

**Subject:** Feedback  
**Title:** Observation – Hair Salon Workshop with customer service (in Finnish language)  
**Teacher:** Marikka Sinkkonen-Mirabella – Helsinki City College of Culinary Art, Fashion and Beauty  
**Students:** 8 (2<sup>nd</sup> year of education – Special Needs Students) – average age: 19 years  
**Topic:** Customer Service – “Hair colouring”  
**Date/Time:** 20.05.2011 / 08:00 – 12:00

### Some facts:

Eija Honkanen from Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences arranged this visit for Sonja and me as we are interested in “Special Needs Education” in Finnish Vocational Colleges.

The College is located nearby Haaga-Helia University Pasila. When we went in the impression of brightness and friendliness was given to us. The school hall is furnished with red sofas and chairs and the combination of brightness together with the furniture creates a nice and friendly atmosphere.

Helsinki City colleges trains approx. 500 – 600 hairdressers and beauticians each year – the total number of students counts approx. 1500 every year (incl. Culinary Art and adult education).

Marikka warmly welcomed us and guided us to the second floor to the hair salon workshop. This room is very big – so enough space for her and her 8 students.

The students arrived between 08:00 and 08:30 in the workshop – Marikka told us that there’s customer service today – main topic: “Hair colouring”. The clients have to pay for this service – but the price is approx. half of the hair salon price (normal prices between € 60.00 and € 100.00 – school prices between € 30.00 and € 60.00).

Marikka gave us some basic information as follows:

The hairdresser education lasts for 3 years – the students have lessons from Monday to Friday every week and furthermore they have traineeship every year.

1<sup>st</sup> year: 4 weeks (1 – 2 days per week)  
2<sup>nd</sup> year: 8 weeks non-stop  
3<sup>rd</sup> year: 8 weeks non-stop

First of all the students take care of finding a hair salon for their traineeship but if they are not successful the college supports them at best.

As the teacher told us some students (special needs students as well as ordinary students) also have problems during their on-the-job-learning periods (unpunctuality etc.). Furthermore it’s also often hard for them to find an employment after their education.

The whole group we were visiting consisted of "Special Needs Students" either with social problems (problems to stand up in the morning etc.) or with learning problems (stuttering, difficulties to make out left or right etc.). Furthermore every morning Marikka calls one student to wake her up.

The lessons in the hair salon workshop happen in blocks (4, 6 or 8 lessons) and Marikka prefers blocks of 6 lessons (e. g. 4 lessons practical working and 2 lessons evaluation etc.).

Marikka decided to educate only this group the whole school year and furthermore she guides them the total training period. So an intensive contact grows up between Marikka and her students.

All pupils create their own portfolio during their 3-years-education. This portfolio is a good method to follow up everyone's development and after three years the teacher gives a written feedback to each student (in the first and second year the pupils only get oral feedbacks from the teacher).

One more thing has been new in Finnish Vocational Education since 2010 – the evaluation of the students.

The students get 3 grades (3 is the best) instead of 5 – but in the first 2 years of education only in theoretical subjects, e. g. languages, mathematics etc. and not in practical education. There they get some kind of written report concerning their skills, improvement suggestions and so on. In the third year they graduate then in all subjects with grades (as she told us only approximately 50 % of the special needs students graduate at Helsinki City College after three years).

If students have learning difficulties there's a possibility for individual curricula but of course this will be mentioned in the final exam (e. g. partial qualification).

Finnish special needs students also get a support from the government (not before the age of 17) – but only for the time of education (maximum for 4 years) and just with confirmation of school visit and if they quit the authorities stop payment immediately. But this support money has not to be paid back.

There's another possibility for the students to get benefits from the state. The Finnish government affords long-run loans to the students. And of course these ones have to be paid back.

### **Our statement:**

Marikka is a very practical oriented, smart and pleasant teacher. She always supports her students the best possible way. Furthermore she has a very calm and relaxed sense and so she exudes this feeling also to her students. In our opinion they like her very much and they meet her with respectfulness.

She always shows them the right way and it seems that the students like that kind of guidance. Furthermore she tries to support them to go the correct way to business life. We were also impressed concerning her personal engagement in motivating her students to pass the education.

We spent an informative and interesting morning in this group. It's always nice to see students doing practical work – most of them are very dedicated and eager to learn.

Marikka has years of experience in this job and the students highly benefit from it.

We enjoyed our stay with Marikka and her students very much. Many thanks again for the possibility to observe her hair salon workshop lessons.