

KANALI

FROM RAUMA TO THE WORLD

Learning International Business
Competence by Doing

Ed. Marina Wikman

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Satakunta University of Applied Sciences

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Foreword

We welcome you to take a peek at the practices of Kanali Campus of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (SAMK), on which international activities are an intrinsic part of everything on campus.

With this publication we wish to give an insight into the ways of working on Kanali Campus, and hopefully intrigue you to find out more, to seek contact, and establish even more cooperation with us.

First you are painted a general picture of how the campus has developed, and what it is today, as well as of what the role of the Chamber of Commerce is in developing educational cooperation with local business and industry.

Our pedagogical recipe, modified problem-based learning, and English as the means for teaching and learning are brought to you to demonstrate the tools for the studies. Next we present how international projects are implemented in the modules, and how the growing importance of Asia is taken into account on campus. The article about the master's thesis acquaints you with the practical approach of research, and the following theme deals with practical training in the bachelor studies. Student exchanges are an elemental part of international practices and our views of them are also discussed. Last but not least, two of our graduates tell you their stories, starting from the time they were accepted to Kanali Campus and SAMK and leading us to where they are today.

We hope you enjoy the journey!

Instruments of internationalisation

Marina Wikman

In higher education, worldwide internationalisation is one of the core areas to focus on, and Kanali Campus of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences is no exception. Internationalisation is an integral part of the strategy on campus. It has been set to be one of the focuses of the campus, and it is included and implemented in various ways to meet the needs of working life.

From the beginning, internationalisation has been an essential component in the activities at SAMK Kanali Campus, and from a modest start at the beginning of the 90s, it has grown to play a major role in producing future business people. Cooperation with local companies, with the support of the local Chamber of Commerce, is most important in providing the students with real-life experiences, and with the opportunity to participate in company projects, and thus also the chance to apply the knowledge gained.

On Kanali Campus, problem-based learning (PBL) has been used as the teaching method for more than 15 years. It has been developed and modified to fulfil the changing requirements of business and also to furnish the students with skills to work in teams and to search for information actively and independently, as well as to “see the big picture”.

Projects integrated into studies become even more valuable when they are carried out for real companies, either in Finland or abroad. When the projects are run together with international partner universities, and the participating students make up teams consisting of members from several partner institutions, learning to work in multinational and multicultural teams is guaranteed.

Working together with people from all over the world is not possible, either for students or for the faculty, unless they have a common language. English as the lingua franca enables exchanges and other cooperation across borders, and opens doors to working life, which is ever expanding. When language teaching and business subject teaching are linked together, and are taught by specialists, better learning results are reached in both.

The main goal of offering degrees is to provide education in areas in which professionals are needed. As a business campus Kanali offers studies in international business, and in order to keep up with the changes and developments in regional and global working life, the International Business and Marketing Logistics programme will start in a renewed form and with a revised name in autumn 2014. The new International Business programme will keep the focus on international business and logistics, as they are in constant demand, but will also add service design specialisation to the programme. Expertise in Asian business and culture will remain one of the options to pursue, as business with Asian countries is growing in importance. Businesses need to develop their operations continuously in order to succeed, and people also need to develop and update their skills. Offering education that is advantageous to both is therefore required. The master's programme is a part-time programme, offering people in working life the chance to bring their skills up to date, and at the same time develop the operations and processes of the company they work for. Most of the assignments throughout their studies can be linked to the jobs and companies of the students, and the master's theses are actually real-life development projects, as the research is done for their employers in the areas that need studying and updating.

Completing the obligatory practical training abroad offers the students the additional possibility to become more international, and get an insight into customs and habits in another country both at work and in free time. It is becoming more and more common to go abroad for practical training, or at least part of it, and thus get valuable hands-on experience of an international environment.

Student exchanges are a natural part of being an international campus. Incoming students make the campus livelier and more colourful, and add to the cultural variety together with the international degree programme students, and the local students. Going abroad gives both Finnish and foreign degree programme students the chance to become more international and add to personal experience and internationalise one's own networks.

Ultimately, the main objective is to educate professionals who are valuable assets for companies in the increasingly international business world, and thus have more of a chance to become employed, hopefully to exciting and motivating posts.

Satakunta University of Applied Sciences in Rauma: international profile in business education

Jaana Vase

Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (SAMK) has a versatile range of educational services which are strongly linked to internationalisation and foreign trade.

SAMK in Rauma offers BBA programmes in International Business and Marketing Logistics, and International Business, and also educates mechanical and production engineers, logistics, industrial management and maritime engineers as well as sea captains. In addition to bachelor programmes there is also a master's degree programme, Business Management and Entrepreneurship. This article focuses on business education that is given on Kanali Campus.

International education was already started at the beginning of 1990s, when the first compulsory courses held in English were included into the curricula. The English-tuition courses encouraged students to apply for an exchange abroad as a part of their studies, and enabled Kanali Campus in Rauma to receive international exchange students. Thus began internationalisation at home.

In the early 90s the credits taught in English were tailor-made for a small group of students. From 1995 to 2013 the amount of English-taught credits has grown sixfold, from 50 to 300. There is no sign of recession in this matter. The growth is mainly the outcome of having enthusiastic teachers and other members of staff who willingly started to teach and work in English, and made our internationalisation possible.

In 1994 Kanali Campus had one incoming exchange student. The number of incoming students has grown greatly since then, and has stabilised to 50-60 annually. The exchange students mainly come from European countries, but also e.g. from Asia and North America. We send tens of our students on exchange, and we are also pleased that the volume of practical trainings abroad has risen from zero to around 20 in an academic year.

SAMK in Rauma receives several foreign lecturers and professors annually, as well as sends lecturers from their own faculty to cooperation universities abroad. These exchanges make it possible to widen the perspectives of the faculty, of the students, and to give new angles to international projects.

Since 1997 a new and completely English-tuition programme was introduced: International Business and Marketing Logistics. This made it possible to receive not only exchange students, but also degree-programme students from other countries. During the last academic year this programme has aroused interest among students from more than 20 different countries all over the world. Even more alternatives are available for foreign students to choose from, since 80% of the courses in the Finnish programme Kansainvälinen kauppa (International Business) are conducted in English.

In autumn 2014 a new English-tuition programme, International Business, will start in Rauma, replacing the International Business and Marketing Logistics programme as well as the IBS programme. The new programme will have a wider approach to international business as service design is added as one option of specialisation.

The master's programme, Business Management and Entrepreneurship (BME), also has non-Finnish students, as the tuition is totally in English. Exchanges are possible in the BME programme, as well, and there is a growing number of students from partner universities completing part of their studies in Rauma.

Also characteristic of the business studies at SAMK on Kanali Campus in Rauma is a strong connection with working life. The studies are combined and applied to a variety of real business cases. This approach is introduced already at the beginning of the studies and deepens and widens throughout the studies, thus giving the students an understanding of working life in practice.

Local chamber of commerce co-operating with SAMK

Johanna Huhtala

The mission of Rauma Chamber of Commerce is to promote and support the business community in the economic region of Rauma. It represents a business voice for local enterprises and holds a strong and active position in the local business fields. Rauma Chamber of Commerce is a network of 400 companies throughout the Rauma region, with a number of educational institutes also among our members.

Companies in the region operate in many and varied fields, from the forest industry to water faucets to the maritime industry. Foreign trade has traditionally been an integral part of business in the area, so it is natural that a great deal of business is international. Local educational institutions play an important role as providers of skilful labour to meet the needs of the region.

SAMK works very actively and closely with us. Offering international business degrees on bachelor and master levels, SAMK Kanali Campus produces knowledge for trading in the area. Together we offer local companies good possibilities to co-operate with students, both Finnish and international. The collaboration takes the form of e.g. student projects and practical training. In a joint effort we have also been able to discover appropriate subjects for theses. With good cooperation and connections we have possibilities to bring companies and students closer to each other.



Problem Based Learning – contributor in generation of business and working life skills of students

Petteri Teppola

SAMK and Kanali Campus follow the paradigms of the humanistic idea of man, the idea of changing the nature of knowledge and the constructivistic nature of learning. These principles are written in the curricula of the degree programmes and they direct the pedagogical development and solutions of SAMK.

Problem Based Learning, PBL, has been applied already for 16 years on Kanali Campus in Rauma. The degree programme of International Business and Marketing Logistics (IBML) was the first to introduce the pedagogical environment for business study purposes in Finland as early as 1997.

The initiative for pedagogical change came from SAMK's own educators, teaching professional business courses. These educators were not satisfied with the results of traditional lecture-based pedagogy, neither did the students sense the meaningfulness of the conventional learning environment. That is why new educational practices were seen as inspirational and were welcomed warmly.

A real boost and encouragement for the development of PBL was being awarded the Centre of Excellence in Education by The Finnish Ministry of Education, which was granted to Kanali Campus in 2002. In argumentation for the award, it was emphasised that it was given especially for the highly developed PBL learning environment in the IBML degree programme. Recognition at the early stages of the PBL application was significant for the future development of the pedagogical environment.

The core idea of PBL

The idea behind PBL originates from Thomas Dewey's ideology "learning by doing". The idea is to activate the learner in the learning process in order to improve the learning results. The plan is also to guide the student on the learning path towards the relevant knowledge and mastery of the knowledge, and finally the ability to apply it in practice.

PBL is also an overall pedagogical environment and solution that consists of the following characteristics:

1. Reality-based problems to support set learning and study objectives,
2. Systematic practice of problem-solving,
3. Focus on the students' self-directive learning process,
4. Working in small self-directed groups and
5. Groups guided by the tutor. (Fjällström & Teppola 1998, 3)

The tutor in PBL is an instructor that guides the group processes and learning. The tutor's task in the group sessions is not to give answers to the problems at hand, but to guide the group to ask the right questions themselves, and help in finding and looking for appropriate information, if needed.

The model of Kanali Campus PBL process

PBL is introduced to the students in its original form right at the beginning of the studies. The practices of PBL are greatly similar to regular case studies, which refers to the fact that PBL is applied with the purpose to learn a well-defined area of theoretical knowledge.

Learning a new way of doing things takes time, and learning the processes and principles of the PBL environment takes approximately six months. The students have then mastered all that is needed to operate successfully in the learning environment.

For the first-year students the PBL learning process follows the original and systematic method. It is called the “7- Jumps” process which to a high degree is in line with the traditional academic research procedure. See Figure 1.

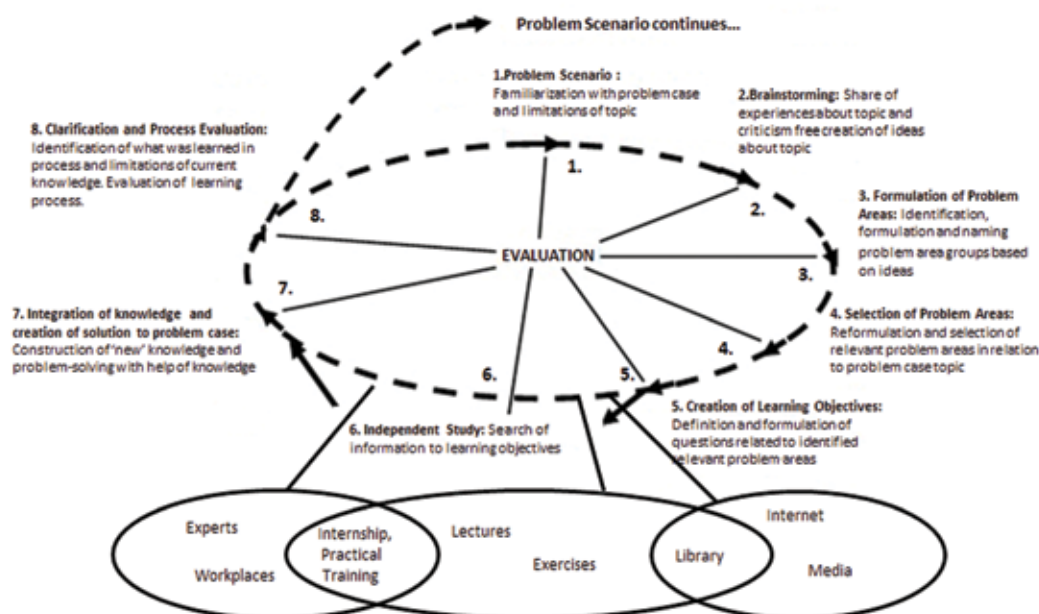


Figure 1. Problem-Based Learning and Information Search (modified from Poikela & Nummenmaa 2006, 78.)

The teachers involved in the course modules create and write the problem cases or stimuli. The cases are aligned with the objectives of the education and represent the central competence areas to be developed in the respective modules. The problem cases are either directly or indirectly built on working-life situations which simulate typical challenges in the given problem areas.

The basic model of the PBL process on Kanali Campus in Rauma consists of three meetings per PBL-cycle. At the beginning of the studies the cases are run in one week, more extensive cases may take 2-3 weeks. Throughout the cycle the students work in small PBL groups (5-8 students/group).

In the first, so-called “Opening Meeting” (stages 1-5 in Figure 1) the student groups familiarise themselves with the problem scenario and case. They identify the main problem areas and their competence gaps as learning needs, in order to be able to solve the problem.

At the first meeting the students create the so-called learning objectives, which reflect the learning needs and thus guide the students’ independent study to close up the competence gaps. The first meeting is supported by teacher tutors who are trained PBL tutors, and competent in the PBL process. The groups are merely advised and shown the way towards the learning objectives or “right answers”.

The independent study (stage 6 in Figure 1) takes place between the first and second meetings. All students search for information on the identified learning objectives to ensure extensive coverage of the topic in hand. Library services, such as books and ebooks, databases and journals, are a critical resource for the functionality of PBL. Lectures placed between the first and second PBL meetings are not a direct source of information to the learning objectives, but their role is to deepen or widen the knowledge of the given topic.

The second meeting, “Check Point” (stage 7 in Figure 1), takes place after the independent study. In the meeting the students share their findings with one another in the groups and combine the knowledge to a common knowledge base. A solution to the original problem scenario is created with the help of the new knowledge. In the check-point meetings the groups have expert teachers, i.e. teachers whose subject areas the given stimulus deals with, to guide and lead them. The tutor teacher, who is responsible for the particular stimulus, monitors the progress of the work in the groups, and helps and answers the students’ questions.

The third and final meeting of one PBL problem case cycle is called the “Presentation Meeting”, or “Closing” (stage 8 in Figure 1). In this meeting the student groups present their solutions and argumentations concerning the problem scenario to the teachers who created the problem case, as well as to the other PBL student groups. The groups get feedback and are evaluated by the teachers and also by the other students.

The PBL student groups keep a record of the problem case process by writing a memo that covers each stage in the PBL problem case cycle, and it also includes the main findings of the group members’ independent study. The memo is part of the PBL and course evaluation.

At the end of the course the PBL groups write a “Final Report”. It summarises and describes the learning outcomes of all the problem cases. In this report the students also discuss their learning process. The Final Report also constitutes a part of the evaluation of the course.

Where are we heading with PBL at Kanali Campus?

During the last six years the PBL at Kanali Campus has been developed more in a project-oriented direction to serve local business and public organisations. Typical projects are e.g. business process evaluations and their development. Professional study modules have different focus areas and respective topics and themes, so the student projects’ themes follow this framework.

The students seek and choose the companies suitable for each project themselves, and ask permission to conduct a project in the organisation. By doing so, the students also learn how to contact and operate with business people, as well as become familiar with local business life and its operators. In feedback the

foreign students often praise the working life projects, since the projects help them to learn a lot about Finnish culture and work culture.

The IBML programme has traditionally had a great number of foreign students, both degree and exchange students. The large number of nationalities in the PBL groups increases the awareness of other cultures among the students. These circumstances improve multicultural teamwork skills and at the same time prepare the students for international business operations in their future careers.

The future development of PBL at Kanali Campus will likely be orientated towards deeper and more systematic cooperation with local businesses. Also the international dimension will be connected to the development of the learning environment in the future. Good cooperation with international partner universities in research will be a great asset, as the students can take part in research projects as part of their studies and work together with foreign students in multicultural project groups.

All in all, at Kanali Campus in Rauma we see PBL as a great functional method for improvement of pedagogics, especially in professional and application-oriented learning. This, in turn, helps us to extend the cooperation with local organisations, and to increase the awareness of the contents of our degree programmes, and the competences we produce. Furthermore, our applied form of PBL will help us to create a bridge for deeper cooperation with regional enterprises and other organisations.

During their studies the students learn to know local enterprises and employers quite well, and the students also partly operate as “bridge makers”. By applying the skills learned in PBL and having working-life-based projects, the students also pass important information about the status of local organisations to us in the academic world. That way we as a higher education institution become more aware of the needs of local organisations, and can develop and provide services that help them to succeed better in their fields.

One of our missions at Kanali Campus is to produce relevant competences for regional employers and also to create circumstances for both employers and students to find each other. In this role the applied PBL has proven to be a very functional choice.

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English language as a tool

Marina Wikman

Some twenty years ago it was still considered a little strange, and even comical, to teach in English in a country such as Finland, in which the national language is not English. Taking also into account that at that time in most courses the participants were all Finnish, it sounded even stranger. Thus, starting to use English in class was a brave step to take for the small business campus of SAMK in Rauma, a seaside town in Finland.

Today on Kanali Campus there are “two-and-a-half” business programmes, which are conducted in English: International Business and Marketing Logistics (IBML) is a bachelor programme in which teaching is completely in English, and we have a master’s programme, Business Management and Entrepreneurship (BME), in which the tuition is also in English. In addition to the two programmes, all professional courses are offered in English in our International Business programme (IB).

Now two decades later, it is easy to say that the decision to teach in English has proven to be the right decision to take early on. In most European countries, and elsewhere in the world, instruction is also conducted in English. We need a lingua franca to provide the students with a real opportunity to internationalise and build a career in the world that is becoming smaller and smaller both in business and in private life. The Confederation of Finnish Industries, EK (Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto), has also taken a stance for tuition in English, stating that internationalisation at home is of crucial importance for higher education in Finland, and the English language plays an integral role in this. (Website of Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto 2013)

An article in *Opettaja*, a Finnish magazine for educational professionals, states that the English language is part of internationalisation, and for this reason there should be more courses in English to support the professional growth of the students. It also insists that special attention should be paid to the English skills of the faculty, both in teaching and in everyday situations. Also awareness of cross-cultural understanding needs to be addressed, to provide a smooth educational environment (Peittoaako englanti suomen? 2013)

English skills of the faculty

SAMK, as well as any other educational institution operating in English in Finland, still faces a few challenges when changing the language to one other than the national language and the mother tongue of most of the faculty. Even if the majority of the faculty, when completing their own degrees, have had to study at least some books and articles in English, not every one of them has been used to speaking the language. The doubts raised, when instruction in English started, were the skills of the faculty in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, as well as fluency – the same issues as those raised by the students at the beginning of the English-tuition days. We have moved on, the world has moved on; having non-native speakers of English in all imaginable areas of work using flawed English is commonplace and accepted as such.

Supporting the faculty to improve their English skills has been the rule at SAMK since teaching in English started. One way of doing this has been offering the teachers English courses. Short intensive courses together with a few other higher education institutions, HEIs, are organised annually. They offer a chance

both to work on one's English in a specified area, such as lecturing or reporting, and also to network with colleagues in the same field in other HEIs, and thus sharing ideas. There are also weekly sessions on offer. They support maintaining and improving English skills, and are organised during the working day at times which are possible for all interested participants among the staff. Development of one's skills in English is considered essential, alongside with keeping up with the progress in one's own professional field.

A doubt often raised is whether the contents of the foreign-language courses are actually as extensive as when the faculty uses their own language. This is a legitimate question, especially if we think of the first courses that a non-native lecturer gives in English. Then again, this applies to anyone and anything when doing something new for the first time: all work is a learning process. There are also many possibilities of avoiding the initial uncertainty in language, and this leads to more motivating methods of teaching, such as more teamwork and a student-centred approach, which are most commendable ways to foster the skills to learn and to take an active role both in learning and in working life.

In her dissertation, "Lectures in English as a Lingua Franca: Interactional Features", Jaana Suviniitty has studied the effect of inadequate English skills on the part of the lecturers on the learning of university students, and has come to the conclusion that "the use of interactional features in lectures influences the way students perceive them, while the perceived quality of lecturer's English does not correlate with students' perception of them" (Suviniitty 2012, 175). She has thus shown that neither the quality of teaching nor of learning is diminished, even if there are some defects in the language used. Language skills are certainly an important element of teaching, but the key is expertise in the actual subject and the ability to tutor the students.

English skills of students

Another issue are the language skills of the students. In the English-tuition bachelor programme the rule to qualify as an applicant is to have a minimum of C in the Finnish matriculation exam, which refers to an average grade. If the applicants are from abroad their IELTS and TOEFL scores are to be 6.0 and 550 respectively. Even this is not enough, but their English is still tested in both the written and oral components of the entrance exam, and they are automatically failed if they do not indicate good enough skills. This is a rule used at all the English-tuition business programmes of Finnish universities of applied sciences, and has proven worthwhile.

Even if the skills are tested, the reality sometimes is not smooth and easy. The students may still have difficulties in either expressing themselves orally, or understanding spoken English, or putting their thoughts on paper on a versatile enough level. To prevent the students from failing in their studies, as well as to support them in improving their skills, language and subject are closely integrated in the modules to help the students reach their academic goals.

Integration of English and business subjects in study modules

CLIL, content and language integrated learning, is widely used in Europe. The European Commission has listed a number of benefits of CLIL. The advantages mentioned are for example that "this way intercultural communication skills can be developed, language competence and oral communication skills can be improved, methods and forms of classroom practice are diversified and learner's motivation and confidence in both the language and the subject being taught are increased" (website of EU). In the bachelor programmes

at Kanali Campus the integration happens in close cooperation between the business subject teachers and the English teachers to guarantee high quality in both English and business subjects.

Thanks to English being the working language, both the faculty's and the students' English skills develop and become more fluent. However, we have also taken into account in the programmes that even if all teaching is in English, it does not necessarily mean that the language skills automatically develop on e.g. the structural and contextual communication levels, both of which are also essential for achieving success, in studies as well as later on in working life. For that reason the English-tuition programme, International Business and Marketing Logistics, IBML, and the partly English-tuition programme, International Business, IB, have both included English communication courses into the compulsory curricula. The students have courses in academic writing, negotiation and presentation skills, to mention a few. We have integrated the teaching of English communication into the various business modules so that a language teacher works closely together with the business subject teachers, and takes the responsibility for improving the communication skills of the students while the business subject teachers can focus on their subject contents. In the master's programme the students are offered individual guidance on their language skills at the beginning of their studies.

Even if one could argue that studying, and also teaching, in a language other than one's own, may have negative consequences, it definitely brings more benefits than disadvantages. Furthermore, the argument of losing on content due to less perfect language skills, has not been carried. The quality and quantity of both course content and language guidance is ensured by having the academics focus on their own specialisation areas, whether business subjects or language.

Whoever studies business today, will in the future deal with companies and people from other countries, and needs fluent language skills to manage. In reality, most business is not done with native speakers of English, but with non-native speakers who are not perfect in English, and who may have strong accents. What would be a better way to get used to hearing different accents and different types of spoken English, whether for vocabulary and grammar or for different ways of communication, than to study in an environment with language and cultural diversity.

As both industry and higher education institutions emphasise the importance of teaching in English, it has been a perfect decision for our programmes to embrace English as a tool, and we believe that the practice is worth developing further to even better meet the needs of the modern world.

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Learning in international joint projects – a didactic innovation

Andreas Gissel, Kent Gourdin & Daniela Tanhua

The increasingly global environment of business sets a higher demand for developing a learning environment that encourages students to fulfil given objectives within an international team. Discussions between the IBML programme at SAMK and the German University of Applied Sciences Ludwigshafen am Rhein were the initiator of the development of a joint project between the two higher education institutions. The first pilot was conducted in 2009, and included twenty SAMK and forty Ludwigshafen students. As of 2012, also the College of Charleston, USA, joined the annually-run project. In total 83 students, divided into 12 teams, participated in the project in 2012.

The aim of the project is to develop a solution within the topic of supply chain management for a local company – either German or Finnish. The project lasts for three months in the autumn semester, and the objective is the same for all 12 international teams. Therefore, we conduct the project as a competition between the teams. This is a clear motivator for work in the project. The responsible teachers supervising the projects are Dr Andreas Gissel from Ludwigshafen, Dr Kent Gourdin from Charleston and Daniela Tanhua from SAMK.

The practical aim of the joint project is to provide a way to deal with the supply chain management of a company, but at the same time the other core foundation is to develop metacognitive skills that are difficult to teach in an up-front class environment. The pillars of the project create the platform for the adaption of these skills. The teachers are facilitators in the learning process and ensure that the environment enables the students to adapt the important skills for working in an international team.

Pillars of the project – the didactic innovation

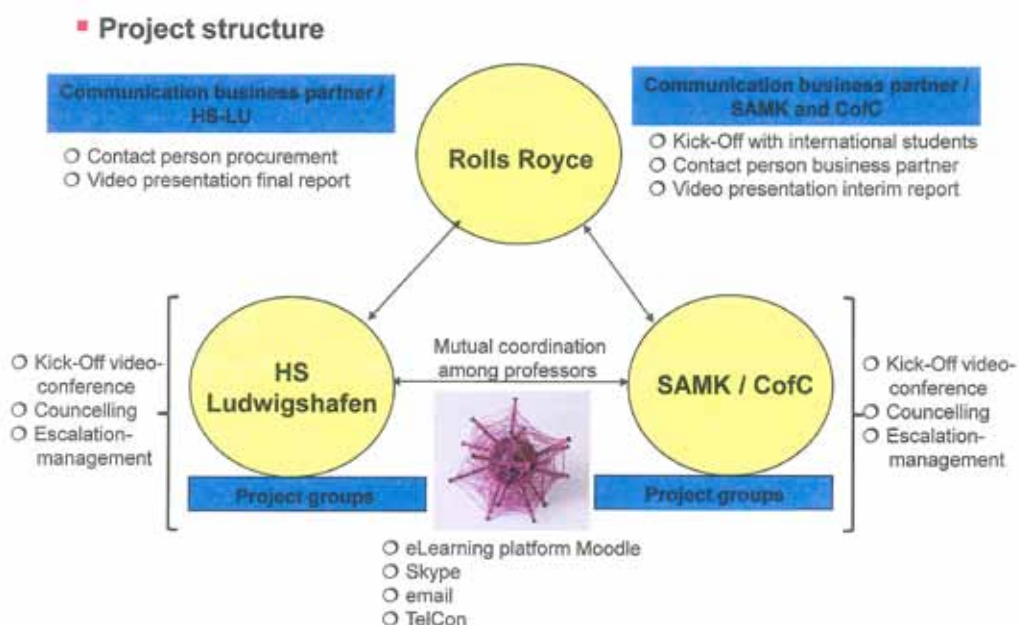


Figure 1. Project structure

1. International teams – virtual collaborative learning

In 2012, the participating students of the three cooperation universities represented 11 different nationalities. The students were assigned to the teams by the teachers to create teams with different universities, different countries and different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the students had to overcome the challenge that they were living on two different continents with three different time zones. The teams were not only international but also working in a virtual environment. Virtual collaborative learning requires a clear definition of tasks, responsibilities and time management.

2. Kick-off meeting

The kick-off meeting at the beginning of October is the gathering when the students are introduced to the project. In the first two years, the meeting was conducted as a video conference. In 2011, twenty-four SAMK students travelled to Ludwigshafen for two days to work with their fellow German students. In 2012, the German students came to Rauma to participate in the kick-off meeting, which also included a video conference with the Charleston students. From experience one can say that the face-to-face meeting in the beginning of the project is a clear advantage towards success in the work in virtual teams later on.

3. Communication

Moodle, the e-learning platform used at SAMK, is the main media for communication in the project. The students are advised to save all bits and pieces in the Moodle discussion forum. This enables the facilitating teachers to follow the progress of the projects. Students and teachers alike can comment on the research outcomes and report chapters. However, the students themselves decide on their group's internal communication media, which is usually a social media tool.

The different time zones that the students live in make it even more challenging to meet deadlines and to find the time for joint group meetings. The right choice of communication tool and the proper conduct of team communication are crucial means of success of the project. This is again a very important learning process for the students.

4. Milestones and Deadlines

The project lasts for three months. The students work quite independently towards the project aim: the problem solution for the client company. To be able to follow the progress of the project, certain milestones and deadlines are created in the e-learning platform. The milestones are at the same time assignments that are assessed by the teachers: the team contract, the project plan, the interim report and the final report.

The team contract is an important tool for the students to help them through the project. It sets the rules and regulations for the teamwork, it defines the competence matrix of the team and in accordance with that, the roles of the team members and their specific tasks and responsibilities.

The project plan defines the objective of the project, the time frame, the tasks for each team member, the deadlines and the responsibilities within the team. The project plan is also approved by the client company.

The interim report is the checkpoint for the teachers to give feedback for the final report, which will be presented to the client company. The objectives and the background research are already written in the interim report, but there are still many blank chapters and, of course, the result is still open.

To practice the presentation of the final report and to check on the status of the project we arrange a presentation of the interim report as a video conference in the second half of the project. All teams prepare a presentation but on the spot, four teams out of the twelve are chosen randomly to make presentations.

5. Counselling by the teachers

The facilitating teachers offer weekly counselling during the project. The students have to book a counselling meeting that every member of the team should attend, in order to avoid miscommunication within the team. The supervising teachers exchange a short summary of the counselling meetings to be informed of the progress of the different teams.

6. Final Report

The final report is the product of the three months' teamwork that will be presented to the client company. On the other hand, it is an academic report with all the requirements that are addressed to a bachelor's thesis.

The final report is assessed as a group assessment. The composition of the international teams sometimes puts a lot of pressure on the fact that all team members should work equally determinedly for the outcome of the team. It is crucial that the team also nominates an editor for the final report, who makes sure that it is a consistent academic report.

7. The Presentation of the Results

The outcome of the project – the problem solution – is presented to the client company at the end of the project. Usually, it is the students of the country where the client company is situated that deliver the presentation, but we also have experience of conducting the presentation as a video conference.

The hidden curriculum

The teachers in the project have a common understanding about the most valuable learning elements in the project: the work in international teams with the restraints of virtual cooperation and different time zones. The students have to take responsibility for the outcome of their common project that will eventually be accepted by the case company. The 3-month intensive work demands that the students are able to cope with stress, to live with the fact that not all facts are known from the beginning, and to handle the conflicts within the teams.

It is interesting to see that the teams that succeed best have also created the best way of communication during the project. They create agendas for the weekly net-meetings and save the memo into the Moodle-platform. This way they are able to follow the progress of the team, the management of the team, the time schedule and the deadlines.

The project is highly motivating for the students, but it also puts a large amount of stress on the students. Group pressure is very strong and effective. The students experience the challenges of creating a common solution for a case company in an international team. The students often face problems connected to their different cultural backgrounds, different levels of commitment, different ways of time management, etc.

In conclusion, it is fair to say that it is mainly for the benefits of the hidden curriculum that the teachers involved are interested in developing the project further, especially as a platform for didactic innovation and eLearning solutions.

Towards Asian business and culture

Pathinee Tekajarin

The growth of Asian economies has a major impact on international trade. China's fast-growing economy has been forecast to overtake the United States as the world's biggest economy as early as 2016. Internationalisation with Asian business counterparts thus becomes an important activity of many companies.

As part of globalisation processes, the interest of Finnish companies is turning more and more towards doing business with Asian countries. Some Finnish companies are expanding to or co-operating with Asian countries in one way or another. The focus is especially on the powerful and key emerging economies: China, India and Japan. (Website of Finpro 2013.) They are potential targets for both investment and business activities. Finland has also now opened an innovation centre in Beijing to facilitate and boost access of Finnish SMEs to the Chinese market (Access of Finnish SMEs to Chinese market gets easier 2013).

Doing business in Asia is seen as a significant move not only from the business perspective in becoming more international, but it is also relevant for education institutions to give attention and importance to studies in Asia and Asian business and culture (ABC). The development of education and training in Asian business and culture is necessary for the studies of international business. This is to prepare the graduates to be ready for a globalised working environment, especially with Asians.

Learning ABC in Rauma

The curricula of the business programmes on Kanali Campus, both the English-tuition IBML and the partly English-tuition International Business degree programme (IB), are constructed with the focus on responding to the needs of working life. In this way we enable the students/graduates to enter business life with well-prepared competences and skills. The focus of the IB programme in Asian business and culture has long been implemented in our curriculum as part of the professional studies, and was set in the business unit in Kankaanpää, a city in northern Satakunta region, with the incentives from the local companies needing to expand their business to Asia, especially to China. The degree programme was later transferred to Rauma as logistics and the international business environment are the city's profile and key strengths. In addition, the opportunities for involvement and cooperation with the Rauma Chamber of Commerce and local and regional SMEs has provided possibilities to work closely with the businesses, and thus to learn what is expected from the graduates of SAMK and potential employees of the companies.

At SAMK we have continuously given importance and implemented the significant elements in Asian business and culture in our curricula, which makes it quite unique in Finland. Some of the key elements are Asian management, business culture, business processes in different Asian countries, marketing and Asian customers. The main goals are to equip the students with versatile practical knowledge and to enable the students to develop their expertise in ABC (Asian Business and Culture) together with country-specific specialisation in the target Asian countries, such as China, India, and Japan. In addition, the students are able to gain more personal cultural awareness and understanding to facilitate doing business with their Asian counterparts.

In the implementation of our ABC courses, versatile pedagogical activities are continuously used to enhance student learning outcomes, and they are based on the focus of the learner, learning experiences and relation to working life. Therefore, varied methods, i.e. problem-based learning (PBL), project-oriented learning (POL), case companies and guest lecturers are utilised to combine the theoretical basis with the practicalities of business and working life. The cooperation in the development and implementation of the ABC courses, practical joint projects and research with our foreign partner universities are also emphasised. Networking among partner institutions providing education in Asian business and culture gives good opportunities for all parties, the benefits being more connections and diversified means of co-created and cooperative work.

Here at Kanali Campus in Rauma, the availability of Asian lecturers, i.e. Japanese, Chinese, Indian and Thai lecturers together with fellow Asian degree students, e.g. Chinese, Vietnamese, and Nepalese, and exchange students on campus has provided the students with practical exposure to real situations and direct experiences in regard to cultural similarities and differences between Finnish and various Asian cultures.

As a result of continuing cooperation with our Asian partner universities, we have had regular long-term guest lecturers from Asian partner universities with us, e.g. from Changzhou University, China and Bangkok University, Thailand. The Asian guest lecturers have contributed to the development of respective courses as the courses are planned and implemented in shared knowledge and cooperation with our faculty members with versatile perspectives and expertise. Having a Chinese guest lecturer in the Chinese Business and Culture course gives substantial knowledge with practical examples and cases, adds more value to our students' learning experiences, and motivates the students in their studies and future work.

In regard to the structure of our curriculum, it is possible that the students will go on student exchange and do their practical training abroad, especially in Asian partner universities and Asian countries. The Asian partner universities will provide the country-specific studies with hands-on experience and the students with a unique environment. The practical training in the target Asian countries will familiarise the student with working life, with real-life practice, which is necessary and important to his/her professional studies and competences in Asian business and culture. The student will have the chance to apply theory in practice and to develop the skills and readiness to independent work, as well as to deepen the skills and competences and to prepare oneself to work in international business or in a related professional field. The students will be able to create their own international network via their student exchange and practical training. In particular, the students specialising in Asian business and culture regularly go on exchange to China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and Malaysia. Some are able to continue by doing practical training and even getting permanent jobs in those countries. The feedback from companies providing training and jobs to our students/graduates is positive thanks to the students' professional competences and good cultural awareness and adjustment.

With our continuing effort and cooperation with the Asian partner universities, the targeted course offerings for the students during their exchange are accomplished. However, the scope of cooperation in regard to Asian studies is not limited only to Asian partner universities. Our interest is also to generate more cooperative activities among other international partners specialising in Asian studies. This is to combine the strengths of various partner universities in co-developing and co-creating a wider range of Asian studies, and thus a more extensive course selection for each institution's own students and exchange students. This also generates more opportunities for faculty development in forms of faculty exchange, joint research and joint student projects.

Why it is so important to know ABC

The role of Asia in international business has significantly and obviously increased and strongly influenced global business approaches and practices. However, it has also increased challenges in doing business. This situation also applies to Asian countries working with the development, changes and challenges in business within Asia. For example, in Thailand, the subscribers of the English-language newspaper The Nation will also get the China Daily: Asia Weekly newspaper as a supplement every weekend, and thus have information about China and Chinese business continually available. The attention towards a growing and influencing Asia is getting stronger and cannot be ignored.

In addition to the profound knowledge in Asian business practices, understanding Asian culture will make doing business easier. One of the principal Asian cultural traits is that relationships matter. Building relationships with Asian counterparts to gain trust will pave the way towards business deals with them. Furthermore, age and hierarchy are important and highly respected in Asia. That will reflect in personal and business behaviour, such as seating arrangements at a meeting table, titles used in addressing each other.

There could be many other Asian cultural traits reflected in business practices which will not make sense to the foreign counterparts. Why should the date and time of signing the business agreement be decided by a Buddhist monk? Why are scissors – even if they are high-quality, world-famous scissors - regarded as “poor” gifts for Asian partners? Understanding the Asian cultural background would help foreign business counterparts comprehend the ideas and differences better. A SAMK student doing her practical training in China mentioned having found Asian culture studies at SAMK useful and practical and being good grounds for her further steps in Asia.

Therefore, in order to move towards Asian business and culture, it has been our main task to provide the students with a good foundation in courses with versatile implementation in order to give profound knowledge and enhance their skills and learning experiences. With the cooperation with our international partner universities specialising in Asian studies, we are able to provide the students with more opportunities in specific areas and topics. In addition to that, the opportunities for the students to expose themselves to various sources of information and experiences regarding Asian business and culture will develop their competences and expertise, and prepare them for working life. It is our continuing effort to maintain our own and our students' achievements in these goals. SunTzu, the Chinese military strategist and the author of the famous book The Art of War, states "If you know your enemies and know yourself, you will not be imperiled in a hundred battles." This advice will apply well here on our path towards ABC.

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Master's thesis as developer of client organisations

Kati Antola & Marina Wikman

The degree programme in Business Management and Entrepreneurship (BME) is offered at SAMK on Kanali Campus in Rauma. The programme provides the students a master-level degree in business administration and accounts for 90 ECTS credits.

The education aims at enhancing skills in business management in the changing domestic and international operating environment, especially in the SME sector. It also aims at enhancing the students' personal abilities to succeed as innovators and developers of organisations. Another important goal is to improve the students' abilities to develop and manage business processes as entrepreneurs and to take an entrepreneurial approach.

Master's programmes at universities of applied sciences in Finland stand apart from other master's programmes by focusing on developing the students' existing knowledge and experience further, with one leg on theory and the other on practical application. Hence, the key requirement for applicants is a minimum three years of work experience after their bachelor's degrees. This is to ensure that new knowledge can be implemented in a real-life context, and thus provide working life with improvement and innovation.

Another important element in the implementation of the master's programmes of universities of applied sciences is that they are part-time programmes. Nationally the programmes have made different decisions about how often to offer the students contact days, i.e. once a week, weekends, a few days at a time, a couple of times a semester. This way the students can work alongside their studies, and also apply the knowledge gained in practice, at once.

BME education started in Rauma in 2008, and the annual intake of students has been approximately 20 students. As the studies are part-time, it takes on an average 2-2.5 years to graduate. It is, though, possible to study full-time, and graduate in three semesters. As the studies are conducted as multiform studies, the contact days only comprise a small part of the studies, and e-learning is used over 90% of the time. Owing to the large proportion of online learning and the language of tuition being English, the students in the programme come from all over the world. To be aware and up-to-date of the latest developments in both research and industry, external experts and guest lecturers from companies and partner universities are also an integral part of the programme.

Further important aspects in the education are enhanced teamwork, leadership, communication and negotiation, as well as problem-solving and decision-making skills. Thanks to virtual learning environments, the education also aims at improving virtual team working skills and managing virtual teams in an international environment.

Master's thesis in BME

The key element of the thesis in the master's programme is the connection to working life, most often to the student's own job and employer, and, thus, it has a concrete link to working life in practice.

The extent of the master's thesis is 30 ECTS, which covers one third of the whole programme (90 ECTS). That is why the work on the master's thesis in BME starts already in the first semester: the subject of the thesis develops, and the methodological skills are also improved, as the studies progress. The subject of the master's thesis is selected based on the needs of working life. As most of the students are both working and studying, the most natural approach is to select a topic that benefits their own work and the employer's operations. The topic can be related to various fields in business management depending on the students' jobs, and their employers' requests.

The purpose of the master's thesis is to develop and demonstrate the student's ability to apply existing data and research, to use the selected methods for analysing and solving problems of working life and to work in independent, demanding expert duties. The focus is on combining both theory and practice, and execution of a working life-related development project.

As a working life-related development project, the student needs for his/her master's thesis a client organisation, which in most cases is his/her employer. Pure theoretical research is not even an accepted form of the master's thesis in BME.

The students present their work in three thesis seminars, but commenting continues on the e-learning platform after the seminars. BME has put special effort on peer feedback, due to the fact that everyone has experience of working life and of various tasks in many different countries, and can thus support each other with versatile insights and experiences. It has been very beneficial and advanced the thesis work for many students in a multitude of ways. This kind of multicultural collaboration generates enhanced learning and new, original approaches to the items under discussion, and provides manifold angles to and from real working life.

The open process available for every student encourages the sharing of ideas and opinions, thus the process does not involve the student and the supervisors only. Naturally, confidential information on clients cannot be revealed in the group, but that kind of information remains between the student and the supervisors.

To provide an overview of the master's thesis topics, a few general examples are studies on cultural diversity in different fields of working life, or studies which aim at developing and innovating the organisations the students work for. There are also quite a few students who are planning to establish or already have their own companies and want to develop the processes for their entrepreneurship.

BME thesis beneficial for all parties

The close connection of the BME master's programme to present-day working life and companies has moulded the programme immensely. The BME programme aims both at offering the students an opportunity to gain new skills and knowledge, and to cater to companies with innovative and improved concepts for their operations.

As the students already have experience of working life, they have a strong motivation to learn. They also know what they need to improve at their work, or to get a successful career. The integral role of peer discussion leads to sharing of knowledge and gives fresh angles to the covered issues. For these reasons, the overall quality of the theses reaches quite a high level, which also benefits the client organisations, providing them with options for modernising and renewing.

The BME programme is kept up-to-date with the requirements and new developments of working life, as every new student group comes in with their current, ongoing experience of companies and their operations. The study methods as such also enhance intercultural and interactional skills. The constant challenges, due to the students having work experience and different cultural backgrounds, also pushes the whole programme towards continuous development.

Practical training – excellent stepping stone to real working life

Liisa Ylituomi

The general objectives of the degree programmes at Kanali Campus and at SAMK altogether include the development of the students' skills and preparedness for working life. During the basic and professional studies, students collect knowledge and theoretical perspectives in various contexts. In order to enable the students to understand the connection between theoretical studies and working life, each business degree programme at SAMK includes a compulsory practical training period of six months, which is integrated into the studies. During this period the student learns to apply the knowledge gained to business life while at the same time acquiring valuable work experience.

Due to globalisation and the requirements of international business, more and more students perform their practical training abroad. By working in a foreign company and in a foreign culture young people collect valuable experiences, gain a wider perspective on an international environment and improve their language and communication skills. Compared to a practical training in one's home country, experience from abroad develops more intensively the trainee's adaptability, tolerance and stress control skills, which are major requirements for success in working life.

Preparing for practical training

Early on, at the beginning of the studies, students are given instructions about concluding their practical training. Getting acquainted with the requirements, functions and purposes of the practical training, the student contributes to planning and designing his/her own performance.

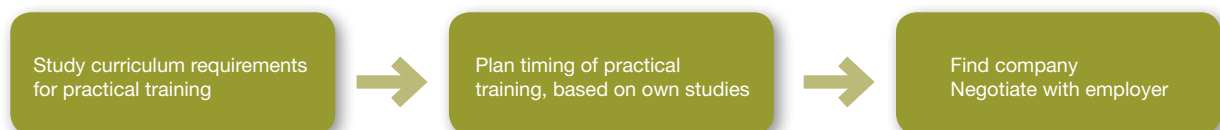


Figure 1. First steps of the practical training process from the student's perspective.

The student is responsible for finding suitable employment for his/her practical training, but already this phase of the process may be challenging. First, the student has to consider the studies he/she has completed before starting the training period, and secondly, he/she should find an interesting field of business and a suitable post. In an ideal case he/she finds a company and a task in which he/she can apply his/her professional studies and carry out demanding tasks. This experience can turn out to be a stepping stone for his/her future career, as the student might be recruited by the case company for a longer term.

When performing his/her practical training, the student is not left alone. From the beginning of the process an academic supervisor of SAMK assists and guides the student to plan his/her training period. The student is responsible for finding and applying for the job, but in the highly competitive job market this may be

an overwhelming task for a beginner. The applicant probably possesses limited experience of any job or company, not to mention experience of companies abroad. Many questions arise when a student considers practical training in a foreign country: “Am I able to manage alone in an unfamiliar city and environment? Am I capable of working in a foreign company? What about my language skills? What if I cannot understand anything? What about the culture in that country? What happens if I do something wrong?” These are common questions to which we try to find answers before the students apply for an international practical training.

Finding a good place for the practical training is not easy. One of the main drivers in this process are the student’s own interests. Having been acquainted with a variety of theoretical subjects within the field of business studies at SAMK, the student may have some ideas about jobs, cultures or countries which interest him/her. However, a huge question still remains: How to find a job abroad? Instead of a single correct answer to the question, there are several possibilities to utilise in finding an international internship.

Various online portals are one of the places to look for a suitable place to work. There are also private and public service providers that deal with international recruitment. Of course, the more “traditional” methods are still in place: by using one’s own connections and earlier experiences, a student may find a job easily. Furthermore, it is not exceptional at all that after a student exchange period in a foreign university, the student applies for a placement by utilising his/her new international connections.

Actions in the practical training process

Having found a host company, there are practical procedures to carry out and documents to fill in to approve the training. The signed contract serves as a link and a binding element between the student, the host company and SAMK.

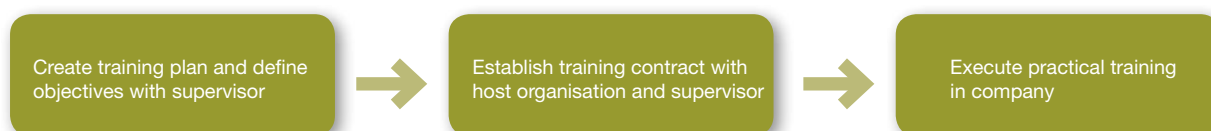


Figure 2. Next steps of practical training process from the student’s perspective.

Before starting the practical training, the student draws up a training plan, which is a very important document both for the student and for the host company. Every training plan includes general information about the practical training, such as the time and the name and contact information of the responsible supervisor. The focus of the plan, though, is on the personal learning objectives the student aims to achieve during the practical training. These targets are initially defined by the student and then approved by the academic supervisor from SAMK. When defining the objectives it is essential to take into account the upcoming tasks in the host organisation in connection with the completed theoretical studies: how will the theoretical knowledge be applied to practice during the training? The established plan serves as a check list for the student, for the organisation and especially for the supervisor in the host company and helps to ensure that all the necessary requirements are taken care of, and the necessary conditions for a successful training period are created.

The practical training contract indicates the commitment of all three parties: the student, the supervisor at the host company and the academic supervisor at SAMK. The agreement not only serves as a regular employment contract, but it also includes the special requirements, responsibilities, defined tasks and obligations of all three parties. By signing the contract, the host company agrees to arrange the specified assignments for the student, and also to monitor and evaluate the process of training. To be able to learn and develop, the trainee needs constructive and encouraging feedback from the host company. During international training this is even more important, as a foreign working environment can differ considerably from the trainee's earlier experiences, and without thorough steering the targets cannot be reached.

Completion of the practical training process

To close and complete each training process, conclusion steps have to be taken conscientiously. Since the beginning of the practical training process was conducted carefully, the completion part is effortless. Clear, thoroughly-considered learning objectives help to evaluate and assess the success of each training period.

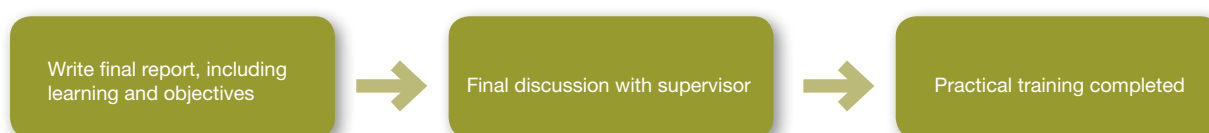


Figure 3. Final steps of practical training process from the student's perspective.

Upon completion of the practical training, the student writes a final report in which he/she compares the set learning objectives to the actual experience in the company. The training report is a document in which the student describes how he/she applied the theoretical studies to real working life. Usually this is the moment when the student recognises how much he/she actually learned and how much the international business environment influenced his/her attitude and personal development. In the final report the student also reflects upon the feedback received, and how it affected his/her work at the company.

To ensure the learning and the achievement of the set objectives, a final discussion is arranged between the academic supervisor from SAMK and the student. During this consultation all the learning outcomes of the practical training are discussed. Although the training period is over at this stage, quite frequently students discover a topic for their bachelor's thesis at the host company.

Practical training performed in Finland by international degree students of SAMK

Case: Biolan Oy (manufacturer of environmental products)

Biolan Oy is a Finnish company producing a wide range of products for organic gardening, composting and ecological sanitation.

In 2011 Biolan Oy was approached by the Indian government to try to find solutions for the sanitation problems in the country. The business and possibilities were studied first by Biolan's own people visiting India and the local government, but it was soon evident that some other resources would be needed.

At this point Hannamaija Fontell, Director of Business Development and R&D in Biolan Oy, heard about the international students and practical training opportunities at SAMK. The lucky coincidence was that there was an Indian student just looking for a place to do his practical training. After an interview he was hired to Biolan Oy for a 3-month-period during summer 2012 to study the Indian market for ecological sanitation and composting.

The experiences of having an international student in the company were really good. The student was very easy-going and made new friends quickly, even if there was the occasional language barrier. He was very active in bringing in new information from a local, Indian point of view. His insight was most valuable especially with sanitation issues, where a large part of the problem or solutions is the culture.

“From our company perspective we can recommend employing an international student, especially in cases when there is a special project that lacks local knowledge”, says Hannamaija Fontell.

SAMK has a number of international degree students who prefer to perform their practical training in Finland. Despite the difficulties they may have with the challenging Finnish language, we have several success stories of foreign students completing their training period at local companies.

A good example of local cooperation and regional development is a case of practical training completed in a medium-size company in Satakunta. The employer planned to start a business project in a specific market area in Asia, and SAMK Kanali Campus suitably had a foreign degree student from that particular country. Demand met supply.

The student had some background knowledge of the business culture in his home country, he spoke the language of the country as his mother tongue, and additionally he had a sufficient amount of international business studies at SAMK “under his belt”. This combination enabled proficient practical training in the company. Integrating academic studies with real business life required plenty of effort from the trainee: not only had he to adapt to new issues and orientate to his new tasks, but he also had to absorb a new business and working culture. As a foreigner, he had to work more intensively to learn and follow the systems, procedures and communication methods and behaviour in the company. The time-consuming nature of this situation is actually the main reason why practical training in a foreign company should be long enough, at least six months.

In spite of carefully indicated objectives for the training, there is always a possibility for misunderstandings to occur. In this case, early challenges were beaten by fast communication and clarifications. The student also received thorough orientation to his tasks and to the company. His daily assignments included searching for new market information and business contacts from his home country. Despite a preliminary business study that had previously been made by the host company, reporting the findings proved troublesome for the trainee. The host supervisor gave him instructions on how to work, but concrete details were not discussed: instead, both the trainee and the supervisor made assumptions. However, by leaving workable results in the host company, our student assisted the local company to develop new business in the target country.

As can be seen in the example, learning by doing is still the method for meaningful building of knowledge. One has to step inside an organisation, go deep into the tasks, and see the business functions with one's own eyes. During the practical training the student has the possibility to ask questions from the professionals and sometimes also challenge them with new proposals.

Performing one's practical training in Finland helps a foreign student to integrate into local business life. Finding a job in Finland after graduation requires some Finnish language skills, but more than that it requires knowledge of Finnish culture, especially business culture. To ensure having a qualified foreign workforce to strengthen the business, more and more Finnish companies have started to provide foreign students with practical training opportunities.

Successful practical training

Whether the practical training is carried out abroad or in the home country, the indicators of success are the same. When starting the training period, a student from a university of applied sciences has already completed plenty of basic and professional studies, with the aim that the trainee is able to provide new ideas and fresh thoughts for the host company. Compared to on-the-job learning, where an inexperienced student learns expertise and skills, the practical training period of the student of SAMK is definitely more interactive. The work experience component of the studies can be considered successful, when during the final discussion about the practical training we find ourselves talking about learning, new discoveries and productive outcomes, which the trainee achieved and imprinted in the host company.



Growing up – student exchange in and out

Saija Arslan

Completing a study period abroad is nowadays an essential part of studies in many degree programmes. From the first week of their studies we encourage SAMK students to go and spend at least one semester in another country. Every student has the opportunity to study or complete their practical training abroad on three different occasions. They can all go for student exchange twice; once to the European countries which belong to the Erasmus programme, and once through some other programme, mainly to Asia, North or South America, or Russia. The third possibility is to do the practical training period abroad.

SAMK has a comprehensive network of partner universities, in Europe and on other continents. Exchange agreements mainly work on a reciprocal basis; our students can receive tuition in partner institutions either for one term or a whole academic year and their students are welcome to SAMK and are offered the same.

To Finland, to SAMK

Rauma is a town of approximately 40,000 inhabitants, a small place by the sea. A town where everything is within easy reach, and where the most convenient means of transportation is a bicycle. Many Finns ride their bikes throughout the year, as do most of the 50-60 exchange students that arrive at Kanali Campus every year.

Our campus is relatively small, with about 500 students. On a campus this compact, everyone knows everyone. One of the advantages of being a small unit is the close relationship between teachers and students – it is quite easy for students to get personal guidance from teachers. Maybe the many positive feedback comments from exchange students are due to the coziness of our close-knit campus. In addition to exchange students, dozens of international degree students also brighten up the life on campus, and a good variety of languages is heard daily in colourful conversations.

To help students adapt to life in Rauma we have an efficient tutor student system. Tutor students contact the incoming students before their arrival, and help out in everyday issues when they arrive. Having a personal tutor student makes life easier for the incoming students and is a good way to establish friendships between degree students and exchange students, as well as advancing internationalisation at home. Often students who have taken part in the tutoring programme are very eager to go on exchange the following year: in fact many of them consider their tutor year as the best in their lives – until they go on exchange themselves.

In addition to a tutoring system, we arrange orientation days for incoming exchange students. Before the actual classes begin they get information about the study methods at SAMK, practical information about courses, accommodation, climate, Finland and Rauma, as well as cultural knowledge. All this softens their possible culture shock and speeds up their integration on campus.

SAMK carries out surveys on exchanges annually. According to the surveys of 2005-2013, students come to study in Finland because Finland is exotic, a northern country next to Russia, we have snow, Finnish

education has a good reputation, friends or home universities have recommended us, and because our courses suit their curricula well.

Kanali Campus is known among the partner universities for courses especially in international business, marketing and logistics. We are proud of our wide selection of subject courses conducted in English. Since 80% of all the course selection is taught in English, Kanalicampus is a great choice for many incoming exchange students. We have made double degree agreements with some partner institutions and every year some students stay with us for the whole academic year, working on their double degrees, completing our courses and writing their theses e.g. for a Finnish company.

During recent years most exchange students were able to participate in the Rauma municipality project called Kielitivoli, which was created to raise an interest in primary school pupils to study foreign languages. Taking part in the project made it possible for exchange students to spend time in local primary schools with the children, telling about their own countries. This experience was very rewarding for both sides. Also high school language teachers are happy about the opportunity to have our exchange students to liven up classes by telling about their countries in their mother tongues. A great listening comprehension assignment for Finnish students and a great way for the exchange students to meet locals!

Broadening horizons – out into the world

Seafaring has always been an essential part of life of the people of Rauma. We like to think that the same curiosity and passion that drove our ancestors to explore the world in past centuries also drives our youngsters today. Going on exchange abroad is a wonderful opportunity for our students, and about 40-50 of them take advantage of it every year. Some want to benefit professionally by learning something which is not in the SAMK curricula, some want to enhance their language skills, and some want purely to break out of their daily routines and enjoy gathering experiences from living in a different culture. Some students enjoy life in the target country so much that they end up working there later on.

We have exchange agreements with over a hundred partner institutions all over the world. Most of the universities have been chosen on the basis of having similar degree programmes to those at SAMK. Thus students can deepen their skills within their own fields of study, which helps them to keep pace with their studies, and the exchange will not lengthen their study times. The double degree agreements we have with some partner universities mean that a student spends his/her third year in the partner university, completes a set package of courses there and also submits the thesis to both universities, thus getting diplomas from both institutions.

Completing part of their studies abroad is a unique opportunity for students, and an inspiration to personal growth. Arranging the exchange demands a lot of patience and initiative from students. Some students know well in advance where they want to spend their exchange period and they prepare for it in many ways. They may have studied the target country's language for years, as well as familiarised themselves with the culture and habits of the region of exchange. Their goal is clear and they are determined to reach it. They have planned their studies so that the exchange fits perfectly in their curricula, possibly followed by a well-planned practical training period abroad, carrying out tasks which strengthen their professional skills. There are also students whose main motivation is learning a language while abroad, getting to know a new culture and environment, or just having the adventure of a lifetime.

Studying abroad is a very valuable experience to students. They get a better vision of other cultures, learn to appreciate different viewpoints on life and to use foreign languages as a means of communication. An exchange period abroad gives students an opportunity to become independent, familiarises them with work in a multicultural, international environment and strengthens their language skills. It is also an exceptionally good time to build their networks for the future. Getting to know other international students, partner university teachers and company representatives in their own fields of study is important and beneficial for their future careers. This is also often a time of remarkable growth for the students – sometimes so much so that they may return from the exchange as a totally different person.

When recruiting new employees, employers appreciate job applicants who have studied or done their practical training abroad. The possibility of completing part of their studies abroad enhances the SAMK alumni's chances of being recruited after graduation.

The story of Weiyu – a Kanali Campus graduate

Weiyu Liu

Thinking of my study time, I can't ignore that there have been many people asking the question: why did you decide to study in Finland?

Simple and easy, I wanted to try something different after graduating from high school in China. At that time a friend of my father's was working as a professor-researcher at one of the universities in Finland. Of course, he told me lots of nice things about Finnish culture, and how flexible and different the Finnish education system was. So, I decided to go to Finland! It was one of the best decisions in my life!

I started my studies at SAMK in the IBML programme, which was a very international and high-quality programme, in 1999, and graduated in 2004. The studies consisted of three and a half years in Finland, and in addition to that we could get a degree from the United Kingdom, if we also spent a year of study in our partner university, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University. I would say both studying in Finland and in the UK was fun, and most interesting, although the way of teaching was very different.

During the time in Finland, we were on a more practical level. One of the most interesting things for me was the practice enterprise. We created a "virtual company". There were all the same functions and operations as in a real company, and there were 5 or 6 of us who needed to work in different roles. I was the "marketing manager" in the company. The practice enterprise was continued and operating for almost a year, starting as a proposal for a business idea, and including everything from a business plan to the final financial report. This was a very practical study module, which gave me a lot for my future real posts.

The study year in the UK was based more on theory. We had a long list of reference books to read, and quite a few assignments and papers to work on, both individually and in teams. I also enjoyed the year in the UK, as the environment was very beautiful, peaceful and close to nature.

In 2004, I went back to China right after the graduation ceremony in Rauma. I could not wait to get back. A long time far away from my home country, I had missed China and my family a lot.

I was lucky to get a chance to start my career in China in IKEA, which is one of the most famous companies in the world, not only in furniture business, but also in supply chain management. I started at IKEA Asia Pacific distribution service as a trainee for a newly-planned distribution centre. There I met lots of senior experts from all over the world, and also some young graduates, just like me. Working in the distribution service opened my eyes, and made me realise that it was one of the key points in the supply chain. My studies at SAMK proved to be most useful in the job. I was promoted to deputy operational manager after two years. I was leading a team of both blue-collar and white-collar co-workers, and I was responsible for inbound and outbound flow in the distribution centre. But still, I felt I needed something more.

Later on, I got an offer from the European supply team in Switzerland to work there as a supply chain specialist. The main responsibility in this role was connecting all stores with all supply partners so that we could have the right goods at the right time in all European IKEA stores at the lowest possible cost. I was working with trading supply planners, with distribution services, with store logistics as well as global offices.

It was a really interesting job. We called ourselves “spiders” since we were dealing with so many different parties in the chain, and we had to work well with them to make things happen. In this role, I had the chance to work with IKEA’s global head office. I was amazed by the design, the concept, the special IKEA global office environment. It made me dream of working there one day!

By the end of 2010, I got a new opportunity to move within IKEA, and work as a global demand planner at head office in Sweden. It was so exciting! A big, new and amazing window had opened for me. Working as a demand planner, I was working closely together with people responsible for sales and also with product developers. We were discussing the prices, sales solutions, marketing strategy, forecast figures for the current situation and future new products. I worked there for 3 years, and it was a great and fun experience. There I got to learn a new product development process, business strategy, and I got to work with great professionals from all over the world. I gained so much knowledge during the time in Sweden.

Finally, due to private reasons, I decided to move back to Switzerland, and start my career in a new company, 3M. 3M had just built up a new EU headquarter base in Switzerland, which consisted of different functions, such as sourcing, packaging, engineering, finance and supply chain planning. My role as a supply chain planner is the integration of demand planning and central management of inventory across Europe, supporting the demand/forecast management and sales and operation process.

Time flies. This year, it has been 10 years since my graduation from SAMK, and also 10 years from when I left Finland. I have a lot of beautiful memories, and a lot to say. I spent 4 years at SAMK and the IBML programme. It was a great experience, and definitely worth the “investment”.

The story of Eeva – a Kanali Campus graduate

Eeva Turkki

It was spring 1997, and I had my future planned out for me and I knew exactly where I was going to apply for studies after matriculation, I wanted to be a nurse and eventually become an aid worker. I had also always said I would never study business, nor would I like to live in Rauma. Little did I know at that point in life.

August came and I found myself in Rauma, where I had just enrolled in a study programme called International Business with Marketing Logistics (IBML) at Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (SAMK). That was the end of my original “grand plan” - after that life has taken me to places I needed to go. And, honestly, the IBML has played a big part in that journey.

Probably the most important reasons for applying for the very first IBML programme were the fact that the teaching language throughout the programme was English, the third year studies would be carried out in the UK, and at the time of graduation we would actually walk away with a double degree from Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College and Satakunta University of Applied Sciences. Having a bachelor’s degree from both Finland and the UK could not be a bad investment for the future, could it?

From day one I felt at ease within our class. Students from all over Finland created an interesting cultural experience, and when the exchange and foreign degree students were added to the mix, learning about communicating, appreciating cultural differences, and learning to manoeuvre in that melting pot became everyday routine. Sometimes brilliant, sometimes a bit more challenging, but always worthwhile.

When we started the studies, I had hardly ever heard of the term “logistics”, and I never thought that it would be “my thing”, but as the studies progressed and courses followed each other, it became more obvious that this is what I would like to pursue in my professional career after studies.

The IBML programme, with the year spent abroad, definitely provided us with tools to tackle future working life. Looking back at the experience I must admit that I appreciated the practical approach of the studies, the close cooperation with business life, and the way we were taught to look for solutions ourselves, rather than feeding us with the correct scenarios and answers.

After graduation I have had the opportunity to work in the public, humanitarian and private sectors. This has been a really good mixture and has helped me develop my understanding of logistics and how the same issues can look a lot different depending on the point of view from which they are evaluated.

My first full-time job after graduation from SAMK as a logistics expert was a post in procurement at the logistics department of the Finnish Defence Forces International Centre (FINCENT), based at the time in Niinisalo Garrison in northern Satakunta. The job involved procurement of various materials and services for the Finnish peacekeeping operations and Finnish UN military observers. The beginning of my professional life would have been tougher, had I not been familiarised with logistics during my studies at SAMK. The

time at FINCENT had a great impact on me both professionally and personally. I could not have asked for a better start to the career in logistics than that.

After a few years I felt the need to seek new challenges. I wanted to have more administrative experience and when a position of an international secretary for the Faculty of Business, Tourism and Culture opened at SAMK, I sent in my application. It was a rather odd feeling to return to my old school in Rauma, but this time as a member of staff, not as a student. However, it was enlightening too see the other side of the picture, not just the student life. My work at SAMK was very different from what I was used to at FINCENT, but in light of the following posts very worthwhile and overall a good experience.

While working at SAMK I found myself applying for the first master's course held at SAMK with the emphasis on international business operations. When I graduated with my bachelor's degree, I thought I would not study anymore. But yet again, luckily my plans changed and I got accepted into the master's study programme in 2005. The part-time studies of the master's programme suited me well, as I could continue working alongside my studies.

After having worked for SAMK for three years, and gained the administrative experience I had sought, it was clear that logistics was where I wanted to continue my professional career. The next natural step was to turn to the private sector to see what that had in store for me. And in no time bigger changes were on the horizon - with the new job came also a move to a new town and my life turned a new page.

Starting as a logistics coordinator at Teknos Oy, Rajamäki Plant opened, yet again, a completely new area of logistics to me. Teknos Group is one of Europe's leading suppliers of industrial coatings with a strong position in retail and architectural coatings, too. The group has production in seven countries: Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Russia and China. Professionally for me, the emphasis was now on cooperation between production and sales and coordinating internal orders so that the material flows from production plants based in Sweden, Denmark and Germany to our warehouse in Finland would be as smooth as possible. Finally, I felt like I was professionally right where I was supposed to be.

One of the best added values in studying for a master's degree part-time was the fact that basically all the assignments were such that I was able to use my own employer as an example and study the issues at hand by familiarising myself with how they are handled in our organisation. In this way, I gained good contacts and a broader understanding of the whole Teknos Group maybe sooner than what I would have, had I just been working in logistics without studying.

After two and a half years at Teknos, suddenly the door opened to the humanitarian sector. Who would have thought that business studies in the IBML programme at SAMK, combined with a few years of relative work experience, in the end opened the way to my dream of becoming an aid worker in the humanitarian sector. I was trained to be in the international aid reserve for the Finnish Red Cross and FRC approached me to see if I would like to apply for a post in Malaysia, where the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies had their Regional Logistics Centre for the Asia Pacific Region. IFRC had launched a 6-month trainee programme for logistics professionals with no previous experience in the humanitarian sector. We began the application process and after a while I got the good news that I had been accepted for a post of trainee procurement delegate. And as everything in my life, it was a matter of only a few weeks to sort everything out and be on the way to Malaysia. Luckily, my employer was supportive of this plan and could see the potential for professional growth and granted a leave of absence, which made it easier to pack my things and go.

In Malaysia I got to work for the very first time in a truly international team, and in an environment that was culturally completely different from what I had been used to. It was an amazing experience, where I could make use of my studies and previous experiences from procurement, administration and warehouse management, and incorporate that with the new environment of the humanitarian sector. Six months flew by, and soon it was time to go home and return back to my old job. I have never felt so out of place. I was restless, kept missing my friends and colleagues in Malaysia and I did not find my old job meaningful or challenging anymore. Only afterwards did I realise that everything was OK, I was just suffering from a culture shock of returning back home, where life had continued as usual while I had been away.

It came as a welcome surprise when the IFRC contacted me again a few weeks after my return to Finland. The IFRC had a procurement officer position open for 6 months in their headquarters in Geneva in Switzerland, and they wanted to know if I would like to apply. It took me no time to decide that this is what I want and I submitted my application immediately. Soon I learned that I was offered the post and this time accepting the post also meant resigning from my job in Finland. I packed my life into cardboard boxes, took the boxes to my parents' garage, sold the apartment, and off I went to Geneva.

The 6-month contract was extended by another 6 months, and during that time the Haiti earthquake took place. I had the opportunity to work with the Haiti operation right from day one from the headquarters, and after a while I was asked to go to Haiti as a procurement delegate and stay until the IFRC could find a long-term delegate to fill the post. I must say that I highly value the field experience in Haiti. The work in those conditions was extremely concrete and without the field mission my experience within the humanitarian sector would not have been complete.

The IFRC had one more surprise in store for me. When it was time to leave Haiti, I was asked to go directly to Panama and work for the rest of my contract in the Regional Logistics Unit for the Americas. In Panama I continued working with the Haiti operation procurement, and training the new IFRC procurement personnel to the Federation processes and procedures.

While I was still in Panama, I had already decided that when my contract is up, it is time to return to Finland. I was contacted by my previous employer to see if I would be interested in returning to the company and work for an ERP project roll-out team for logistics and warehousing, starting with the project in Finland. After 2 years 8 months, 4 countries and 4 projects on the roll-out team, this summer I moved temporarily from the roll-out team to the support team, and back to the roll-out team with a new project in a new country. I have found it to be very motivating and rewarding, but also challenging to be part of such a project. It is an asset to be fully familiar with our logistics set-up across the Group, and see how different countries and cultures accept such a big change in their work. With more Group companies waiting to be incorporated to the same ERP system, I suspect a few more surprises, many new colleagues, and new challenges ahead in the coming years. Never a dull day in logistics.

What have I learned from my experiences from the time of my studies at SAMK to the present position? I had to travel far to see close. I really needed the experience of living and working abroad, and during that time I came to value Finland even more. I know now that I truly enjoy working in multicultural teams, but I do not have to live abroad to do that. What is important for me now is to find a suitable balance between the travel days abroad the work requires, and being able to have a good and rewarding "normal" life back home.

I have learned the meaning of "never say never", and realised that sometimes the path you did not plan is the one you should take, it might just turn out to be better than you dreamed of.

Writer introductions

Kati Antola, DSc, Senior Lecturer. Kati Antola teaches marketing and international business both at undergraduate and graduate levels. She is also responsible for the English-tuition Master's degree programme, BME. Furthermore, she has over twelve years' experience in international business, in the paper industry.

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Daniela Tanhua, MSc, Senior Lecturer & Team Leader. Daniela Tanhua teaches International Business and Logistics Management in both Finnish and English degree programmes. She has been responsible for the International Business and Marketing Logistics undergraduate degree programme since 1999. She has been involved in several international projects connected to in-class teaching throughout her career at the Faculty of Logistics and Maritime Technology.

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Jaana Vase, MA, Dean of the Faculty of Logistics and Maritime Technology. Jaana Vase is in charge of all business, engineering and maritime Bachelor and Master's degree programmes in the faculty. Jaana Vase has worked in various management positions at SAMK.

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Liisa Ylituomi, Business College Graduate. Liisa Ylituomi has worked as a lecturer of international trade and logistics and academic supervisor for practical training at SAMK. She has long-term experience of working life in an international company, working as team leader and manager in the company's supply chain management operations.

KANALI FROM RAUMA TO THE WORLD

Learning International Business Competence by Doing

Kanali – from Rauma to the World takes the reader on a tour through the means and methods used on Kanali Campus of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences. These means and methods are the tools that hone the students' skills, preparing them for careers in international business. Learning by doing is the core of all activities, starting from problem-based learning as the pedagogical approach, using English as the working language, and ending with co-operation with businesses, be it a student project, a company development task or work placement.



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