johanna Heinonen	
Methodological Approaches to Branding with a Focus on Tourism as a Process of Change and Innovation .....62 Marica Mazurek	
Presenting Porvoo Campus - Creating Business, Tourism and Wellness.....76	

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