

Subject: Feedback
Title: Observation – Company Business Course (in Finnish language)
Teacher: Tuomo Rynänen – Haaga Helia University / Pasila (Helsinki)
Students: 17 (1st year vocational studies – Business) – average age: 24 years
Topic: Foundation of a virtual company (4 groups)
with presentation to all afterwards
Date/Time: 03.05.2011 / 10:00 – 13:00

Some facts:

Today we got the possibility to observe a Business class at Haaga-Helia University in Pasila. As the lesson didn't take part in an EDP-supported classroom – but all students had netbooks – we asked Tuomo concerning the equipment the students need for that kind of education.

And we heard the same as we did at the Haaga-Helia Campus in Porvoo – all netbooks are provided by Haaga-Helia for its students. As this is completely different to the Austrian system – however this is very productive in any case – Sonja and I would appreciate that kind of support also to us and to our students.

The teacher (Tuomo) provides all necessary information, all material and instructions for the students on the moodle platform (this is very common and popular in all Finnish schools).

The work-solution then depends on the students' imagination, of course Tuomo evaluates the results with them, but there is neither a right nor a wrong, it's important for him to support them in creating own minds and ideas and in adapting their knowledge in tasks related to practice.

Furthermore Tuomo told us that he had his own little company (IT) in the nineties. So he has a lot of practical experience and the students could benefit from it.

This course lasts for 3 months – there are 8 appointments each 4 lessons – so in total 32 lessons. At the end there's a final exam (= independent work).

Procedure:

- Welcoming
- Short introduction of ourselves
- PowerPoint Presentation of Tuomo – Input for the students
- Formation of 4 groups
- Group work (timing: 1 hour) – task: Every group founds its own company (name), considers which products will be offered and does a basic financial calculation (supply demand, incomes, expenses, profit before taxation, profit, loss and so on).
- Presentation of each group and evaluation by Tuomo / feedback from other students

Our statement:

Tuomo is a very friendly, worldly and competent teacher. We saw interesting and busy lessons in this Business-class. Although the working language was Finnish we could understand the main way of proceeding.

Furthermore we had a very interesting discussion with Tuomo during the group work activities of his students.

He explained us his main aim and his way of teaching. In addition we got some general information about his professional background and the Finnish retail trade.

Approx. 80 % of the Finnish retail trade is in the hands of two big companies and that might be the reason why foodstuff is about 25 % more expensive than in EEC-average. Sonja and I heard many interesting facts about the Finnish system – not only in relation to education.

After one hour the first group started with its presentation. All members came to the whiteboard and they told us their company name and all the other considerations and calculations.

Tuomo evaluated the results with them and if necessary he did improvement suggestions or he corrected the results. The other study-colleagues could comment the outcomes. The students did a good job – every group had its own ideas concerning company name, products and so on.

One thing we'd like to mention for an upgrade. As the evaluation between Tuomo and his students took place at the whiteboard and the teacher's desk it seemed that it was hard for the other students to follow up the conversation between Tuomo and the presenting group.

In our opinion it would be better that the teacher stands at the back of the classroom that everybody could hear the discussions, improvement suggestions, the positive comments, the teacher's feedback, and so on.

Overall we could say that we saw professional lessons with interested and active students and we enjoyed our stay with Tuomo and his group. We like this kind of active and independent group work and hope we could implement this more in our teaching method when we start to teach again in Austria in autumn.