



Cultural Mentoring

A SKILL2E Related Approach

Jannica Bergman

Degree Thesis
Bachelor's Degree in Tourism
2012

DEGREE THESIS	
Arcada	
Degree Programme:	Tourism
Identification number:	3638
Author:	Jannica Bergman
Title:	Cultural Mentoring – A SKILL2E Related Approach
Supervisor (Arcada):	Susanna Fabricius
Commissioned by:	SKILL2E
<p>The world attracts more and more students and nowadays it is normal to travel abroad for an internship. Exciting adventures and international work experience are obvious positive effects, but the fact is that culture related issues arise. The European Commission for Education and Learning funds SKILL2E, a project that among all strives to minimize problems related to cultural misunderstandings and one of the main goals of the project is to create a cultural mentoring program for students in universities. The key word is international cooperation and the target is to build a program beneficial for all stakeholders: students, universities and enterprises providing internship possibilities. By interviewing three students with international work experience and investigating previous mentoring researches will this thesis seek answers to what students see as an ideal mentor, what the tasks of a mentor should be and what kind of mentoring relationships leads to the best outcome. The research is supported by a theoretical framework, addressing cultures, working abroad and mentoring. The results of this research show that a mentor's gender and age are irrelevant for students and the focus should rather be on the mentor's qualities. Based on the interviews and previous research, students want a mentor acting like a role model they can relate to and build a strong relationship with. The research also found that an informal mentoring relationship is most beneficial from a student's point of view. The research focuses on cross-cultural experiences and will therefore not take any in-country subcultures in consideration.</p>	
Keywords:	culture, mentoring, organizational cultures, work abroad, internship, SKILL2E
Number of pages:	56 + 22
Language:	English
Date of acceptance:	12.6.2012

EXAMENSARBETE	
Arcada	
Utbildningsprogram:	Turism
Identifikationsnummer:	3638
Författare:	Jannica Bergman
Arbetets namn:	Cultural Mentoring – A SKILL2E Related Approach
Handledare (Arcada):	Susanna Fabricius
Uppdragsgivare:	SKILL2E
<p>Världen blir allt intressantare och numera är det inte ovanligt för studeranden att åka utomlands för arbetspraktik. Förutom de självklara positiva effekterna, såsom internationell arbetserfarenhet och spännande upplevelser, hämtar fenomenet med sig kulturrelaterade problem. För att minska missförstånd som orsakats av okunskap i kulturer har det av Europeiska kommissionen finansiellt stödda projektet SKILL2E som avser att bland annat skapa ett kulturellt mentorskapsprogram för studerande i högskolor. Internationellt samarbete är projektets nyckelord och det strävar till att skapa ett resultat som är fördelaktigt för alla parter: studeranden, högskolor och företag som erbjuder på praktikmöjligheter. Med hjälp av intervjuer med studeranden som har internationell arbetserfarenhet och en skrivbordsundersökning i redan utförda mentorskapsundersökningar kommer detta examensarbete att från en studerandes synvinkel granska hurdan en ideal mentor är, vad dess viktigaste uppgifter är och hurdan mentorskapsförhållande leder till det bästa resultatet. Undersökningen stöds dessutom av en teoretisk referensram som behandlar kulturer, utlandsarbete och mentorskap. Resultatet visar att ålder och kön är irrelevanta faktorer vid val av en mentor. Viktigare är att studeranden har möjligheten att skapa ett starkt förhållande med sin mentor, känner att hon eller han har något gemensamt med sin mentor och att denne upplevs som en stödjande rollmodell. På basen av intervjuerna och tidigare undersökningar i ämnet upplevs ett informellt mentorförhållande som den lönsammaste modellen. Undersökningen fokuserar på upplevelser i mångkulturell kontext och kommer inte att ta möjliga subkulturer i ett land i beaktande.</p>	
Nyckelord:	kultur, mentorskap, organisationskulturer, utlandsarbete, praktik, SKILL2E
Sidantal:	56 + 22
Språk:	engelska
Datum för godkännande:	12.6.2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 Questioning the research	7
1.2 Aim of the thesis, limitations and methods	7
2 CULTURE	9
2.1 Categorizing cultures	11
2.2 Stereotypes and cultural prejudice	14
2.3 Culture chock – adjustment and adaptation	15
3 COMMUNICATION	19
3.1 Verbal and nonverbal communication	19
3.2 Styles of communication	20
4 WORKING ABROAD	22
4.1 Organizational cultures	22
4.2 Intercultural Development Continuum	24
5 MENTORING	26
5.1 The aim of mentoring	27
5.2 Skills of a mentor	28
5.3 Previous research	29
6 SUMMARY OF THE THEORIES	32
7 METHODOLOGY	34
7.1 Qualitative vs. quantitative research	35
7.2 Choice of method	36
7.3 The interview guide	37
7.4 The interviews	38
8 RESEARCH RESULTS	39

8.1 Cultural differences	39
8.2 Personalities of the students	44
8.3 The mentoring process	45
9 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	47
9.1 Validity, reliability and improvements	50
9.2 Suggestions for further research	51
REFERENCES	53
APPENDICES	57
Appendix 1: Interview guide for the unstructured interviews	57
Appendix 2: Interview 1	59
Appendix 3: Interview 2.....	67
Appendix 4: Interview 3.....	73

FIGURES

Figure 1 Hofstede's view of a culture, "The onion"	10
Figure 2 The stages of culture chock according to Beamer & Varner.....	16
Figure 3 Schein's view on the layers in an organizational culture.....	24
Figure 4 The five stages of IDC.....	25
Figure 5 The values of Finland and Turkey.....	40
Figure 6 The values of Finland and India.....	41
Figure 7 The values of Germany and Austria.....	42

1 INTRODUCTION

The demand of multicultural workforce seems to be constantly growing worldwide as a result of globalization. Especially youngsters have during the past years grown to show a strong interest to make an internship in a foreign country and to enable this; many universities provide internship opportunities in other countries as a part of the students' compulsory studies. More and more students are willing to take this opportunity to explore the world and learn about cultures different from what they grew up in or are most familiar with. This can, at least partly, be explained by the grown level of curiosity that currently embraces the world but the importance of social media should not be forgotten. Many internet based communication systems allow people to build relationships regardless of where they are physically located.

However, stepping on foreign soil and diving into a new culture is not always as great as it might sound at first. The incomer might face difficulties with the living habits, communication and norms, to name a few, and to ease this level of anxiety related to the issues, the SKILL2E project is developing a cultural mentoring program. The aim of this program, funded by the European Commission for Education and Learning, is among all to define the term cultural mentor, such as what it in practice means and what qualities a mentor should possess, and research in the benefits of a student having a mentor at work. A hand-on handbook of a mentor's skills and abilities is a goal. An assessment tool for measuring a person's intercultural competence is also under construction. SKILL2E strives to strengthen the cooperation with universities and enterprises in order to make the decision of going abroad for a period of time easier for students. (SKILL2E 2012.)

The final objective of the project is to involve universities, students and enterprises in an outcome that is beneficial for all stakeholders (SKILL2E 2012). Students' decision to go abroad would be easier if they knew a mentor guided them during their stay, universities would benefit from students' experience abroad and foreign enterprises could utilize the intercultural workforce provided to them through this project. All parties gain valuable knowledge from different cultural aspects and can use them when making plans for the future.

All in all, globalization is the key word for tomorrow's world and international work experience is worth investing in.

I was offered this thesis subject as a continuation of a culture course related task. My thesis supervisor, and the lecturer of the culture course, is personally involved in the SKILL2E project and asked if I wanted to continue researching in cultural mentoring. Foreign languages, cultures and travelling are very important for me, which is why I decided to accept her offer. As I have finished an internship abroad too, I really wanted to immerse myself in this subject so that I could ease other students' stays overseas. A cultural mentor is something I wish I had during the stay. My wish is to bring up cultural difficulties and engage people in seeking solutions to them.

1.1 Questioning the research

Even if the mentoring process already is quite planned on a theoretical level, several practical questions need to be answered, especially when dealing with students travelling abroad for work. Among them the most important one: what exactly are the mentor's tasks? As a following question to this would be, how would the student in reality benefit from a mentor? It is also important to consider how a mentor should be selected, i.e. what the mentor's characteristics should be, and what know-how he or she should possess in order to provide the needed assistance in cross-cultural matters.

In addition to these, the importance of cultural awareness, including the term in general but also how a culture is formed and what it includes, are necessary for the understanding of cultural dilemmas. Also, gaining knowledge in organizational cultures and their behavior is required as these are closely linked to the subject.

1.2 Aim of the thesis, limitations and methods

Even though the mentor is one of the vital persons when establishing a program like this, it is also important to note the student when planning it. The aim of this thesis is to define what a cultural mentor in practice should do, what type of a person he or she should be and what type of mentoring relationship leads to the most beneficial outcome.

The author will interview three students who are currently working or have worked abroad during the year of 2012. The aim is to discover what kind of experiences they had, how they would have benefited from having a mentor and what in their opinion an ideal mentor is. In addition, the author will get acquainted with several previous researches of mentoring in practice to gain useful information for the SKILL2E project.

SKILL2E is working on an international level and cross-cultural in this research comprises studies about different countries' cultures, so this research will therefore not take any in-country subcultures in consideration. The material used in the theoretic framework is limited to culture, working abroad and mentoring. The author has aimed at using fresh and reliable sources, preferably academic texts, books and official websites all either published or updated in the 21st Century.

2 CULTURE

Culture is a complete view on the world and like a mind map of reality that individuals take for granted; it is rarely examined and not discussed by the members of a society. It consists of behavior patterns, norms and values, but also attitudes and material objects. A person's genes do not include these assumptions of a culture, but the person will from early childhood learn how one should behave, what is important and how to act in different situations. Even though the basic patterns in a culture are learned from birth, or even before according to some, these appear only when necessary. A member of a society is not trapped in a culture, since cultures are also learnable later on in life and some people find it easy to move among the diversity of cultures. To do this, it is essential to understand different cultures and the variances in them. (Beamer & Varner 2008 p. 5-7, Mitchell 2000 p. 4.)

Linda Beamer and Iris Varner (2008) describe a culture as an operating system: without the operating environment Windows, a computer would not work. A culture enables information to process according to our environment, like applications on a computer. A human's brain can be seen as the hardware, processing different software programs. Furthermore, Beamer and Varner state that all people see the world through different windows, which leads to a culture being built. The windows vary from an individual to an individual but there are some similarities between the members of a culture. (Beamer & Varner 2008 p. 5, Mitchell 2000 p. 4.)

According to Geert Hofstede (see de Mooij p. 52), a culture's manifestations can be portrayed as an onion with different layers (see Figure 1). Symbols, such as pictures, gestures and words, are the outermost layer of the onion and these are rapidly changing in the culture: new symbols are constantly developed and old ones disappear just as fast. Heroes on the other hand, that form the second layer, tend to stay the same for a longer period of time. A culture sees a hero as highly appreciated, giving it an important meaning often used as a base for behavior patterns. The third layer consists of rituals significant to the culture. Taking football as an example: the way the players greet each other is a ritual that differs radically depending on where the game is played. American players act differently compared to their European

colleagues. All three layers of the onion are classified as expressions of a culture and they are visible to an outsider of the group. However, the core of the onion is formed of the culture's values, which are sometimes hard to define. Values are not visible on the outside and are often difficult to explain to someone new entering a culture. (de Mooij 2010 p. 52.)

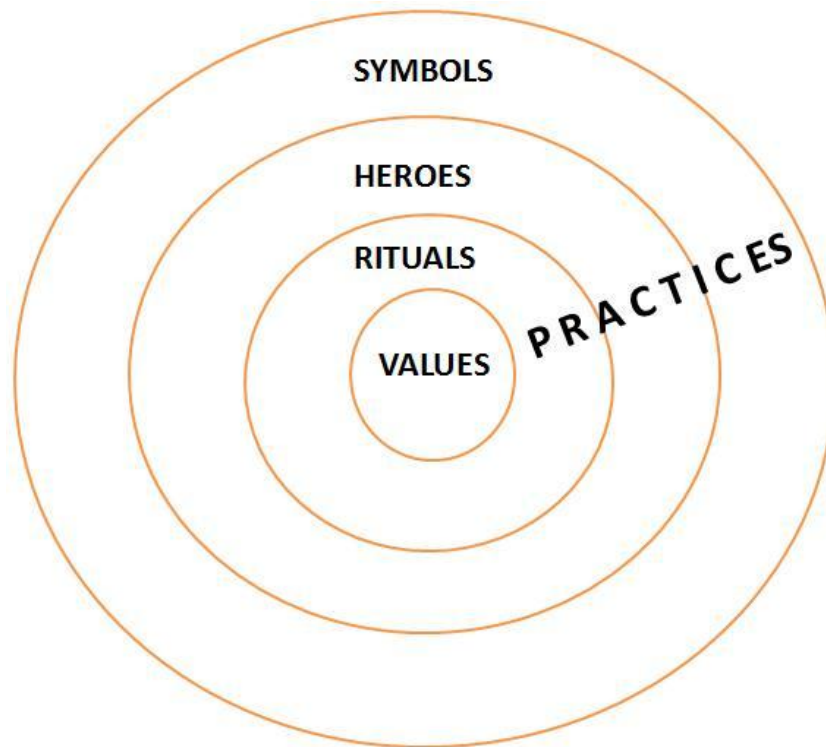


Figure 3 Hofstede's view of a culture, "The onion". (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, p. 7. Modified by the author)

Professors Rumina Rai and Kishwar Panna (2010) state, that a culture is formed by three components. A culture trait can be something as small as the ritual of breaking the glass at Jewish weddings and it can be both material and nonmaterial, e.g. an unwritten code how to behave at a wedding. This is the smallest bit of a culture and cannot be further divided, unlike a culture complex, which consists of several aspects combined to a complex pattern. A wedding is, again as an example, in its whole a culture complex consisting of a number of traits. Similar culture complexes form culture patterns functioning as a base of similar behavior. Continuing with a wedding as an example, together with other family related institutions it forms a culture pattern. (Rai & Panna 2010 p. 18.)

Rai and Panna (2010) further say that cultures consist of material and nonmaterial parts. Material parts of a culture are formed of food, architecture, art and other man-made things we are able to observe and study. These are often traditional links to the members of the society but evolve faster than nonmaterial cultures. Norms, attitudes and values are nonmaterial and not sensitive to change. Because these parts of a culture are significantly different, it is inevitable that a gap is formed, called a culture lag. Taking the Indian culture as an example, the material parts including technology are rapidly changing, while nonmaterial parts of the culture, such as religion, stay the same. (Rai & Panna 2010 p. 47-51.)

2.1 Categorizing cultures

According to findings by Hampden-Turner et al. (2000), cultures are actually mirror images of one another. As an example, the Western cultures read from left to right while in Asia the opposite, from right to left. The same applies to driving vehicles; in some countries you drive on the left, in some on the right. Based on this theory of mirror images, researchers categorize cultures with the help of dimensions describing the cultures' values. The comparison of cultures can be done by looking at the culture's attitudes on time, humanity, power distance and uncertainty avoidance, to name a few. (Hampden-Turner et al 2000 p. 1-2.)

How a culture accepts and supports differences can be measured with the universalism versus particularism dilemma. Cultures that are built on laws, rules and generalizations are called universalistic, meaning group members should be treated similarly. If a culture makes exceptions in how people are treated and respects differences in individuals, it is considered to be a particularistic culture. To illustrate the difference, one can imagine plain hen's eggs in a box, representing the universal view, and a uniquely decorated Fabergé egg: a universalistic culture seeks for similarities in individuals and forms groups while particularistic ones appreciate an individual's selfhood. (Hampden-Turner et al. 2000 p. 13-14.)

Cultures can also be classed based on how they value individuality. Is the personal success and freedom more important than a group's common memories, heritage to the family and group pride? Competition, self-fulfillment and an individual's freedom characterizes an individual culture whereas cooperation and concern of family and friends are important in collectivistic cultures. It is important to understand that individualistic cultures do not dismiss

charity, as an example, nor should one believe that collectivistic cultures underrate individuals' desires. Instead, individualism means that one person's contribution and voluntariness lead to a group's welfare. On the other hand, collectivism sees a group's welfare as a result of shared knowledge within the members. (Hampden-Turner et al. 2000 p. 68-69.)

How one relates to a person's status defines whether he or she belongs to an achieving or an ascribing culture. Winning a game, getting promoted at work and doing well in a test are important goals in ascribing cultures. A person's status is considered to be a privilege and a genetic feature and therefore celebrities' children are treated similarly as their parents, even though they have not personally achieved anything special. Also achieving cultures believe that personal achievement itself is important, but in the end it does not matter who wins. If a neighbor runs faster than you, are you a better person if you win him or her in a contest? Cultures who value achievement would answer no to this question. (Hampden-Turner et al. 2000 p. 189-191.)

Hierarchies and opinions about statuses differ, sometimes radically, depending on which culture is topical. When hierarchal differences are unfamiliar to one, clashes leading to confusion and misunderstandings are inevitable. As an example, the idea of hierarchy is very different in America and Asia. An American businessman visited family friends in Singapore and friendly shook both the host's and his wife's hand. Then, out of politeness, he decided to shake the Thai maid's hand as well, which led to her running away upset and crying. The explanation to this lies in the belief of a foreigner automatically being of a higher status than a maid, therefore it is unacceptable for the American and the Thai to shake hands. This divide is problematic if not understood and could lead to fatal errors in the world of business. (Gesteland 2005 p. 50.)

Where does virtue originate from? Are our souls and core beliefs the source or is it something outside of us? Cultures that believe virtue builds up of a person's inside are called inner-directive cultures. People having a soul and that everyone deep down knows what action is right and what is wrong are basic beliefs in these cultures. In contrast, outer-directive cultures believe that our surroundings grant virtue and nature, with all its aesthetic features, is the breaking force. People accept that they are led in life with the help of an outer source. When two people from contrary cultures meet in a war, the inner-directive one usually takes control

to manage the anxiety descended from the inside while the outer-directive individual tries to adjust to the circumstances. (Hampden-Turner et al. 2000 p. 234-235.)

Time is abstract. It cannot be seen or heard, touched or smelled. Yet it plays a crucial role in all cultures no matter which one is referred to. However, the relation to time differs significantly from culture to culture. The sequential view of time means that time is money and once it is gone, there is absolutely nothing left. Work cannot be postponed for tomorrow since one should see tasks as “once in a lifetime” experiences that will never be repeated. The contrary view is synchronized time, where life runs in circles and happenings reoccur. There is no urgent need to finish something today since tomorrow is regarded as a new possibility. Cultures can be measured by asking the participants from different cultures to draw circles, representing the past, the present and the future. According to a yearly test by Hampden-Turner et al., respondents from the United States draw three circles carefully aligned representing their sequential view, while the Japanese draw a synchronized picture of three merging circles. The result illustrates the cultures’ differences what comes to the view of time. (Hampden-Turner et al. 2000 p. 295-297.)

The last dimension pair is specificity versus diffuseness. In nature these are complimentary and connected to each other but cultures differ based on how precisely they put an end on something and how much they tolerate diffusive, complex patterns put together to configurations. High toleration means that the culture is diffuse, while a desire to break things up to small pieces and form clarity are characteristics of a specific culture. (Hampden-Turner et al. 2000 p. 123.)

In addition to Hampden-Turner’s and Fons Trompenaars’ contrary cultural pairs, cultures can be classified according to Geert Hofstede’s five cultural dimensions. MAS, short for masculinity and femininity, describe a culture’s view on role distribution within the society. Masculine cultures favor competition and assertiveness while feminine cultures are modest, caring and soft. Uncertainty avoidance, or UAI, on the other hand reflects the level of tolerance regarding uncertain situations. Cultures who feel uncertainty tend to build up a social system with strict laws and safety systems to avoid any unwanted happenings, while opposite cultures feel more relaxed about the future. (Hofstede 2011.)

In cultures where the boss in an enterprise is very reachable and is regarded as somewhat of a team member a low power distance exists. Hofstede means that the gap between a leader and a follower is narrow when the society belongs to a low power distance culture and vice versa. The power distance index (PDI) refers to which extent the culture tolerates inequality between hierarchal higher and lower members. If a culture points out one single person's achievements instead of a group's, it is, according to Hofstede's individualism (IDV) dimension, considered an individualistic culture. In these cultures persons should look after themselves and the closest family members; the society or group is not as important. A collectivistic culture is the opposite, where a group's needs are put ahead the individual's and the core family is usually a lot wider than in individualistic societies, consisting of aunts, uncles, cousins and other relatives. (Hofstede 2011.)

Upon these four dimensions, Hofstede decided to add another fifth dimension. He defined a difference in cultures' view on making plans. Short-term oriented cultures tend not to worry about the future but focuses on what is currently relevant. Cultures which make plans for years ahead are called long-term oriented cultures, and their members usually want to ensure that they are secured in the future by taking insurances and in other ways avoid coming across unexpected events. (Hofstede 2011.)

2.2 Stereotypes and cultural prejudice

Forming a simplified picture of a culture and its members based on certain characteristics is called stereotyping. Germans are serious, Japanese shy and group-oriented and French food lovers and romantic, to list a few. This process is an extremely short version of focusing on a culture and researching its uniqueness; stereotyping a culture's members is judging the whole group based on one person's behavior, values, beliefs et cetera. These sometime false mental images help to cope with the reality. (Mitchell 2000 p. 28.)

Even though stereotypes are usually considered a negative phenomenon, there are in fact advantages with stereotyping. Of course the process applies the best on large groups, such as nationalities, but can be used as a guideline of a certain society's behavior. As an example, when travelling abroad for a business meeting, the negotiator from the host culture will most likely fit the general stereotypic image of it rather than be a true exception. This allows the

visitor to prepare him or herself for the meeting and to gain knowledge of the culture and its members in advance, minimizing misunderstandings. (Mitchell 2000 p. 28.)

The unknown has always been interesting for human beings. However, for some the unknown evokes hostile reactions and harsh opinions because they feel anxiety and fright towards it. Saying generalizations, e.g. Irish get easily angry or Chinese are emotionally cold, means that one is judging a culture and its members based on usually just one experience. Prejudice sometimes evokes myths, such as a dialect referring to not being intelligent. It is often thoughtless and harmless, but can create extremely hostile reactions towards one or many groups based on gender, age, sexuality or ethnicity. Taking racial matters as an example, prejudice is a combined whole of negative stereotypes related to for example a person's color of skin, leading to feelings of ranking oneself superior when having a different skin tone. Unfortunately prejudice is strongly connected to societies influencing at least role building, giving an unhealthy base for a truly functioning, multicultural society. This result is clearly visible for example in the USA, where African-American people still struggle to fight against hard prejudice based on their skin tone. Eventually, when taking stronger actions, prejudice turns into racism. Noting that these terms are not interchangeable is crucial, since prejudice is, according to Jones (1972), one person's view while racism as a term is used when one person's idea spreads and creates groups of people thinking alike. (Johnson 2008 p. 102, Beamer & Varner 2008 p. 26-27, Guirdham 2005 p. 184-185.)

2.3 Culture chock – adjustment and adaptation

When moving abroad, a sojourner will inevitably face a culture chock, which in reality is not a well describing term since the feelings of a culture chock appear slowly, not as a single jolt. Everything familiar at home – language, food, norms – suddenly fades away and turns into unfamiliar surroundings. Both psychological and physical feelings emerge when an individual immerses herself in a culture and symptoms such as irritation, rigidity, loneliness and depression are common due to the high number of adjustments that are necessary. The level of the chock can vary from feeling homesick to completely isolate oneself from the host culture and the severity depends on the individual's knowledge in the host language, knowing how to act in different situations and the level of loneliness, to name a few. (Beamer & Varner 2008 p. 16, Guirdham 2005 p. 271-273, Mitchell 2000 p. 34.)

Culture chocks can be divided into four stages (see Figure 2) and the majority of people working in another culture experience all four stages. There are several terms used for the stages, but Beamer and Varner call the first set of feelings for euphoria. Many travelers leave a culture before they attend the next stage, since this only lasts for no longer than a fortnight, and some do not experience it all during their stay. The euphoric stage means that the host culture appears as exciting and fascinating, like a new adventure. However, reality will sooner or later strike and the illusion of an impeccable life breaks. The individual moves on to the sometimes months long second stage, called disillusionment, and the most common definition of a culture chock. During the second stage feelings like not knowing what to not know are common and might guide an individual as deep as to depression. The state of disappointment in oneself is inevitable when trying to understand the host culture and making mistakes when doing so. The mind map formed earlier in life is no longer valid and causes dislocation. Many sojourners react heavily during the second stage; dissatisfaction with everything in the host culture is common and many sojourners change in their behavior. Some establish relationships that would be out of the question in one's own culture. In addition to the psychological symptoms, sojourners might also develop physical reactions as a result of distress. Aches of different kind, fatigue, sleeping problems and loss of appetite, are frequent among sojourners. Overcoming all symptoms, both psychological and physical, are important since the second stage defines whether or not the individual will adjust to the host culture or not. (Beamer & Varner 2008 p. 16-17, Guirdham 2005 p. 274.)

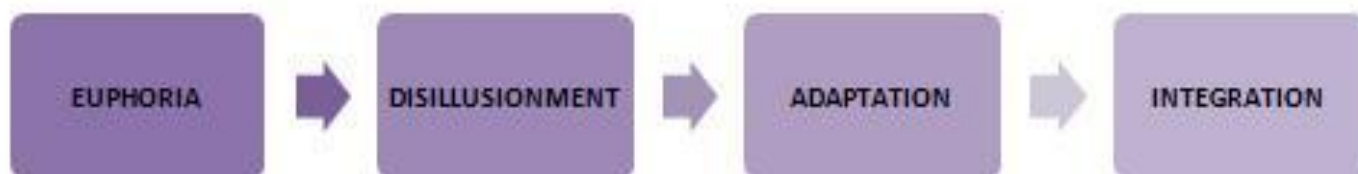


Figure 2 The stages of culture chock according to Beamer & Varner (2008). Made by the author

When a sojourner becomes more aware of the host culture and is able to look at matters from several aspects the cooperation with the host culture's members feels better. This third stage is called adaptation. The integration stage, fourth stage, is often reached when the sojourner's linguistic skills improve and the host culture's basic assumptions and behavior does not appear as off-throwing. An identification process is starting to grow and, despite upcoming difficulties, the sojourner refuses to quit the battle against a culture chock. Beamer and Varner state that most individuals working in a new culture attend all four stages and in fact keep continuously finding themselves in one of the stages. A culture chock is like a cycle, where euphoria leads to disillusionment and so on and the cycle tend to last the whole stay, notwithstanding the length of it (Beamer & Varner 2008 p. 16-18, Guirdham 2005 p. 274.)

Entering a new culture and trying to adapt to new living habits is often difficult and inevitably causes a culture chock. However, there are a number of means to help tackle the symptoms and make the adaptation easier. It is important to stay in contact, by for example calling or writing letters, with friends and family from home and also to keep one updated about what happens in the home country. One can also look for other sojourners and bond with them, but it is important to avoid building up an "us" versus "them", cynical attitude, against the host culture's members, since it can only destroy the outcome of an abroad experience. Instead one should get involved with the hosts and ask them to show the surroundings, it is a question of pride of the own culture. Finding someone to talk to, preferably a host is important since taking care of physical health is one of the corner stones in surviving in a new culture. Writing thoughts in a diary is usually helpful and allows the individual to focus on the most important factors of the experience. The important thing to remember is to understand that culture chocks happen to everyone, no matter the duration of the trip, and utilizing tips on survival will help dealing with the emotions. (Beamer & Varner 2008 p. 18, Mitchell 2000 p. 34.)

When a sojourner returns home, where he or she has been longing to return, it is essential to understand that conditions have changed during his or her time abroad. The sojourner's view on the home culture has most likely changed and complaining about things formerly acceptable occurs. Relatives and close friends usually see this change in the home comer and usually describe him or her as impatient. The returnee on the other hand often feels that no one wants to hear stories about the wonderful time abroad and might feel as a complete

outsider despite surrounded by family members. According to Beamer and Varner, some suggest that the level of reverse culture chock is directly linked to how easy or difficult it has been to adjust to the new host culture: the easier the adjustment, the more severe are the feelings of a reverse culture chock. Peter N Orange (2007) states in his article about reverse culture chock, that deep immersion in the host culture and positive reactions towards it often amplifies a reverse culture chock. (Beamer & Varner 2008 p. 18-19, Orange 2007.)

A reverse culture chock can, like the generally more known culture chock, be divided into four stages, of which the first one starts while the sojourner is still abroad. He or she starts to think about home more often and tries to imagine the return. This first stage is according to Orange called disengagement. Once returned, a euphoric stage is followed. The returnee feels he or she is warmly welcomed and family members and friends often politely listen to stories about the time abroad for a while, but the sojourner soon realizes they are listening half-heartedly and actually prefer to discuss themselves. This, together with feelings of anger towards the home culture, result in alienation: the returnee feels like an outsider although at home. The symptoms are similar to the ones in the second stage of culture chock, i.e. the returnee feels lonely and disorientated. However, these feelings eventually fade away and the returnee gradually adjusts back to the home culture. (Orange 2007.)

When culture chock eventually gives in and a sojourner can start a somewhat normal lifestyle, the acculturation process starts. The word as a term was brought up the first time in the 1930's and was then, and is still, defined as a continuous meet of two cultures resulting in one or both of the cultures evolving. Some aspects of the foreign culture are gradually merged with the other, creating a kind of melting pot. Maintaining healthy family relationships during the acculturation process is important since they help managing the adjustment anxiety. Keeping an eternally open mind and staying positive towards the host culture facilitates the stay. (Moran et al. 2007 p. 281.)

3 COMMUNICATION

The decision to not communicate is impossible, since everything we do or decide to not do is considered forms of communication. Everything has a hidden meaning: silence, a blank face, a glance or a movement and they require decoding of the receiver. All cultures use communication, but the ways to interpret it vary largely. Therefore intercultural communication is considered more difficult. According to Smith & Bond (see Novinger 2001), cultures reflect differently on e.g. how to react in surprising situations or how to relate to an authority. (Nilsson & Waldemarson 2007 p. 130, Novinger 2001 p. 4.)

3.1 Verbal and nonverbal communication

The verbal messages and their content translate in many ways from culture to culture, e.g. a simple phrase of thank you. In Germany thanking an employee for bringing a cup of coffee is polite, while it would be misinterpreted as an action of rudeness in Saudi Arabia, where a thank you needs to be followed with metaphors further emphasizing the importance of the thanking. Also the content in sentences might be translated in a wrong way and cause severe misunderstandings. The translator needs to be aware of cultural and historical backgrounds of sentences to be able to transfer the meaning to the fullest. Taking the French phrase “C’est pa normal” as an example. Directly translated it means “It is not normal” but in reality it can also be understood as something not being acceptable or that someone had no right to do a thing. This example demonstrates the importance of knowing the many alternative translations for a phrase or a word. (Carté & Fox 2008 p. 74.)

It is reasonable to note that cultures using the same language can face trouble when communicating, because cultures using the same communication style can differ drastically. Many aspects influence communication and therefore a Spaniard and a Mexican might necessarily not understand each other completely due to cultural differences. The same applies to the English language: even though it is considered as the lingua franca in the world of business, cultures use the language in very dissimilar ways. (Novinger 2001 p. 7, Carté & Fox 2008 p. 75.)

Researchers suggest that up to three quarters of all communication is nonverbal. How are the messages then transferred? Nonverbal communication can be categorized to subcategories: eye contact and facial expressions (oculesics), gestures and posture (kinesics) and the use of silence. The use of eye contact is different in e.g. Europe and Asia. To look each other in the eyes when checking in to a hotel is a sign of politeness in Finland, while the same action in Japan is rude. Also many facial expressions are similar worldwide, but the use of them is different. A smiling Chinese woman often hides her teeth with her hand since it is not acceptable for a woman to smile with her teeth showing. In contrary, smiles in the United States tend to look forced and insincere, because the way of seeing a smile is unlike the one in e.g. Europe. (Beamer & Varner 2008 p. 203-210, Ting-Toomey 1999 p. 123.)

In addition to the subcategories listed above, also paralanguage is classified as nonverbal communication. Paralanguage consists of small “words” during a conversation lacking a direct meaning. However, members of the same society directly know what these small “words” mean, e.g. “uh”, “hmm”, “er”. (Beamer & Varner 2008 p. 202-203.)

3.2 Styles of communication

Cultures transfer messages in very dissimilar ways. In 1976, Edward Hall (see Ting-Toomey 1999) categorized cultures according to their style of communication. Low-context cultures (hereinafter LC cultures) emphasize the importance of spoken language and favor straight talk with little or no room for interpretation. In LC cultures it is the sender’s responsibility to express oneself clearly enough for the receiver to understand the meaning immediately. Furthermore, the personal characteristics, such as opinions, thoughts and feelings, tend to rule the verbal messages. In comparison to LC cultures, high-context cultures (hereinafter HC cultures) require thoughtful interpretation of the messages. Members of a HC culture highlight the use of nonverbal communication and the receiver is often expected to read between the lines. In order to understand the meaning of a HC culture’s member’s message to the fullest, one needs to pay attention to the context and the nonverbal channels. (Ting-Toomey 1999 p. 100-101.)

The second stylistic pair is direct versus indirect communication and it refers to what extent a person reveals his or her true meaning in the message. In many Western countries the direct

style is common, i.e. what you say is what you mean. This style difference is often the origin for serious misunderstandings when cultures representing opposite styles cross, since the differences vary to a large extent. As an example, a Chinese saying “we might need more time to fix this” interprets to an American as “it will be fixed”. However, the Chinese is actually meaning that he will not be able to fix whatever is broken but, since he is from an indirect culture, fails to express himself directly. (Ting-Toomey 1999 p. 103-105.)

The third style pair is the person-oriented versus the status-oriented style. The person-oriented style emphasizes the respect of personal uniqueness while the status-oriented focuses on the person’s status. Therefore in cultures using the status-oriented style such as Japan and China, the hierarchal difference between the sender and the receiver, e.g. parent-child discussion, is further accentuated by using gestures. Noting the difference in statuses is vital, e.g. when one is travelling in Asia. (Ting-Toomey 1999 p. 106.)

In United States it is normal, if not even expected, to highlight one’s personal achievements while it is close to a taboo in many Asian countries. This difference in the point of view lies in the third style pair, self-enhancement versus self-effacement. United States is categorized in the former style and e.g. China in the latter. Self-effacement cultures are modest and believe that personal achievements are best visible in the behavior, not expressed verbally. (Ting-Toomey 1999 p. 107-109.)

Characteristics associated with a LC culture include individualism, self-face concern, direct communication and linear logic while HC cultures tend to be collectivistic, communicate indirectly, favor a listener-oriented style and have spiral logic. Western countries such as Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Australia and United States are all categorized as LC cultures, while many Eastern countries including Japan, China, Vietnam together with Nigeria and Kuwait are considered high-context countries. (Ting-Toomey 1999 p. 101.)

4 WORKING ABROAD

Can anybody make the decision and go work abroad? Everyone can probably do that, but Susan C. Schneider and Jean-Louis Barsoux (2003) state that a sojourner needs to possess different abilities to be able to function properly when working abroad. The quality often regarded as most essential is interpersonal skills since it enables the person to form relationships but also to transfer experiences to surrounding people, hence linguistic skills important. Getting in contact with coworkers and other individuals from the host culture, no matter the level of language knowledge, is important. Often the effort to try speaking is worth more than being able to express oneself fluently so a strong self-knowledge, to not feel fright to lose face, is important. (Schneider & Barsoux 2003 p. 190-192.)

Motivation to learn and understand, or cultural curiosity, as a third quality is another driving factor. The sojourner must be able to accept the fact that the host culture might not be as easy to handle as thought and respect it, as well as tolerating uncertainty, is yet another ability to possess. Sometimes it is better to let go and immerse oneself, than worry. Humor is considered a coping mechanism and on top of this, it facilitates relationship building. (Schneider & Barsoux 2003 p. 192-194.)

4.1 Organizational cultures

In order to cope in a new workplace abroad, one needs to understand the complexity of organizational cultures and their deeper meaning to the working society. Culture affects the workplace in numerous ways: how the employees work together, what they value and how much responsibility each individual is willing to take. Even if a manager thinks cultures are too soft and should not be implemented in the company, the culture's influence cannot be depreciated. In addition to the impact on the employees, a culture also delivers dimensions to the managerial style in a company, whether it is wanted or not. Managers are, by purpose or not, giving the framework on how to act when at work and in many of the contemporary workplaces an organizational culture is considered vital for the company to function. Despite of knowledge in an existent organizational culture, a deeper understanding in the complexity of the culture is lacking. Therefore Alvesson (2002) suggests that a clear framework,

consisting of a definition of the culture - the meaning to the company and defining symbols - should be brought out in the open to ensure a qualified practice of it. (Guirdham 2005 p. 69, Alvesson 2002 p. 9.)

Geert Hofstede's dimensions of a culture are usually referred to when describing cultural differences at work. The effect of a national culture at work is obvious when looking at companies in different countries. Taking France as an example, generally the manager or leader of a group is the only one with power and this is directly linked to the nation's high score in Hofstede's power distance dimension. (Guirdham 2005 p. 69.)

Alvesson (see Hofstede & Hofstede p. 284) differentiates eight views of an organizational culture. Some companies see the culture as a control mechanism while others consider it as a sign, showing where to go. It can also be highlighted as a sacred cow with people committing to it to the fullest. To the positive views include also seeing it as glue holding the society together and allowing expressing feelings and emotions within the group. Of course, negative views also exist. Some say a culture suffocates people's desire to explore new possibilities and others state that it results in blind spots when innovative ideas are taken for granted. Combining the positive and negative effects, some mean that an organizational culture raises conflicts and supports the division of the employees explaining the ambivalence. No matter the personal view on an organizational culture, Rollinson (2005) says that these cultures consist of a complexity of unwritten patterns, codes and behavior systems so vital for the company's employees that they are continuously taught to newcomers as the only ways to behave, think and feel. The construction of the culture is based on the original employees and tends to evolve during time when new employees enter the culture (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005, Rollinson 2005 p. 538, Buchanan & Huczynski 2004 p. 644.)

An organizational culture can like a culture be divided into layers, but the content of these is different. In 1990, Edgar Schein (see Rollinson 2008) presented the idea of the culture as a pattern, coded in the members' minds in everyday thinking. The idea is that the content of an organizational culture is so obvious that it is taken for granted without requirements of constant pondering. Schein's idea can be illustrated as an orange, consisting of two layers and a core. The outermost layer is visible to an outsider and is formed of artefacts. These can include e.g. working uniforms, ceremonies, taboos and myths and they create uniformity within the employees. Under the artefacts lie values and beliefs that the company possesses.

These vary from organization to organization but trust, confidentiality and basis of reward are commonly the most important ones. The orange's core, which cannot be seen by outsiders, symbolizes the deepest level in an organizational culture and consists of basic assumptions. This includes sensitive subjects never to be discussed with others due to the delicate nature, such as questions of respect, decision making and the organization's view on competition and collaboration. (Rollinson 2008 p. 592-593.)

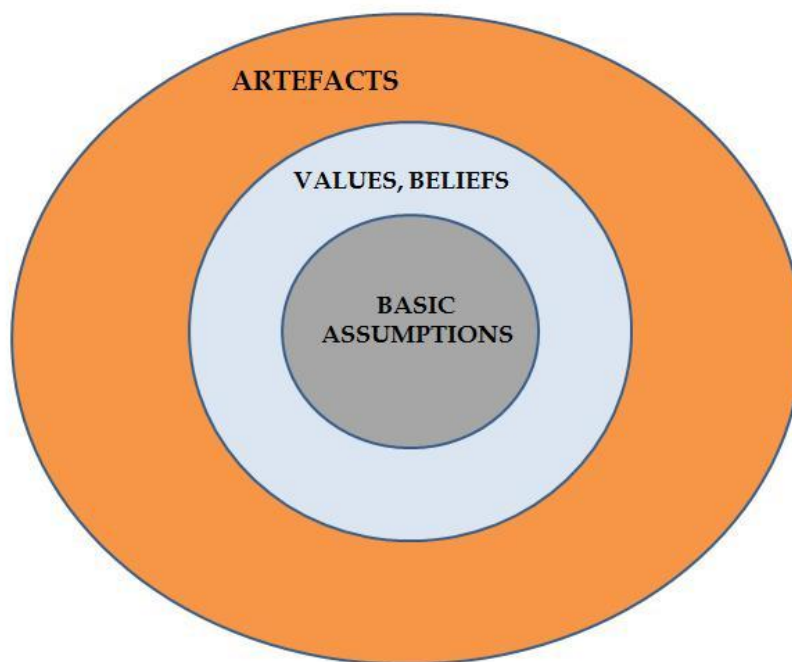


Figure 3 Schein's view on the layers in an organizational culture (Rollinson 2004 s. 539, modified by the author)

4.2 Intercultural Development Continuum

Dr. Mitchell Hammer developed a model for the different stages of acceptance of cultural diversity and cultural differences at the workplace (see Figure 4). The purpose of intercultural development continuum (hereinafter IDC) is to help employees cope with cultural diversity and make them work more effectively with people from other cultures, while explaining how

individuals or groups feel about the diversity and the cultural differences. Since there are individual variances in to what extent one is aware of other cultures, IDC categorizes individuals according to how complex their thinking is. Less complexity means that the individual has a monocultural view, meaning that the individual, on some level, is aware of cultural differences of which most are only visible ones. Categorizing people based on stereotypes is common since no understanding of the deeper levels, such as values, beliefs and norms, exists. The opposite way of thinking is when an individual has a multicultural mindset, also known as a greater complexity. This individual is able to look below the surface of a culture and explore the cultural differences with great enthusiasm. People with this ability of thinking are often able to switch how they look at matters, from their own culture's or a different culture's point of view, bringing value to the group or organization. (MDB Group 2011.)



Figure 4 The five stages of IDC (MDB Group 2011, modified by the author)

The IDC process is divided into five stages and a person with a less complex mindset can go through them all. First one is in complete denial, refusing to see the cultural differences in the surroundings. A high level of anxiety is considered normal during this stage and the individual usually isolates oneself from foreign people. During the second stage, polarization, the individual chooses either to accept the cultural differences and maybe start to feel one's own culture is not the best one (reversal polarization) or to completely judge the foreign culture and refuse to see any positive in it (defense polarization). Individuals at the defense side of the polarization stage form strong negative opinions about other cultures and embrace an ethnocentric way of thinking, meaning one's own culture is superior to others. (MDB Group 2011.)

An individual will eventually see the cultural differences as something positive and start to accept them. The person is able to understand the fact that people from other cultures are quite similar to one under the surface while having some visible differences in customs and traditions. During this minimization stage the individual starts to treat others as he or she would like to be treated. The next stage enables the individual to further gain acceptance

towards cultural differences and the idea of all cultures being just as rich is growing. A desire to learn about other cultures is emerging stronger. The acceptance stage is followed by adaptation, where the individual sees a cultural diversity as a positive effect that brings value to life. When this last stage is achieved, the individual is able to change his or her view of thinking from one's own culture to a foreign one and to apply a cultural behavior according to the situation. (MDB Group 2011.)

5 MENTORING

The word *mentor* originates from Greek mythology thousands of years ago. Odysseus was a warrior and a traveller, who had to leave his household to somebody loyal enough to take care of it. Odysseus gave this responsibility to his fellow friend, Mentor. Mentor was also to be a tutor to Telemachos, the son of Odysseus. The goddess of philosophy, Athena, would take the form of Mentor when she guided Odysseus through the obstacles he met. This is how the word mentor was formed. (Casado-Lumbreras et al. 2011 p. 2404, Ensher & Murphy 1997 p. 460.)

A debate of which term to use, coaching or mentoring, when referring to a staff member supporting a newcomer is not necessary since, according to Mary Connor and Julia Pokora (2007), the activities complete each other. Both aim to promote an individual's personal development and view on the future and strategic planning for the career. A mentor should enable this voyage of discovery and support the mentee throughout the action as well as to help him or her in defining the goals. However, in reality there are some differences between coaching and mentoring. Florence Stone (2007) says that there is a growing demand for coaches, both from companies' and employees' side. Coaching as a term refers to a desire to support the employee enough in order to get the best out of him, which results in a positive effect for the company. Mentoring in contrary concentrates on the mentee's individual growth from a deeper view: the company's success is not the primary goal of it. A personal growth and an increased will to succeed are the desired results of a mentoring process. In addition, it

is supposed to improve the listening skills of the mentee. (Connor & Pokora 2007 p. 6, Stone 2007 p.12, 155-156.)

5.1 The aim of mentoring

Mentoring should be considered a two-way street giving the mentor and the mentee mutual gain, rather than a top to down process satisfying only one of the parties. A mentee should be regarded as someone who can do more than take orders and be responsible. The contemporary view of mentoring is that a friendship should be achieved and in the ideal situation both parties can express their expectations, worries and anticipations to one another. Openness between the two is essential for a positive outcome of the experience. Stone (2007) additionally wants to point out that a male manager needs to select a female mentee carefully and vice versa to minimize the risk of a sexual relationship emerging and giving grounds for gossiping. This could destroy the mentoring and its outcome completely. The assumption that only a mentee can end the mutual relationship is false, since the mentorship can be ended also by the mentor. The decision always needs to be justified and explained clearly to avoid any false suppositions of a mentee's failure. The relationship can also be ended if the personalities of the parties collide and result in a negative experience. (Shea 2001 p. 73-7, Stone 2007 p. 205-206, 208-209.)

There are two different types of mentoring: informal and formal. When the organization assigns a mentor, it is called formal mentoring and there is often a strict framework of what the mentor versus the mentee should do in the process. The mentors are educated before the mentoring process starts, which leads to the positive effect of getting rid of persons who are seeking for personal benefits instead of dedicating themselves to the mentoring process. Also, when the mentoring process is planned, all mentees are assigned a mentor of their own. This way no one is excluded. Informal mentoring is instead a spontaneous form of mentoring, where it is more likely to be included in social relationships. The group's strongest individuals tend to snap up the small number of mentors. However, there are positive sides in informal mentoring, one being that they last longer because of the high level of trust. Informal mentors are often empathetic and are by the mentees seen more as friends, and this has proven to lead to more satisfied mentees overall. (Shea 2001 p. 7, Clutterbuck 2004 p. 27-29.)

The mentor's most important task is, according to Gordon Shea (2001), to explore what the mentee's expectations and desired learning outcomes are. Being a friend who listens and comforts is a goal. Only this enables the mentor to do his or her best in helping the mentee to achieve the goals. The mentor should also engage himself or herself in the mentee's needs and to foster a healthy self-image. (Shea 2001 p. 31-33, 77.)

While there are expected tasks a mentor should accomplish, there are also actions to avoid. Shea (2001) says that a mentor should never criticize the mentee but engage in understanding for example a failure in a work task. Only by giving supporting feedback can a mentor strengthen the mentee's will to learn. A mentor should not give direct advice, nor be seen as a rescuer, since the mentee should evaluate different possibilities and choose the correct solution independently as well as sort out self-caused issues. (Shea 2001 p. 61, 63, 65, 67.)

5.2 Skills of a mentor

When a person is told to describe a mentor in their own words, many people mention "wise old man", "guardian angel" or "savior". However, when the same person is told to think about someone who influenced him or her in the past, many bring up a strict teacher or boss or a demanding parent. These may also be referred to as role models, idols or a source of inspiration. Despite the fact that a mentor usually impersonates an older man, much like Merlin the magician, a contemporary view suggests that a mentor's capability to function as a positive support in the mentee's learning and developing is based on other characteristics than age and gender. Choosing a mentor only because of his or her age is never justified. (Clutterbuck & Lane 2004 p. 29-30, Stone 2007 p. 156.)

Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) discovered in their research that the qualities of a mentor can be categorized to eight dimensions. The authentic dimension includes characteristics such as openness, conscientiousness, honesty, sense of reality, principality and loyalty, while the nurturing dimension suggests that the mentor has understanding in interpersonal matters, is capable to listen and take care of a mentee, is patient yet willing to teach and able to delegate. At the same time, according to the research, a mentor must be approachable and inspirational. The mentor's expertise was also highlighted and many reported that a mentor needs to be hard-working. Perhaps surprisingly, the eighth and last dimension classified was the volatile

dimension. Respondents in the research said they valued a mentor who was aggressive in business, a perfectionist, intimidating and self-centered. In the end one can say that a mentor needs to be compassionate but strict at the same time, whilst possessing excellence in the field and being able to delegate tasks to others. (Clutterbuck & Lane 2004 p. 30-33.)

Furthermore, a mentor should be familiar with the term cultural intelligence. Every individual acts differently regarding adaptation to a new culture and, according to Beamer and Varner (2008), cultural intelligence (hereinafter CQ) describes a person's skills in adapting. CQ consists of three key areas, of which the first one is knowledge in a culture and problem solving skills of cultural matters. The second area is the level of motivation of adapting to a new culture and the third one measures the applying of problem solving and adapting skills into action in new cultural contexts. Beamer and Varner state that studies prove that the generally measured intelligence, such as the common IQ and emotional intelligence depend on cultural differences. (Beamer & Varner 2008 p. 28.)

5.3 Previous research

There is already a lot of evidence that mentoring has been proved useful, taking Robert Sullivan's (2000) research Entrepreneurial learning and mentoring as an example. Sullivan researched whether or not a mentor, together with useful information provided at the correct time, had beneficial effects on small and medium-sized companies' new-starter entrepreneurs. Sullivan's paper stated that in an interview taken by Choueke and Armstrong in 1992 regarding influences in personal development, the majority, i.e. 95 percent of the respondents, said past experience is the most important factor when learning. Learning from other people, colleagues, was the second popular answer while self-experience was reported the third most important factor. Sullivan said several of the entrepreneurs had faced many obstacles and draw-backs during their career but they had used their past experiences and knowledge to overcome these. What kind of an impact did a mentor then have? (Sullivan 2000 p. 160, 163, 168.)

Sullivan came to the conclusion that establishing a mentor-mentee relationship indeed has a beneficial outcome, especially if the mentee asked for support and guidance when they felt they needed it. A mentor proved to be a functioning support system to the new entrepreneur,

when the mentor had the required expertise in the field, combined with knowledge, skills and experience in it. However, Sullivan highlights the importance of matching the correct mentor with the correct mentee; their interpersonal chemistries are of high relevance in order for the mentoring process to be successful. According to Ellen A. Ensher and Susan E. Murphy's study (1997) about when the mentoring process is proven most useful, if the mentee experienced similarities with the mentor, such as likings and values, the outcome of the mentoring process was more beneficial in contrast to if the mentee felt there was nothing in common with the mentor. Sullivan called for deeper investigation in how one could find a perfect mentor for a mentee as it is of great importance. The research wondered whether or not the mentor and the mentee should be matched by someone else, or if it was better that the two seek one another. Sullivan also mentioned that a study of a mentor's long-term effects would give useful information for future mentoring relationships. (Sullivan 2000 p. 171-173, Ensher & Murphy 1997 p. 460, 474.)

Does the mentor's gender matter? Ragins and Cotton (1999) researched in this subject, matching male and female students with same-gender versus cross-gender mentors. Their research proved no significant differences in psychosocial functions comparing same-gender mentoring outcome to cross-gender one. However, female mentees being mentored by females reported participating more in social activities and males mentored by females felt they were not accepted enough, compared to other gender combinations. Ragins and Cotton also studied the differences in the outcome of formal and informal mentoring and found that mentees, who had an informal relationship with their mentor, reported being more successful career-wise and gaining more psychosocial benefits. They also felt closer friendship with their mentor and saw them as accepting role models. Why did formally mentored mentees report being less satisfied? According to the study, formal mentoring relationships tend to be short and very structured, giving less room to build friendships and gain a level of trust with the mentors. Ragins and Cotton stated that the mentee's personality might affect the choice of which type of mentoring relationship to initiate. The researchers point out that mentees, choosing informal relationships or selected in one, are career-driven and eager to perform which means they are more likely to succeed even without a mentor's assistance compared to mentees in formal relationships. Finally, no remarkable differences were noted when comparing non-mentored students versus formally mentored ones. This does not automatically mean that formal mentoring is useless, since the research of Ragins and Cotton

prove that having a formal mentor provide more career development since the mentor, compared to an informal one, often understands the mentee's career-related desires and possibilities better. (Ragins & Cotton 1999 p. 529, 537, 544, 547.)

Casado-Lumbreras et al. (2011) on the other hand researched in cultural diversity in the software development industry and what outcomes mentoring had. Interestingly, they found out that cultural differences have a somewhat significant impact on both informal and formal mentoring, but it did not affect the mentee's technical skills. The results also presented that mentoring had a major influence on the mentee's cultural dimensions. Perhaps the positive effect on a person's skills as a result of mentoring is related to what type of work the mentee is doing. Sanna Hosio stated in her research about nursing students' experiences abroad during an internship that the students had most difficulties with the practical aspects in the workplace and that these enhanced due to language barriers. She mentioned that in a previous research made by Koskinen & Tossavainen in 2003 (see Hosio p. 48) a guide's active presence during the internship was proven very useful when dealing with international studies or work. The student's work skills advanced when a helping hand was provided. (Casado-Lumbreras et al. 2011 p. 2404, 2407-2410, Hosio 2008 p. 2, 48.)

If a mentor on site has significant positive effects on a student, is there something else outside the mentor's reach that can impact? Paula J. Pedersen (2010) studied what students learned during their stay abroad and how the learning results were relative to intercultural effectiveness. To measure the level of learning and intercultural sensitivity, she used an instrument called Intercultural Development Inventory, or IDI, to determine how well the student had adapted. As stated by Hammer et al. (see Pedersen 2010 p. 73), the instrument measures the stages of the cultural adaptation process. What Pedersen found out was that a student moved along the adaptation process if he or she had previous experience of travelling abroad and had been educated in intercultural matters. In fact, if the student was going abroad for the first time, the importance of pre-education in cultural differences was even more important than if the student had previous travelling experience. Surprisingly, factors such as gender, participation in free-time activities, speaking many languages, writing a diary or having a large group of friends did not have an effect on the adaptation process at all. (Pedersen 2010 p. 70, 73, 76.)

6 SUMMARY OF THE THEORIES

As this research examines the qualities of a cultural mentor, it is essential to present subjects that are relevant to understand the term. By dividing the term in half, to culture and mentoring, and focusing on what they actually include, we can discuss the important factors that influence when cultural mentoring is established.

Culture is a massive word including anything from the use of language to rituals in people's lives. A culture is a complete view on the world and seen so obvious by its members that it is rarely discussed among them. The explanatory descriptions of a culture vary from researcher to researcher: one describes a culture as a window through which an individual sees the world, while others divide a culture into three pieces, one smaller than the other but tightly linked to another. What everyone seems to have in common is that culture is a complex word, consisting of several key factors that can differ largely. As there are several kinds of cultures, a need of categorizing is evident. The ways of categorizing cultures are as many as there are ways to describe one. Hampden-Turner et al. (2000) introduced the view of cultures as each other's' mirror images, taking driving and reading as an example. In some countries you drive on the right side, in others on the left. The same applies to where one starts to read, from the left or from the right. Other differences include the view on a person's status, how individual people in a culture are, how one relates to time and how accepting towards differences a culture is, to name a few.

Cultures can also be categorized by their use of communication. Everything we do, let it be speaking, blinking an eye or rubbing our noses, gives signals to our surroundings whether we like it or not, which means that we cannot make a decision to not communicate. Interpreting communication can often prove to be very difficult despite how similar or different the cultures and languages are. Taking Latin American Spanish and Spanish as an example, many words and phrases are different and therefore a native speaker from Spain might not understand one from Mexico despite the use of Spanish.

Mentoring as a term is old and originates from the Greek mythology thousands of years ago. Nowadays mentoring is gaining more popularity as its benefits are more and more researched and, according to Shea (2001), a mentor's most important task is to support the mentee and be

more of a friend to him or her than acting as a director. Several researches, e.g. the one of Sullivan's in 2000, show that mentoring has been useful for newbies in various fields. The relationship between a mentor and mentee is of high value and the outcome of the mentoring process relies on how well their chemistries work together. But what qualifications should a mentor then have? Despite the fact that many think of a wise old man when told to describe a mentor, choosing a mentor because of gender or age is never justified or beneficial. More important characteristics are for example openness, expertise in a specific field important in the mentoring situation, reachability, principality and loyalty. Many people want a mentor to be both compassionate and strict at the same time, much like a demanding parent from their childhood.

Previous research in mentoring shows that informal mentoring has been more beneficial compared to formal mentor-mentee relationships. One of the main reasons is that students see an informal mentor more as a friend which leads to a high level of trust between them. However, formal mentors tend to provide better results in career development. Based on Ragins & Cotton's research a mentor's gender does not have a great impact on the outcome of mentoring, but if a female mentee had a female mentor, the mentee was more likely to participate in social activities after work. When a male was mentored by a female, the mentee reported being less satisfied with the outcome of the process and he did not feel as accepted as he had hoped.

As the research focuses on cultural mentoring from a student point of view, it is also important to look at how a student should prepare oneself when going abroad for an internship. Even though practically anyone can go abroad to work, a few characteristics help adjusting to a new culture. The most essential quality of one is interpersonal skills, needed when establishing relations to members of the host culture. Equally important is to possess a healthy but strong self-knowledge so that one is not afraid to make errors that might occur when for example trying to learn the host country's language. In addition, a person needs to be motivated to learn something new and preferably have a set of humor, as this is regarded as a coping mechanism and eases relationship building. Knowledge in organizational structures is useful so that an understanding of how the company works can be gained. The five stages of adaptation to a new workplace in a foreign culture can be well presented using Dr. Hammer's Intercultural Development Continuum, where the person starts from a denial stage,

isolating from the host culture, finishing the process in the adaptation stage where the a culture's characteristics are integrated into the everyday behavior.

7 METHODOLOGY

The aim of a research is to explore something new that can either be new for the researcher, secondary research, or for the entire world, primary research. Choosing the method is highly crucial, since these two ways lead to different results. While the result of a secondary research is considered useful, the one of a primary research answers the most important questions related to the research topic and leads to significant findings that have an impact on a higher level, such as finding the cause for an illness. (Rugg & Petre 2006 p. 31-32.)

A research starts with defining the research problem; the question or questions that need answers. To start with, the researcher either creates hypotheses or establishes a theory or theories. Then, useful data is collected in order to be able to either prove the theory correct or to discard it, or to see if the hypotheses were correct or not. Data can be divided into two main categories: primary data and secondary data. When collecting fresh data for the first time, the data is called primary and is considered original. On the other hand, if the data already has been collected and modified by someone else, i.e. the researcher is not the original data collector, the data is called secondary. The collection of secondary data is merely getting acquainted with written material, for example journals, blogs and memos, and compiling them. When the data is collected and analyzed, the researcher needs to draw conclusions based on the findings. This has to be done very carefully in order to not produce any misleading inferences. If the study contains hypotheses, the researcher might draw generalizations, but if theories were presented, the researcher tries to explain these by interpreting the results. This often leads to new questions and sets a base for a continued research. (Kothari 2004 p. 95, 344.)

7.1 Qualitative vs. quantitative research

Research methods are divided into two main categories: quantitative and qualitative researches. The methods differ and the decision on which one to use should be made by evaluating the research problem. Is it more important to collect data from a large scale of persons, where the result is quite narrow and the results can be processed electronically, or should the data be an in-depth analysis collected only from a few persons by for example interviewing them? In a qualitative research the persons are chosen by purposive sampling, in contrast to random sampling in a quantitative research. Another way to differentiate these types of methods is to compare the aim of the research. A quantitative research is aimed to test the hypotheses and the results tend to be mathematically presented, whereas a qualitative research focuses more on exploring the results on a broad scale. Composing a mathematical scale or a table, like in a quantitative research, is often difficult or straight up impossible in a qualitative research. Any research, qualitative or quantitative, needs to be valid and reliable so that the results can be considered truthful. (Glenn 2010 p. 95-97, 152.)

A face-to-face collection of primary data is called an interview, a qualitative method, and suits a research that requires intensive focus on a subject. Deciding who to interview is important, since the best result is achieved when the interviewed person has a direct contact with the research problem. Also, the interviewer should meet the person in real life to obtain the most accurate results, as many important gestures, for example, relevant to the language might otherwise not be noted. The fact that the interviewer meets the person on spot might also have negative side effects, the most important one being that the person creates answers to make the interview more interesting. (Kothari 2004 p. 97-99.)

An unstructured interview, in contrast to a structured one, gives the interviewer great freedom in making the interview, but at the same time, it gives the interviewed person the opportunity to more freely narrate his experiences in his or her own words. A basic interview structure might be made in advance, but as the interview continues the interviewer can add supplementary questions or even omit ones based on the situation. The positive effect of this is that interviewer can adjust the questions if the situation requires and therefore produce a freely conducted conversation, possibly surprising the person so that spontaneous reactions are uttered. Despite the given freedom, the interview method has several downsides like any other research method. One important is the large amount of time needed to accomplish it

since deciding the questions, the interview itself and the analysis of the data is very time-consuming. Also, if the interview is done in an unstructured way the comparison of interviews is next to impossible since they don't follow a structured pattern. Therefore the interviewer should choose a more structured method if the aim is to compare several respondents to one another. (Kothari 2004 p. 98-99, Gillham 2005 p. 45.)

According to Sarah Lowndes (see Gillham 2005), an e-mail interview is less intrusive than a face-to-face discussion and gives the respondent more time to think about the answers, giving more color to the content. It is also a relatively fast method to collect data. One of the downsides in interviewing someone by e-mail is that the result may lack the spontaneous replies that often emerge in real-time interviews. A researcher should also be prepared to face difficulties in interpreting received answers. Not everyone writes correctly and clearly when answering an e-mail which means that the researcher might receive a very chatty or idiomatic response to the interview. However, a researcher often has the possibility to ask the interviewee to clarify or further expand an answer if needed. (Gillham 2005 p. 107-111.)

Another qualitative method is desk research, where the researcher collects data from already published material, such as journals, books, internet and blogs. A desk research can be used in several ways. Firstly it can function as a background research, upon which further studies can be done. Secondly it can be used instead of a field study, by combining it with re-analyzing previous researches to obtain new insights about the research subject. Thirdly, a desk research can also be the main research method with no fieldwork done. (Armstrong 2006 p. 52-53.)

7.2 Choice of method

In order to collect data for this research about cultural mentoring, the author chose qualitative research methods, for several reasons. Firstly, the use of quantitative methods is not suitable in this research, as the final result requires in-depth answers in order to collect more useful data. By focusing on a few persons and previous researches it is easier to dig in to the core of the experiences and therefore evaluate the mentoring process and what skills the mentor should possess. Also, one's experiences in a foreign country are hard to present mathematically as in a quantitative method, by e.g. evaluating the degree of culture chock from 1 to 5, but need to be explained in words of one own to be fully understood. Only by

letting the students express themselves in words, and the researcher asking additional questions when needed, can one draw a reliable picture of the experienced phenomena.

The author will arrange two unstructured interviews (see Appendices 2 & 3). By choosing the interviews to be done in an unstructured way, the students can more freely express their experiences and feelings, hopefully providing spontaneous answers leading to interesting new insights. The third interview (see Appendix 4) is done by e-mail as a test if better responses are received when the interview subject has more time to reflect on his or her experiences abroad. Both parts, the author and the interviewee, had the option to ask any additional questions if needed.

However, solely the interviews will not provide enough useful data for the completion of the study, which is why the author also will get acquainted with several previous researches related to mentoring. A deeper knowledge is provided by the interviews, whereas previous researches offer experiences of mentoring in practice. The ideal situation is that the interviewed students provide useful new information and the researches help SKILL2E learn from previous experiences about mentoring in practice.

7.3 The interview guide

The unstructured interview (see Appendix 1) contained approximately 20 questions, divided into three categories based on the topic. The questions started with learning about cultural differences, moving on to questions about the student's characteristics and finally finishing with detailed questions about mentors and the mentoring process. As an unstructured interview can be altered during the interviewing session to match the situation, not all questions were asked or they were modified.

The interview sent by e-mail contained almost the same questions as in the face-to-face interview. The main questions had optional supported questions as a guide to what the main question aimed for in order to minimize the possibility of a misunderstanding.

7.4 The interviews

The first respondent is a 24-year-old male student from Turkey, Student A, currently working in Finland in a brand building company. The internship is a part of his master's degree studies. At the time of the interview, 2nd May, he had spent approximately two months in the country. The interview was taken face-to-face in Helsinki.

A 24-year-old male from Germany, Student B, spent one month in Austria at the beginning of 2012. The internship was a mandatory part of his studies and he worked in a mine. Skype, a virtual communication system, was used to make the interview possible. The system allows people to not only speak but also see each other using a webcam, and this possibility was utilized.

The third interview differed from the two other ones. A series of questions were sent by e-mail to the third respondent, Student C. The author wanted to see if letting the student familiarize with the questions and taking time to think about the experiences would provide deeper answers. Student C is a 30-year-old male student from Tampere, Finland. He spent one month in India working in an office that was a part of a factory. His internship too was included in the mandatory business studies of the home university.

All the interviews were taken during week 18 in 2012 and the unstructured ones were recorded and transcribed. The first two students were interviewed in English while the third student received the questions and answered them in Finnish. The author aimed at creating a relaxing discussion with Student A and B in order for them to freely express themselves, possibly spontaneously saying something that the author had not thought about. The interview guide was used as a base but especially the interview with Student B required adapting the questions to the situation. As the third interview was sent by e-mail, it was important to form the questions in the clearest possible way. Supporting questions were added as a guideline. In all three interviews the thought of not asking any leading questions was in the back of the mind of the author at all times.

8 RESEARCH RESULTS

The interviews provided a lot of useful information concerning a cultural mentor. Comparing the interview results to previous researches, there are some very interesting facts to be pointed out. The results are divided into three categories, similar to the ones in the interviews, to make the analysis more structured and therefore clearer to read and follow.

8.1 Cultural differences

A culture includes everything from certain behavior patterns and a view on the world to the use of time and ways of communicating. Some cultures are more alike while others are complete mirror images of one another. Sometimes moving from a culture to another is hard, sometimes easy, and one of the influencing matters is how different one's home culture is compared to the culture one is entering.

Many authors, such as Beamer and Varner (2008), state that all sojourners experience a culture chock. However, of all three interviewees, not one mentioned to have experienced a strong culture chock. Student A said his previous travelling experiences and hobbies of listening to foreign music and watching international movies helped him avoid a culture chock striking, while Student B felt his destination country was so similar to his home that there was hardly anything that could have triggered a culture chock. Interestingly, Student C did actually feel a reverse culture chock instead of a chock abroad, something that is usually experienced after a long stay overseas, at least according to Orange (2007). Students A and C had additionally asked friends about previous experiences in the country and Student C had immersed himself in reading tourist guides and studying the local business culture before he departed.

Students A and C entered cultures very different from their home countries. Taking Hofstede's way of categorizing cultures as an example, one can see that there are significant differences when the student's home country is compared to the country they stayed in. Student A from Turkey said he did not experience any culture chock at all, which in the light of Hofstede's findings (see Figure 5) is quite unusual since the values of the countries vary.

The power distance index, or PDI, is half higher in Turkey than in Finland. Student A verified this by saying it is easier to go speak with a boss in Finland than in Turkey, which means that Finland has a lower power distance index. Also the individuality index, IDV, is very different comparing the countries. According to Student A, Turkey is a collectivistic country, not favoring individuality as much as Finland. The interview also showed some similarities that are verified when taking a look at Hofstede’s values. Student A said that Turkish people do not really appreciate masculine values, such as having a lot of money, and he had noted the same attitude in Finland. As one can see from Figure 5 and the masculinity index, MAS, the distance between Finland and Turkey is not that large, confirming what Student A said. Hampden-Turner et al. (2000) would classify both countries as achieving ones, since the degree of success is in general not really valued. Student A also said that the Western and Eastern parts of Turkey are highly different; people in the East want to protect traditions while the other part of the country breathes Western European air. The values seen in Figure 5 might therefore not apply to where Student A is from, considering his hometown being in the West.

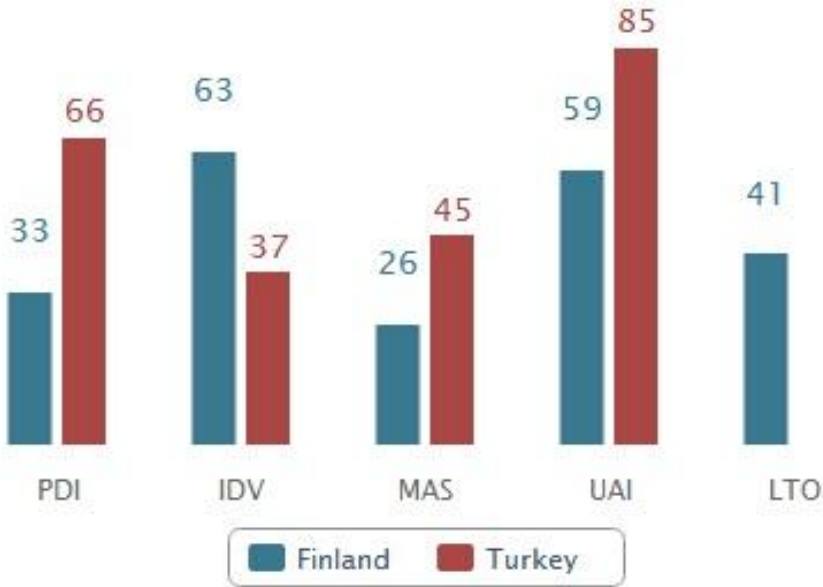


Figure 5 The values of Finland and Turkey (Hofstede 2012)

Student C also reported not experiencing a real culture chock which again is seen as a bit peculiar comparing their values that Hofstede has defined. Taking a quick glance at Figure 6,

one can clearly see that there are large differences between Finland and India. The PDI is significantly higher in India than in Finland, which means the distance between a boss and an employee is larger in India. Student C said that the boss has a lot of power and is usually the one making decisions in a company. He also added that it is not unusual for a boss to loudly tell off his employee for making a mistake. These are clear signs of a high PDI.

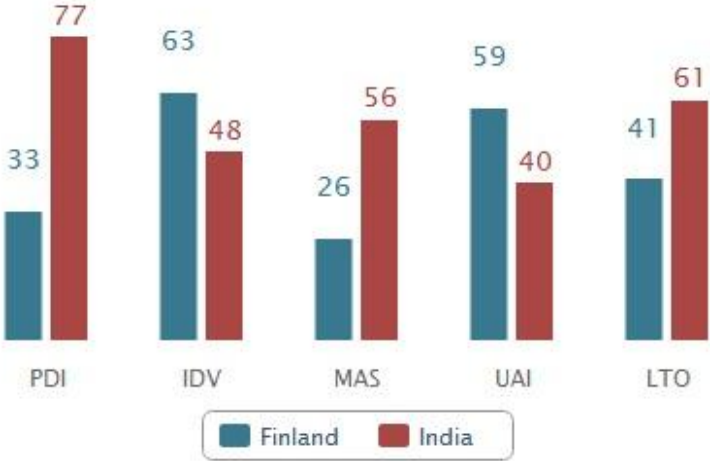


Figure 6 The values of Finland and India (Hofstede 2012)

Unlike Student A and Student C, Student B had visited the country prior to his internship. He reported not experiencing a culture chock because he had visited the country before and the culture was therefore familiar to him. Also the cultures' similarities had an effect on him not feeling a culture chock. Hofstede agrees on Germany and Austria being quite similar (see Figure 7) as the values between the countries do not significantly vary. Actually, both countries score the exact same, quite low value of 31 in the long-term orientation index, LTO, meaning that both are classified as short-term oriented countries that do not worry too much about the future. However, the PDI of Austria is remarkably lower than the one of Germany, which means that the relationship between a boss and an employee is very relaxed. Student B verified this by saying it was really easy to go speak with his boss, but he also said it is almost just as easy in Germany. However, he added that the relaxed relationship might be due to the industry he is working in and does not necessarily apply in general.



Figure 7 The values of Germany and Austria (Hofstede 2012)

Another subject that differs from culture to culture is the use of time, which is important when for example working. Hampden-Turner et al. (2000) divided cultures into sequential and synchronized cultures depending on how they relate to time. Student C, who worked in India, noticed the very different views people can have on time. He mentioned that if someone was asked to bring a paper, the answer might very well have been yes, the paper is delivered in 10 minutes but in reality the paper was not delivered until several hours later. However, Student C said that one had to be on time for work. Since the Indians had such a laid-back attitude on time, it is evident that the country is classified as having a synchronized view on time. They do not see time that important, like it was money. Also Student A noted differences in the use of time. According to him, Finns are more organized and keep a close eye on time by using a lot of calendars, unlike Turks who feel more relaxed about organizing their time. Student A clarified that time is not seen as something unimportant, but the attitude is more laid-back compared to Finland. He also mentioned it sometimes feels like living in a chaos when in Turkey, referring to the unorganized atmosphere.

Even though Student B said he did not experience a culture chock because Germany and Austria are so similar, he admitted having problems in communicating. Despite the fact that both countries are considered low-context cultures according to the classification of Edward Hall (see Ting-Toomey 1999), and both countries use German, the accent is very different which causes problems between Germans and Austrians having a conversation in their mother

tongue. Student B actually said that using English would have been a lot easier. This proves that students might face difficulties even if the countries' cultures are close to each other.

Student C acknowledged problems related to communication just as did Student B. The use of non-verbal communication caused some humorous situations, as Indians tend to shake their head as a sign of confirming something or saying yes. Student C felt it was strange when colleagues shook their heads, interpreted as saying no in the West, when they actually were saying yes. Also Student A experienced some funny incidents with non-verbal communication. When a Finn is saying "joo" he means yes, but in Turkey the word is used when you greet someone or when you are denying something. Student C also faced some problems with the spoken language due to the sometimes strong accents in English. However, this was not the case with Student A who actually said it was easy in Finland since everyone speaks English very well and it is not necessary to learn the official languages of the country.

How are people treated in a country? Student A said he did not experience any differences in how people are treated in Finland and in Turkey; people tend to be on the same level regardless of their age, gender and so on. Student B said the same thing about Austria and Germany. Indians on the other hand are still strongly dividing people into categories based on their gender and age, something that is visible in how you relate to your family. According to Student C, one's parents should be treated respectfully and the family in general is very important. These are typical signs of a strongly collectivistic country, as presented by Hampden-Turner et al. (2000).

Stereotypes and prejudice are difficult to handle, especially if you are the target of them. However, none of the interviewees said they had experienced any of these during their visits abroad. Student B said that Germans and Austrians occasionally make fun of each other in a friendly way, but he did not notice any of this at his workplace. No negative reactions were received by Student A either, who said Finns had taken good care of him. Student C on the other hand, who visited a small town unusual to general tourists, dealt with people who were not familiar with Caucasian people. He said many were staring and wanted to take pictures, but all in all people accepted him very well.

When the interviewees were asked to describe the first reactions when arriving to the country, all of them mentioned something related to nature and the surroundings. Student A said he felt

snow was really exciting and new, Student B also noted the snow first, together with the mountains and Student C reacted on the chaotic traffic and an interesting kitchen that uses a lot of spices and fresh ingredients.

8.2 Personalities of the students

Even though practically anyone can decide to leave home for a while to work overseas, Schneider and Barsoux (2003) state that there are some characteristics that increase a student's success abroad. Possessing good interpersonal skills and being interested in other languages and cultures will certainly help the student to adapt. Also, if the student is motivated and wants to learn, the experience is probably a lot easier. In her research, Pedersen (2010) found that students who had been abroad prior to their internship in another country progressed in the adaptation process much more than individuals who were abroad the first time during their internship. Her research showed that students, who were travelling to another country for the first time, needed a lot more assistance in intercultural matters compared to the ones who had international work or travel experience.

All of the interviewees had travelled abroad before their internships. Student B had travelled a lot in Europe and also visited South America, Student A had spent time in Belgium and Europe in general and Student C had made approximately five to six one-week trips abroad, mainly in Europe. It is evident that all three of them were familiar with different kinds of cultures and ways to live.

While the reasons for choosing their internship countries varied, they all shared the opinion of wanting to experience something exciting. Students A and C expressed this desire strongest. North Europe was still an unknown territory to Student A, who had heard many stories of Finland from a relative's friend. His home university co-operated with the University of Arcada and a Finnish company, and helped him find the internship. Even though his university was the one ultimately deciding the destination country, Student A said he could have not been more satisfied with the result. Also Student C felt very happy about his destination country and felt very motivated to investigate in the differences in India. For Student B the main reason to choose Austria was the high quality of the work place, although

he also expressed wanting to work someplace else than in Germany. All in all the interviewees felt motivated to experience and learn something new.

8.3 The mentoring process

Even though Connor and Pokora (2007) mean there are no significant differences between a coach and a mentor, and therefore a debate on which term to use is unnecessary, Stone (2007) points out the differences in the terms' content. A coach wants to improve the protégé's learning so that the outcome is beneficial for the company, whereas a mentor focuses on an individual's personal growth. The ultimate goal of mentoring is mutual gain.

All three interviewees were assisted during their internship. Student C got acquainted with the workplace in the company of the Finnish male CEO. The student felt he needed help with the practical aspects, such as timetables, where to find something and who to turn to if help was needed. Student A was assisted by the company's female marketing manager. She helped him with the everyday tasks, such as introducing the student to the public transport ticket system and how to behave at work. Students A and C had one person helping them, but Student B felt he had the team's support. Although he had a male colleague showing him around, he could turn to anyone for help. When asked if he had preferred the help of just one person being more available to him, he admitted it would have been a good decision.

According to Clutterbuck and Lane (2004), many people describe a mentor as an old man or a savior, but the interviewees proved this wrong. Actually only one directly said the mentor should be older, and none of them mentioned a gender. Two out of three interviewees had a same-gender mentoring relationship at their workplace. Does gender matter in reality? According to findings by Ragins and Cotton (1999) a mentor's gender did not prove to have any significant impact on the outcome. When the interviewees were asked if they think the gender of a mentor matters, all of them agreed that the question is irrelevant. However, Stone (2007) points out that a male mentor should be cautious when choosing a female mentee, and vice versa, to avoid any sexual relations emerging.

The mentor's gender and age do not play an important role in the mentoring process, but other qualities in a person do. All the interviewees valued knowledge and wished that the mentor had expertise in their field. Student B also said the mentor has to be fair, while Student C said

he would describe an ideal mentor as someone who is patient to teach the mentee and willing to answer questions even if they might seem obvious. Also, Clutterbuck and Lane (2004) said that a mentor has to have a nurturing dimension, meaning that they have to be willing to help and be patient to assist as long as the mentee understands.

Student C added that having something in common with the mentor is important. Student A felt the same way and preferred the mentor to be quite young, so that he or she could imagine themselves in the mentee's position. Ensher and Murhpy's study in 1997 proved that mentees wanted to feel they had something in common with their mentor. Possessing knowledge in one's own culture is important for a mentor, according to Student A, who also said an ideal situation would be that the mentor was familiar with both the home culture and the culture of the mentee. Student C, who was assisted by a Finn, said he would not necessary have learnt as much from an Indian.

What kind of a mentoring relationship is most beneficial then? Several studies suggest that informal mentoring is the best option. Sullivan (2000) came to the conclusion that mentees do best when they receive assistance and guidance when they feel that they need it the most, which is common in an informal mentoring relationship. Informal mentoring normally means that the student is the active part in the relationship, contacting the mentor when he or she feels like it. In order for this to work, the mentor needs to be approachable, agreed by Clutterbuck and Lane (2004). Mentees in informal relationships tend to be more satisfied with their mentors and the outcome of the process in general, compared to students in formal relationships. The problem in formal mentoring is that they often have a strict framework for the process itself, leaving little room for building any type of friendships but, due to the strict nature, they create a better base for future career development. The preference of an informal mentoring relationship became clear when interviewing the students. All of them said they would prefer the help of a mentor only in the beginning of their internship. Student A said he would appreciate the guidance of a mentor also later on if he was the one asking for help.

The practical benefits of having a mentor are obvious. Student A said coping in a new country without anyone's assistance would have been very difficult. Also Student C said adapting to the company had been a lot more difficult if no one had guided him in the beginning. The fact that students experience most difficulties with practical aspects while abroad, like the interviewees in this research, was confirmed in Sanna Hosio's research in 2008, also showing

that a guide's presence improved the students' skills in doing their job. Casado-Lumbreras et al. (2011) on the other hand state that mentoring merely has an effect on a person's cultural dimensions. When students A and B were asked if they had learnt something new abroad, Student A reported learning to use a calendar more frequently and Student B had started to learn new words, showing that the foreign culture already had an impact on them despite the short duration of the stay.

9 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Adapting to a new culture can vary from individual to individual. This research proves that previous experience of travel and work overseas eases the culture chock, or as the interviewees in this research feel, eliminates it completely. In fact, it seems that the four stages of culture chock, as seen in Figure 2, cannot be applied to the interviewed students. They appear to be in a stage combining euphoria and adaptation. This is an important conclusion to take into consideration when planning internships abroad. The reason why the three interviewed students reported not suffering from a culture chock depends in my opinion on that all three had gotten acquainted with several other countries prior to their internships. Two of them had also asked friends about previous experiences in the country, so they were prepared before they left. Pedersen's research verifies this. When you know at least something about the country you are going to, you are in a way prepared to what you will encounter, even though the reality might not match the expectations. Sullivan's research proves that new entrepreneurs rated past experiences as important as mentoring. I recommend to spend more time on educating students who have never been abroad before, but experienced travelers should not be forgotten either. A careful preparation before departure is beneficial for everyone regardless of how many countries they have visited. It is also fair to say that a student's personality affects the experience abroad. All three interviewees said they are extroverted people, interested in other cultures and languages. Motivation to learn about and understand a new culture inevitably has a positive impact on the experience abroad.

The interviewees and the results in Hosio's research show that students feel that they need most assistance with practical matters. The students should receive help in completing

everyday tasks, such as finding a supermarket, how to buy a bus ticket and how to buy a SIM card in order to call home. Work related issues should also be paid attention to, so that the students adapt to the company as well as possible. I would like to see a mentor who is familiar with organizational cultures and the Intercultural Development Continuum, as the student's adaptation to the company affects the whole stay. In the interview, Student C reported that the mentor's most important task is to help the mentee fit in the group to avoid any feelings of being left out, which I have to agree on. The mentor should not allow any hostile reactions towards the mentee from colleagues or allow the mentee to isolate herself or himself from the crowd.

One very important issue was brought up during the research. Student B was indeed familiar with the country and culture he stayed in, but major communicational problems took place. What this shows is that despite similarities in a culture, communication can cause severe trouble. The importance of this should never be underestimated, since communicational misunderstandings can potentially lead to fatal consequences. Students A and C also reported facing misunderstandings in communicating with locals, since gestures and small words mean different things back home and abroad. A mentor should be educated in cultures but should also focus on communication-related issues.

The results of this research show that the age and gender of a mentor does not really matter; focusing on the mentor's characteristics is more important. It became very clear that a mentor should be patient and willing to help, share values with the mentee and have expertise in the field. I see a mentor as a combination of one's best friend and a parent, combining a close relationship with motherly advices. A mentee should feel it easy to speak about his or emotions to the mentor and not carry any extra weight on their shoulders. Even though picking a mentor based on age and gender is never justified, if a mentor is close to the mentee's age the mentee can identify with the mentor and vice versa, which reinforces the relationship between them.

Studies show that informal mentoring relationships are most beneficial which I think is true. Building a strong connection between the mentor and the mentee strengthens the mentee's self-esteem, leading to mutual positive experiences. Even though an informal relationship should be aimed at, it is worth inspecting how this should be executed. According to Ragins and Cotton, the problem with informal mentoring relationships is that career-driven students

that are eager to perform usually chooses this type of relationship, which in my opinion could lead to that these students pick their favorite mentors, leaving the quiet ones in the background. The interviewees in this research also reported that they would like to have a mentor by their side during the first weeks of their stay and later only if they needed help. Previous research shows that this type of solution is the best option, so that the mentee can decide when to ask for help instead of someone constantly following their every move. I think that an informal mentoring relationship is something to aim at, but to perhaps have a structured framework for the first weeks of the stay in order to build a level of trust between the mentor and the mentee.

Sullivan's research called for further investigation in how to match a mentee with a mentor so that their chemistries work together. No solution to this was found, but according to me, letting the mentee choose a mentor would be the best option. Unfortunately this would probably not work in practice, since the students are arriving from another country, leaving no time to get acquainted with their pre-determined cultural mentor prior to their arrival. However, I suggest that profiles of both mentees and potential mentors are made in order to match a student with someone sharing for instance the same values and hobbies. The matching process could be done by either someone objective, who is involved in the project, or by the students themselves.

One interviewee said it would be optimal if the mentor knew about the culture he or she lived in and was familiar with the student's culture. This is the goal of a cultural mentor; to introduce the newcomer to the new host culture but also prepare colleagues for where the student is coming from. Therefore it is essential that the mentor has an in-depth knowledge in cultures. By introducing the student's culture and its distinctive characteristics to colleagues, stereotyping and prejudice, which none of the interviewees in this research luckily did not experience, could be minimized. The reason for negative thoughts of a newcomer often lies in lack of knowledge, so careful preparation again would ease the mentoring process and the adaptation to the workplace.

All in all I believe a mentor should, like a mentee, obviously be interested in foreign cultures and languages and truly be dedicated to the mentoring process. Especially if the mentee is unfamiliar to other cultures before the internship, the mentor should engage in gaining in-depth knowledge about cultures. A mentor should be aware of what a culture contains, how

different cultures can be and what problems culture clashes can evoke. Ideally the mentor can provide useful tools to cope with a culture chock, especially if the level of the chock a mentee is experiencing is severe. Evidently communication is a very important part of a culture. Therefore a mentor should understand the difficulties he or she might face. Based on this research, other important qualities are willingness to help, having enough patience and being motivated. I also want to point out that mentoring is a process that strives to mutual gain, which is why both parties should agree on what goals they have. Awareness of the other's interests is necessary for the most beneficial outcome. As a conclusion, I see a mentor as a blend of a best friend's qualities combined with motherly advices, leaving the mentee space to grow in a trustful and loyal relationship.

The aim of this research was to determine the skills and characteristics of a mentor from a student point of view, what the actual tasks of a cultural mentor should be and how a beneficial mentoring relationship should be built. By interviewing three students with international work experience and familiarizing with previous studies in the subject of mentoring, this research has reached its goals. Suggestions on the mentor's tasks, characteristics and the mentoring process in general are presented and the SKILL2E project will hopefully see this research as something they can use when they launch cultural mentoring.

9.1 Validity, reliability and improvements

Briefly described, a qualitative research is valid if it leads to a truthful result. What this means is that the research has to be objective, and its subject must be linked to the method and the outcome. The researcher must predetermine these and later be able to defense the choices made if asked. A simple question of is the result believable usually helps defining a research's validity. (Glenn 2010 p. 143-145.)

The results of this research are truthful since the research question supports the method, and the method supports the results. The aim was to focus on students' wishes of a mentor and what they had experienced abroad, so it is justified that students who had worked overseas for a period of time were interviewed. As the concept of cultural mentoring is still under construction, using previous mentoring researches and their results in this project provide

useful information to learn from. A research should also be objective and I think I have delivered results that are uncontaminated from subjective views.

There is always room for improvements, also in this research. All the interviewed students had spent a rather short period of time abroad, so focusing on for example students who were at the end of a longer stay, say three months, may have given a different result. However, already the results presented in this research provide very useful information that is in line with previous results on the subject. Another thing worth offering a thought is the way the students were interviewed. The goal of the e-mail interview was to see if the student can express himself better if he has more time to think about his feelings. The danger in this, as in all interviews, is that the interviewee might make up answers to make them more interesting. However, in my opinion all interviews in this research are authentic and do not include any misleading answers.

The last important question to focus on is if it was better letting the students express themselves in their mother tongue, instead of English, to avoid any misunderstandings. Especially if one's command in English is not that strong, explaining something might be very difficult and the use of wrong words might occur, leading to false interpretations. Luckily Student C was able to answer the questions in his mother tongue and students A and B spoke English fluently, so I doubt any severe misunderstandings happened.

9.2 Suggestions for further research

The desired skills of a mentor, what type of mentoring relationship should be applied and what tasks the mentor should have are presented in this research, but some subjects to study still remain. What is the best way to match a mentee with a mentor? As the SKILL2E project continues, and more and more students are working abroad, a detailed research in the students' wishes towards the mentor selection process could be made. Once the cultural mentor program is launched and been in use for a while, a new study on how it succeeds could be wise to do to determine if all important aspects are covered. Since this research contained only three interviews, it could also be beneficial to ask several students about their experiences abroad in order to get a broader picture of the needs.

Student C said he might not have received as much help at the workplace from an Indian compared to a mentor the same nationality as he is which leads to one asking if the mentor's nationality matters. Further research in this might be useful.

This research has also cast light on the importance of a student's personality when adapting to a new culture, but a research of cultural mentoring from a mentor point of view is suggestible since mentoring is aims at mutual gain. Both parties' expectations need to be taken into consideration. What desires do cultural mentors have in terms of e.g. education and the execution of the mentoring process? What expectations do they have and how would they like to be matched with a mentee?

REFERENCES

Books and articles

Alvesson, Mats. 2002, *Understanding Organizational Culture*. SAGE Publications Ltd, 222 p.

Armstrong, Michael. 2006, *A Handbook of Management Techniques: A Comprehensive Guide To Achieving Managerial Excellence & Improved Decision Making*. 3rd edition, Kogan Page, 736 p.

Beamer, Linda & Varner, Iris I. 2008, *Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace*. McGraw-Hill, 360 p.

Buchanan, David & Huczynski Andrzej. 2004, *Organizational Behaviour An introductory Text*. 5th Edition, Harlow England: Pearson Education Limited, 959 p.

Carté, Penny & Fox, Chris. 2008, *Bridging the Culture Gap : A Practical Guide to International Business Communication*. 2nd Edition, Kogan Page Ltd, 216 p.

Casado-Lumbreras, Cristina; Colomo-Palacios, Ricardo; Soto-Acosta, Pedro; Misra, Sanjay. 2011, *Culture dimensions in software development industry: The effects of mentoring*. Scientific Research and Essays, vol 6, p. 2403-2412.

Clutterbuck, David. 2004, *Everyone Needs a Mentor : Fostering Talent in Your Organisation*. 4th Edition, Chartered Institute Of Personnel & Development, 208 p.

Clutterbuck, Phillip & Lane, Gill. 2004, *Situational Mentor : An International Review of Competencies and Capabilities in Mentoring*. Ashgate Publishing Group, 241 p.

Connor, Mary & Pokora, Julia. 2007, *Coaching and Mentoring at Work: Developing Effective Practice*. Open University Press, 263 p.

Ensher, Ellen A. & Murphy, Susan E. 1997, *Effects of Race, Gender, Perceived Similarity and Contact on Mentor Relationships*. Journal of Vocational Behavior, issue 50, p. 460-481.

- Gesteland, Richard R. 2005, *Cross-Cultural Business Behavior: Negotiating, Selling, Sourcing and Managing Across Cultures*. 4th Edition, Copenhagen Business School Press, 351 p.
- Gillham, Bill. 2005, *Research Interviewing : The Range of Techniques*. Open University Press, 194 p.
- Glenn, Jerome Clayton. 2010, *Handbook of Research Methods*. Jaipur : Global Media, 295 p.
- Guirdham, Maureen. 2005, *Communicating Across Cultures at Work*. 2nd Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 352 p.
- Hampden-Turner, Charles; Trompenaars, Fons; Lewis, David. 2000, *Building Cross-Cultural Competence: How to Create Wealth from Conflicting Values*. Yale University Press, 400 p.
- Hofstede, Geert & Hofstede, Gert Jan. 2005, *Cultures and Organisations: Software of the mind*. 2nd Edition, McGraw-Hill, 434 p.
- Johnson, Allan G. 2008, *The Forest and the Trees: Sociology as Life, Practice and Promise*. Temple University Press, 202 p.
- Kothari, C.R. 2004, *Research Methodology : Methods and Techniques*. New Age International, 418 p.
- de Mooij, Marieke. 2010, *Global Marketing and Advertising: Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*. SAGE Publications Ltd, 325 p.
- Mitchell, Charles. 2000, *Short Course in International Business Culture*. World Trade Press, 192 p.
- Moran, Robert T.; Harris, Philip R.; Moran, Sarah V. 2007, *Managing Cultural Differences: Global Leadership Strategies for the 21st century*, Elsevier Inc., 707 p.
- Nilsson, Björn & Waldemarson, Anna-Karin. 2007, *Kommunikation-Samspel mellan människor*. 3rd Edition, Studentlitteratur, 169 p.
- Novinger, Tracy. 2001, *Intercultural Communication : A Practical Guide*. University of Texas Press, 225 p.

Pedersen, Paula J. 2010, *Assessing intercultural effectiveness outcomes in a year-long study abroad program*. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, issue 34, p. 70-80.

Ragins, Belle Rose & Cotton, John L. 1999, *Mentor Functions and Outcomes: A Comparison of Men and Women in Formal and Informal Mentoring Relationships*. Journal of Applied Psychology, vol. 84, no 4, p. 529-550.

Rai, Rumina & Panna, Kishwar. 2010, *Introduction to Culture Studies*. Global Media, 99 p.

Rollinson, Derek. 2005, *Organisational Behaviour and Analysis*. Pearson Education Limited 768 p.

Rugg, Gordon & Petre, Marian. 2006, *Gentle Guide to Research Methods*. Open University Press. 254 p.

Schneider, Susan C. & Barsoux, Jean-Louis. 2003, *Managing across cultures*. 2nd Edition, Pearson Education Limited, 330 p.

Shea, Gordon. 2001, *Mentoring: How to Develop Successful Mentor Behaviors*. Course Technology Crisp, 110 p.

Stone, Florence. 2007, *Coaching, Counseling and Mentoring: How to Choose and Use the Right Technique to Boost Employee Performance*. 2nd Edition, AMACOM Books, 238 p.

Sullivan, Robert. 2000, *Entrepreneurial learning and mentoring*. MCB University Press, International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research, vol 6, no 3. 2000, p. 160-175.

Ting-Toomey, Stella. 2005, *Communicating Across Cultures*. The Guilford Press, 310 p.

On the web

Geert Hofstede. Homepage of Professor Hofstede. [www] Reviewed 1st February 2011 and 6th May 2012. <http://www.geert-hofstede.com/>

Hosio, Sanna. 2008, *Kansainvälinen opiskelukokemus ja siinä kohdatut ongelmat – hoitotyön opiskelijoiden arvioimana*. Turun yliopisto, hoitotieteen laitos. [www] Published 8th July 2008. Reviewed 3rd May 2012.

<https://www.doria.fi/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10024/39458/gradu2008hosio.pdf?sequence=1>

MDB Group. IDC Description. [www] Reviewed 14th March 2011.

http://www.mdbgroup.com/intercultural_development.htm

Orange, Peter N. 2007, *Reverse Culture Chock*. British Expats. [www] Reviewed 16th February 2011. <http://britishexpats.com/articles/moving-abroad/reverse-culture-shock/>

SKILL2E. The project's homepage, objectives of the project. [www] Reviewed 15th March 2012. <http://skill2e.fh-salzburg.ac.at/index.php?id=5>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview guide for the unstructured interviews

Cultural Differences

1. Where in your country do you come from?
2. What was your first reaction when you arrived to your host culture?
3. How did you prepare yourself before arriving?
4. How have the host country's people reacted towards you?
5. What are the biggest differences between your home and host country?
6. Are everyone treated the same way in your home country and is it different in the host country?
7. How individualistic are the people in your home country compared to the host country?
8. How does your home country relate to status and does it differ from the host country's view?
9. What hierarchal differences have you noticed?
10. Have you experienced any difficulties when dealing with time?
11. Have you experienced any differences related to communication?
12. What paralanguage "words" have you noticed and are they different back at home?

Personality

13. What made you pick the host country as your preferred location for the internship?
14. How would you describe yourself as a person?
15. Have you seen any changes in yourself during your stay in the host country?

16. How hard of a culture chock did you experience and what methods did you use to cope with it?

17. What new have you learnt that you can take with you home?

Mentoring

18. Has anyone at the workplace taught you “the manners of the company”?

19. How well have you adapted?

20. How is the workplace different from the ones back home?

21. What kind of help do you think you’d had from a mentor?

22. Describe your ideal mentor.

23. Does age and gender matter when picking a suitable mentor?

24. According to you, what are a mentor’s most important tasks?

25. At what point during your stay would you like to have a mentor’s support?

26. Would you like to choose a mentor yourself or be matched with someone?

Appendix 2: Interview 1

The first interview took place in a café 2nd May in Helsinki. The respondent is a 24-year-old male, Student A, from Turkey.

Author: Okay, let's start. So where in Turkey do you come from?

Student: Umm, my hometown? Or where I come from?

A: Where you come from.

S: Ah yes yes. Mugla, I live in Mugla.

A: Is it a big city compared to Helsinki?

S: No, it's quite small. About the same size as here. It's quite touristic compared to here.

A: Alright. Is it close to Ankara?

S: (laugh) No not really, it's actually close to Antalya and Alanya...

A: Okay. So what was your initial reaction when you arrived here?

S: My initial reaction, hmm... I don't know, I just came here, saw the snow and I thought it was really cool and I it's going to be hard for me, heh.

A: Have you been to Helsinki before?

S: No.

A: Alright. Did you prepare yourself in any way before you came here?

S: Umm, what kind of...?

A: Like, did you read any books or articles, ask someone who had been here to tell you how it is...?

S: Oh yeah, well actually I have a friend here, my cousin's closest friend, so she helped too much about, umm, information about here, so, actually, I was quite prepared when I arrived.

A: Oh I see. How have Finns reacted towards you then? Have you noticed any stereotyping towards you or have you come across any prejudice?

S: Stereotypes from Finnish people? No, actually I think they have been really kind and helpful; they have helped me so much.

A: So you say Finns have been nice to you then?

S: Well yes, I think they are that normally.

A: Okay, so, what do you think are the biggest differences between Turkey and Finland? Like, name a few that come first to your mind.

S: Ahh, okay... Actually in Helsinki, as far as I know, everything is in order. Everything is clear and people are quite calm, but in Turkey people are more excited and... Sometimes I can say that, I can so myself, that we in Turkey are living in a chaos, but in good chaos, I think. I like tha chaos, well not really a chaos, I think it's a... It's a... Special thing for people.

A: Umm, yes, so now I'm going to ask a few questions about Turkey in general because I don't know so much about your country yet. Do you think everyone are treated the same way in Turkey, like, no matter if they are women or men, old or young?

S: No, actually we have quite different acting from people, because actually, this is my theory, I divide Turkey into two parts: the Western and the Eastern parts. And it makes really a difference where you are.

A: Oh, so in what ways do the parts differ?

S: Umm, the West part of Turkey is trying to westernalize more, and the East part still protects their traditions and other stuff. And... yes.

A: But you're from the West, right?

S: Yes yes, I'm from Western Turkey that is more modern.

A: Okay. How individualistic then do you think your people are? Do they live home until a late age, or do they want to do stuff when they're really young, say 18?

S: Uhh in Turkey it's not like that because we are actually, as far as I know from Hofstede, very collectivistic country and in here it's sooo different... That's the biggest difference maybe.

A: Oh okay! So, how do you think you in Turkey relate to status? Is it okay to show off if you have a lot of money and, you know, a fancy car, or should you just hide it?

S: Yeah, actually, few people or less people show that, but generally, no.

A: So do you mean that it's not acceptable to brag with what you have? Are you treated differently if you show what you got?

S: No, no. Nothing happens if you show what you have but people thinks that he shows and... Well it's not so good actually.

A: Do you think it's the same in Finland as well?

S: Uh, yes I think. I don't really... but, umm... It's okay I think. Quite the same I think.

A: Okay. So, what comes to hierarchy is it, compared to Turkey, is it here so that the boss is above the employees? And everyone respects him or her very much? And is it the same way in Turkey?

S: Yeah, in Turkey, uhh, is this something about the distance between the employer and the employees?

A: Yes.

S: In Turkey it's quite big, the distance. But in here, I can say that just for my company, where I work, it's not that big. I can walk to my boss here, but in a respectful way.

A: But could you do that in Turkey too?

S: Yepp, well, no we can do that, not often, but we have to find the appropriate time to do that.

A: Alright, that's interesting... So moving on. Have you had any problems with time here? Are you punctual? Say we meet at 5 pm, are you then expected to be there at that time?

S: I am actually very keen on to be there on time.

A: Does it apply, to... The workplace too? If the work starts at 8 in the morning, are you there that time?

S: Well not like in Spain that you come when you want, but I think Turkey is in the middle of Finland and Spain really. I can say that. It's comfortable, but not too comfortable.

A: So have you noticed any communicational differences?

S: No, actually... People on the streets and the tram, umm... In Turkey you can communicate with others but here in Finland people want to concentrate on their music and be like, very closed, maybe shy even I don't know.

A: Yeah, it's quite silent in the public transportations. Have you found it weird?

S: No I don't see it as weird, it's people's choices what they wish to do really.

A: Have you noticed that Finns would use a lot of these paralinguistic "words"? Paralinguistic, you know what it is? They are these small kinds of words that you fill the sentences with, that don't really mean anything. You know like, "umm, "ahaa" and so on.

S: Oh I see! In Turkey, when you say "joo", in Turkey it means "hi". But it can also mean "no", heh. Yeah but that's something different, that is a bit weird for me when Finnish people say it, but otherwise we have the same reactions mainly.

A: Okay, good to know. How would you say that the non-verbal communication is? Have you noticed any gestures that would something else in Turkey than what they do here?

S: No, they're not different at all actually. I didn't notice that but, I... No.

A: Do Turkish people use a lot of gestures when they speak then, more than in Finland?

S: Yes quite a lot actually, here it's not that common really. You don't use your hands or something like that here a lot.

A: Okay. So, what made you choose Helsinki as your internship location?

S: Uh, umm... My international relations office, she booked it, actually, because they have an agreement with the university and Arcada, and they said that the most beneficial place to go is

here. And I was happy to hear that. Because I was in Belgium five years ago, so I had seen the Central Europe and I wanted to go North too.

A: So you are interested in other countries then?

S: Yes, and cultures. I'm kind of motivated to learn.

A: Well that's always good. Now, have you noticed any changes in yourself now that you've been here?

S: Umm... No actually, because in Belgium I had to learn their language but here I don't have to learn language and I think learning the language is important in that place, because I don't need to learn language... So that don't affect me. I can use English.

A: No gestures or anything else Finns do?

S: Hmm... No, not really.

A: Do you think Finns speak English better than the Turkish?

S: Oh yes, very well! Exactly.

A: Is it common to study a lot in Turkey? Not just the English language, but in general too. And does it cost to study at university?

S: Oh not just the language? Well actually, not really. There are governmental universities and private universities. At the governmental ones you don't have to pay, but at the private ones... I think it's the same here in Finland?

A: Well studying in general is for free, but there are some universities that charge for tuition. They are, I think at least, mostly focused on business though.

S: Oh yes I see. Well it's actually quite the same in Turkey too. We don't have so many private universities either. So, umm... I could say that it's free, yeah.

A: Umm... Yes. Did you experience a hard culture chock?

S: No, not at all!

A: Not at all then? Nothing?

S: No, because I used to go to Europe and actually, personal culture... I mean, I really like to watch foreign movies and listen to foreign music and I think it's beautiful. Yeah. So I think that's why I didn't experience a culture chock in that way maybe.

A: Well have you then learnt something here that you can take home with you? Any manners or useful - ...

S: Yeah I think it's so important here that everyone, even if he or she work, use calendars. They really give importance to time, but in Turkey it's not really that case. They don't use them in the same way.

A: Oh, so that's something you could tell your friends about?

S: Definitely, definitely. I am going to. Time is really important, you really should use it... uh... wisely I guess.

A: So you know my work is about mentoring, right? Now I'm going to ask you a few questions about mentors and mentoring in general. So has anyone at your company taught you the manners that you... Like, how you should talk and act when you are there?

S: Teaching? Not really teaching but more of a guide, you know guiding. I can say that really... There is a woman, a marketing manager, and she has helped me about everything. About my, um, place to stay and about the ticket and about the people behaving at work. That's... That's really made my job really easy. It's nice to have a tutor, that's what she should be called I think.

A: So you had a guide then, alright. Did anyone tell her to be your guide?

S: Heh, I don't know actually...

A: Heh alright. And how old is she, approximately?

S: Umm... well... I'd say something about 28, I think.

A: So fairly young then?

S: Yes yes, about 30 something.

A: So you have adapted well to the company because of her help?

S: Yes, really.

A: Is there something in the work culture that is different from in Turkey? Like, is it more common there to wear uniforms?

S: In Turkey I use uniform when I work, much, but here it's quite comfortable clothes. Like not dress up... And I think it's quite okay this way.

A: You mean you like when it's not so formal, or...?

S: Yes, I prefer the more casual look you know.

A: How do you think you had adapted if you hadn't had a guide at work?

S: Okay... That's a good question actually! Yeah, it's... It would be really hard for me to find a place, and also the transportation... And my tasks at work, that would be hard to understand actually.

A: Have the other ones at work helped you too, or just the marketing manager?

S: Yes, it's a small company so everyone has helped.

A: Well that's nice to hear. Do you think you could describe your ideal mentor?

S: I don't think so...! I can't describe...

A: Heh, I mean...

S: Yeah I mean that shouldn't be... too old, the mentor has to be young so that, umm, in that way she or he can understand me. And otherwise...

A: Do you think gender matters? If it's a man or a woman?

S: No, it doesn't matter for me, and... I don't know. Maybe he or she has, or, should know about the culture.

A: Do you mean your culture or both the host and your culture?

S: No no, here for example the Finnish culture. But yeah! It would be better if she knew about my culture too! It would be useful. Because if I asked some places to go, or some things to ask, he or she should answer me quite clearly and they would help me.

A: Do you think you would like to have a mentor for the whole time you work or just for, you know, a few weeks in the beginning?

S: Hmm... Uh, maybe in the beginning more yes, later it needs to be more open if I ask for support.

A: So you say that you would like her to be there more often in the beginning and then later only if you take the initiative, right?

S: Yes, that's the better way I think.

A: Umm... What do you think a mentor's most important work would be?

S: I can say that supporting and guidance. Yeah.

A: Do you think it has to start from you or would you like the mentor to come and ask you how you feel?

S: Yeah, well... We can say again that in the beginning he or she can help me and ask me everything, but after that... Yeah. When I feel more close to him or her I go and ask for help.

A: If you had the option, would you like to choose the mentor yourself or let someone else match you with you an appropriate mentor?

S: Umm... I don't know really, heh... Yeah, I don't need to choose actually.

A: So you don't think it makes a difference if you can choose or not?

S: No not really, it doesn't matter really.

A: Alright. Well thank you so much for the interview! You have been very helpful and produced a lot of good material for me.

S: Thank you!

Appendix 3: Interview 2

The interview was taken 3rd May via Skype, a virtual communication system. The respondent is a 24-year-old male, Student B, from Germany.

Author: Alright, you're good to start? Let's go. Had you been to Austria before?

Student: Yes, quite many times. With my parents, but as a child, we used to go there.

A: Okay. How does it differ from Germany?

S: Well, it's not that different. But I first reacted to the snow, and the mountains...

A: So you had been there before, did you study at all about the country before you started your internship?

S: No... Not really, I just had to prepare myself for the trip there, pay for the highways. It's really... Everything is really... Quite the same there, compared to Germany.

A: Okay, because I was just going to ask what differences there are between the countries?

S: Well the language of course is different.

A: In what way is it different? Is it understandable?

S: Yes, I understand, it's German you know, but... They speak different type of German. Sometimes it's really hard to understand. They don't speak the same way as we do.

A: Oh alright. But who understands the other one better, a German or an Austrian?

S: Oh no, the Austrians understand better. All the movies have subtitles and they watch a lot of German TV, so they understand better. But I think the Austrian German is really hard to understand.

A: So how did you understand your colleagues at work?

S: I sometimes did, they really tried to use the "Germany-German" words with me.

A: But you didn't use English with them, correct?

S: No, heh, no... But I'm pretty sure I would have understood much more then. I really thought it would be much easier, it was a lot harder to understand. When they speak to each other, I let them talk time to time because when they were having a conversation with someone it was sometimes hard to understand what they said, but someone tried to explain to me.

A: Okay, so your colleagues helped you then?

S: Yeah... Sometimes you know.

A: Ah alright. So, moving on. Do you think people are equal in Austria? Are everyone treated in the same way?

S: Yeah, I think so. No matter the age, gender...

A: And is it the same in Germany as well?

S: Oh yeah.

A: Okay.

S: They don't really like people from other states in Austria, it's always like that. They have these internal... Differences or don't come along so well. And in Germany, you like, make fun of Austrians.

A: But did this affect you and your working?

S: No, no. I didn't see that.

A: Okay. Did you notice any differences in hierarchies at the workplace, comparing Germany to Austria?

S: Umm... No, it was really nice. My boss was really nice. But it might be like this with miners, that everyone talk and are nice to everybody.

A: Is it different than in Germany?

S: Well no, I can say that it feels almost the same here. Not at every work but at least this industry.

A: Did you then notice any differences related to time? Like use of time.

S: Umm... We had to take the bus to work and if you missed the transport you couldn't go to work.

A: So you were dependent on the one bus taking you to work?

S: Yeah. We had a break of half an hour, and sometimes they were watching with a clock. Maybe not when you start working but the breaks.

A: Is it like that in Germany too?

S: Hmm... Yeah, quite strict in a way.

A: Okay. What kind of differences did you experience if we're talking about communication? You mentioned the language already but are there some other things?

S: Hmm... No... Not anything else.

A: Do they use gestures a lot then, and do they differ from the German ones?

S: Heh, no, they don't do that a lot. And neither do we, so I didn't see anything different. The language is quite the same, you know.

A: Okay. Well did you learn any new words, in the Austrian German, during your stay?

S: Heh yes! But they're pretty... Pretty... Well we use them in Germany too.

A: I see, heh. So why did you decide to go to Austria?

S: Hmm... They have the best mines. And I wanted to go abroad.

A: Did your school help you with finding a good placement...

S: No no, I asked some fellow students, you know.

A: Ah okay, that's good.

S: We had to go there during the winter, because of the heat you know. The working conditions were very good there because it was such a big mine.

A: Oh! In general, are the working conditions better in Austria then?

S: No not in general, but at this place yes.

A: Alright. So, I heard you have travelled a lot before too. How would you describe yourself as a person?

S: Yeah I have. I like studying languages...

A: Had you spent longer times abroad before spending the one month in Austria? Not for a vacation but for example working.

S: Well I spent two months in South America.

A: Wow, that's cool!

S: Yeah, yeah. But I didn't work there, just travelled. And I have also travelled in Europe.

A: Okay. Well did you see any changes in yourself when you were working in Austria? Did pick up any of their habits, like what they were doing?

S: Mmm no, not really... What do you mean?

A: For example, did you start to speak in the same way as your colleagues did?

S: Hmm... Yeah, sometimes I tried to use the same words as they do, and talk to each other.

A: But did you then experience a culture chock when you went there?

S: No, because I have been there sometimes before.

A: So the fact that the two are very similar has an impact, correct?

S: Yes, I think it's why.

A: Alrighty. So did you have anyone at work place who showed how to, like, behave and speak?

S: Yes, one of my co-workers showed me around a bit.

A: Was it a man or a woman?

S: No, all the miners are men.

A: Okay, was he older than you?

S: Yeah yeah, they were all older than me.

A: Okay, how old?

S: Hmm... 25 to 50, maybe a bit older.

A: And this one who helped you, how old do you think he was?

S: Well, not just one of my co-workers were helping, everyone did spend time with everyone, yes.

A: Oh okay! So they all helped you? There wasn't just one, who was your, like, mentor or something?

S: No, some were more helpful than others but in general all were helpful.

A: Okay, but how do you think you would have benefited from having just one person, helping you much more?

S: Well... yeah.

A: If you could have chosen a person to help you, how would you describe the person's characteristics?

S: A bit older of course, so that he knows to teach me you know... Hmm, it's really hard. And then to be fair.

A: Do you think it matters if the person is a man or a woman?

S: No, no, it doesn't matter at all.

A: Do you think you would like to choose a mentor yourself or perhaps let someone else decide who your mentor would be?

S: Hmm... I don't think it matters, I only care about what kind of person it is.

A: And at what point do you think you would like to have help?

S: Umm... I think in the beginning, the first weeks... So I get used to everything and... Yeah.
The beginning.

A: Okay, well I think this is it. Thank you!

S: Heheh, thanks!

Appendix 4: Interview 3

HAASTATTELU

Alla olevien kysymysten tarkoituksena on kartoittaa kokemuksiasi maassa, jossa olet suorittanut työharjoittelusi. Kysymyksissä mainittu kohdemaahan on se maa, jossa työskentelit. Kursivoitujen kysymysten tarkoituksena on tukea pääkysymystä ja niihin vastaaminen ei ole pakollista, mutta ne antavat viitteitä siitä, mitä kysymyksellä haetaan.

Ikä: 30

Asuinpaikka: Tampere

Missä olit työharjoittelussa ja kuinka kauan? Intia 1kk

Millainen yritys oli kyseessä (ala) ja kuinka suuresta yrityksestä oli kysymys (työntekijöiden lukumäärä)?

Olin töissä toimistolla ja tiloissa oli myös tehdas, työntekijöitä yrityksellä oli noin sata

Kulttuurieroista

Mikä oli ensireaktiosi, kun saavuit kohdemaahan?

Olin hieman ihmeissäni ja innoissani päästessäni vihdoinkin käymään Intiassa

Olitko tutustunut kohdemaahan ennen lähtöä (esimerkiksi lukemalla lehtiä, kirjoja, kysymällä tutuilta kokemuksista?)

Olin lukenut paljon matkaoppaita ja paikallisesta bisneskulttuurista ja kysellyt kaverilta neuvoja ja apuja.

Kuinka kohdemaan ihmiset ottivat sinut vastaan? *Kohtasitko sinuun kohdistuvia stereotyyppioita tai ennakkoluuloja? Miten ne ilmenivät käytännössä?*

Ihmiset ottivat vastaan hyvin. Kyseessä ei ollut mikään turistikohde, vaan paikka, missä ei ole paljon valkoihoisia, niin sain osakseni paljon katseita ja moni tuli kysymään saako ottaa valokuvan.

Mitkä ovat sinun mielestäsi suurimmat erot Suomen ja kohdemaan välillä? Mainitse muutama ensimmäiseksi mieleen tuleva asia.

Liikenne

- Se miten hyvin se toimii, vaikka tuntuu, että liikennesääntöjä on minimaalisesti ja niitäkään ei kukaan noudata.

Ruoka

- Raaka-aineet olivat tuoreita ja mausteet kiehtovia. Ottaisin milloin tahansas Suomeen samanlaisen ruokakulttuurin valmisruokien jne tilalle.

Ihmiset

- Ihmiset olivat iloisia ja hymyilivät paljon.

Kohdeltiinko kohdemaassa kaikkia eri tavalla, vai olivatko ihmiset eri asemassa esimerkiksi sukupuolen tai iän perusteella?

Intiassa on melko vahva kastiperinne, joka asettaa ihmiset eriarvoiseen asemaan. Vanhempia tulee kunnioittaa ja perheet ovat hyvin tärkeitä. Naiskuskit olivat harvinaisia, mutta niitäkin näkyi välillä.

Millaisia eroja huomasit kohdemaan ja Suomen välillä, kun kyseessä ovat erilaiset työpaikkaan liittyvät hierarkiat? *Oliko esimies korkeammassa asemassa kuin Suomessa? Millainen kynnys oli lähestyä esimiestä?*

Esimiehellä on paljon valtaa Intiassa. Paikalliset työntekijät eivät ota paljoa vastuuta ja kysyvät paljon neuvoa ja esimies joutuu päättämään lähes kaiken. Myös palautteen antaminen on erilaista Intiassa, on aivan normaalia, että

esimies antaa paljon ”äänekästä” palautetta työntekijälle, joka tekee ison virheen.

Millaisia eroja huomasit ajankäyttöön liittyen? *Koitko ajan tuottavan sinulle ongelmia? Oliko töihin ajoissa saapuminen suhteellinen käsite (vrt. eteläeurooppalaisiin tapoihin) vai alkoiko työt juuri siihen kellonaikaan, kuin oli sovittu?*

Töihin tultiin täsmällisesti, mutta työtehtävissä ajat olivat joustava käsite. Kun menit kysymään jotain tärkeätä paperia, että voit suorittaa omat laskelmat loppuun, niin saattoi tulla vastaus, että tuon sen 10 minuutin päästä. Kun oli 4 tuntia kulunut ja kävit kysymässä, että onko sitä paperia löytynyt tuli vastaus, että menee vielä 5 minuuttia. Oli hyvin todennäköistä, että tästäkin meni vielä vähintään kolme tuntia ennen kuin paperi oli sinulla kädessä.

Millaisia kommunikaatioon liittyviä erilaisuuksia kohtasit? *Olivatko kohdemaan kansalaiset suomalaisiin verrattuna hiljaisempia?*

Ihmiset puhuivat paljon ja osasivat puhua englantia, osa huonommin ja osa paremmin, mutta aksentit olivat hyvin erilaisia ja tuottivat välillä vaikeuksia. Työkaverit tulivat paljon juttelemaan ja kyselemään kuulumisia viikonlopun jälkeen.

Millaisia erilaisuuksia suomalaisten ja kohdemaan kansalaisten välillä elekieleen liittyen huomasit? *Kohtasitko esimerkiksi väärinkäsityksiä, koska kohdemaan kansalaiset käyttivät eleitä, jotka Suomessa tarkoittavat jotain muuta?*

Intiassa on jännä tapa heiluttaa päätä ja se tarkoittaa hyväksymistä tai samaa kuin selvä. Se tuotti vähän huvittavia tilanteita ja ihmetystä, kun toinen sanoo tekevänsä jonkun työn, mutta kuitenkin heiluttaa päätä samalla tavalla, kuin sanoisi ei.

Sinä

Kuinka paljon olit matkustellut ennen ulkomailla suorittamaasi työharjoittelua?

Olen matkustellut jonkin verran lähinnä Euroopassa. tehnyt noin 5-6 kappaletta viikon mittaisia reissuja eri maihin.

Miksi lähdit juuri valitsemaasi maahan? *Mitkä asiat vaikuttivat päätökseesi?*

Intia on kehittyvä talouskulttuuri ja halusin päästä tutustumaan kyseisen maan työkulttuuriin, työtapoihin. Olin myös erittäin kiinnostunut ruokakulttuurista ja siitä miten niin monta eri uskontokuntaa voi elää rinnakkain ilman mitään ongelmia.

Kuinka kuvailisit itseäsi henkilönä? *Oletko kiinnostunut kulttuureista ja kielistä? Kuinka helppoa sinun on tutustua uusiin ihmisiin?*

Olen erittäin kiinnostunut erikulttuureista ja kielistä, vaikka välillä tuntuukin, että uuden kielen oppiminen on hankalaa. Omasta mielestä koen, että olen hyvä tutustumaan uusiin ihmisiin.

Huomasitko kohdemaassa oleskelusi aikana itsessäsi muutoksia, jotka olivat peräisin kohdemaan kulttuurista, kuten eleitä tai muutoksia kommunikaatiossasi? Kuvaile millaisia muutoksia huomasit.

Huomasin, että aloin itsekin heiluttelemaan päätäni ymmärtämisen merkiksi ja osoittaakseni, että hoidan jonkun tehtävän.

Koitko vahvan kulttuurishokin ja millaisin keinoin selvisit siitä?

Koin kulttuurishokin vasta tullessani takaisin Suomeen, kun huomasin miten kovasti olisin halunnut lähteä takaisin. Kai voi sanoa, että selvisin siitä niin, että päätin lähteä Intiaan takaisin heti kun tulee uusi mahdollisuus.

Mentorointi

Oliko yrityksessä joku, joka ”opetti sinut talon tavoille”? Kuka hän oli ja kumpaa sukupuolta hän edustaa? Mitä hän käytännössä teki?

Yrityksen miespuolinen suomalainen toimitusjohtaja esitteli yrityksen ja työntekijät joiden kanssa tulen työskentelemään. Kävelimme toimiston ja varaston läpi missä esiteltiin missä mitään tehdää ja kuka on vastuussa mistäkin. Melko paljon opein sit tarinoilla, mitä hän kertoi Intialaisista työntekijöistä.

Hänen ensimmäinen työtehtävä oli käydä haastattelemassa toimiston työntekijät läpi ja selvittää mitä he tekevät, mitkä ovat päivittäiset rutiinit jne. Näin opein paljon siitä kuka hoitaa mitäkin tehtävää ja pääsin samalla tutustumaan muihin.

Kuinka hyvin sopeuduit yritykseen?

Sopeuduin yritykseen hyvin. Alussa oli hankalampaa, kun joutui odottamaan, että joku etsii jonkun paperin. Sitten opein hieman kasaamaan työtehtäviä niin, että tein toisia hommia silloin, kun piti odottaa jotain.

Jos sinulla ei ollut tukenasi yrityksessä työskentelevää henkilöä, miten luulet että sellaisen henkilön apu olisi vaikuttanut sopeutumiseesi? Jos sinulla oli tukihenkilö, miten luulet että olisit pärjännyt ilman häntä?

Ilman tukihenkilöä olisi sopeutuminen jäänyt heikommalle pohjalle, koska häneltä sai paljon sellaista tietoa, mitä intialainen työntekijä ei välttämättä arvaisi kertoa.

Millainen on sinun mielestäsi ideaali mentori? *Kuvaile hänen ominaisuuksiaan muutamalla sanalla, esimerkiksi ikä, sukupuoli, tavoitteet elämässä ja työpaikalla.*

Ideaali mentori on pitkäjänteinen, joka osaa kertoa myös sellaisista pienistä asioista, jotka saattavat tuntua itsestäänselvyyksiltä. Iällä ja sukupuolella ei ole mielestäni paljon väliä. Tavoitteilla on väliä siinä, että pystyy samaistumaan ja löytämään jonkun yhteisen asian, jolloin oppimisesta tulee mielenkiintoisempaa.

Mitkä ovat sinun mielestäsi mentorin tärkeimmät tehtävät?

Auttaa, opastaa ja tutustuttaa. Varsinkin työyhteisöön tutustuttaminen on tärkeää, että pääsee mahdollisimman nopeasti sisään työporukkaan, ettei jää eristyksiin.

Missä vaiheessa työharjoittelua kaipaisit mentorin tukea eniten? Haluaisitko hänen olevan sinun käytettävissäsi koko työharjoittelun ajan?

Alussa tarvitsin apua, kun piti selvittää mitä pitää tehdä ja millä aikataululla ja keltä kannattaa käydä kysymässä tietoja. Itse en kokenut, että tarvitsisin

mentoria koko harjoittelun ajan. Huomasin hyödylliseksi sen, että pystyin kysymään myös työkavereilta apuja, koska heillä oli täsmällisempää tietoa.