

Subject: Feedback
Title: Observation – Project group – “International Connections”
Teacher: Veijo Väänttinen / Haaga-Helia University Porvoo
Students: 16 (2nd semester – Degree Programme in International Business)
Topic: Team meeting with discussions about further procedure
Date/Time: 06.04.2011 / 12:00 – 13:30

Procedure:

Sonja and me observed a team meeting in an international project group. The students are split into several groups (e. g. group Austria, group Hungary, group Vietnam aso) where they have got the following task. Haaga-Helia University cooperates with a software company in Porvoo and the students have to find new partners for this company (retailers who want to sell the software products of them in their home country). As this project only started short time ago the students are still in the planning phase. One of their first jobs was to find out appropriate companies abroad (enterprises between 20 and 50 employees) and to collect all data in a list (aim: about 100 relevant addresses). The next step would be sending an email to all those foreign retailers, introducing the Finnish IT-Company and asking if they were interested in a future cooperation etc. So the students at Haaga-Helia University Porvoo are responsible for the “first contact” between the Finnish and foreign company. They are the link between seller and retailer. The final purpose of this project is the arrangement of a meeting between the IT-Company and the potential target audience in June 2011. Furthermore Haaga-Helia University Porvoo could catch a trial version – as a unique opportunity – from Microsoft. The name of the programme is “Microsoft Dynamics CRM” and the students are able to manage all correspondence etc. with this programme. Haaga-Helia University Porvoo arranged some free accounts for students and teachers for testing this Microsoft programme. This IT-project is the first of this type – so the final evaluation only could be done by June 2011 and the teacher – Mr. Veijo Väänttinen – is already in suspense about the outcomes and the further procedure (with corrections, alignments aso) and if necessary a new implementation in autumn 2011. In any case three project-points have to be fulfilled:

- Planning
- Implementation and
- Correcting

Our statement:

The meeting took place in a very relaxed room without chairs but beanbag chairs in the middle of the room and on the left and right hand side with sofas. The students enjoyed their stay in this room. They actively discussed the already settled and the further procedures with their teacher Veijo. Furthermore that day all students had to register in the CRM programme. It was a completely different method of teaching and ambiance as we know from Austrian schools / universities. But we saw very competent and interested students in energized discussions among themselves and with their teacher. In our opinion they can train a lot of practical work as they actively work together with companies from the real business life and they get the possibility to obtain lots of “work-experience”. We like this new kind of practical-oriented lessons in classrooms which don’t look like classrooms. It’s a completely new experience for us to observe that kind of education but we guess this is the step of education in the high-tech century where we have already arrived. Not only companies are faced with new challenges but also schools and universities. In our point of view “Project-based learning” is one of the new keywords in education – and Veijo has been doing a very good job in enabling his students the participation in this fully practical oriented project and the additional possibility to be testers of the “Microsoft Dynamics CRM” trial version. As we understood this is also a completely new curriculum for the students. Congratulations to all involved people who contributed to realizing that!

General statement concerning our stay at Haaga-Helia University Porvoo:

The new Haaga-Helia University in Porvoo was opened this year in January. Sonja and me were completely impressed from the building, from the furnishing, the open atmosphere and the hypermodern styling. We took a lot of photos where we tried to catch the atmosphere. In discussions with the director of Haaga-Helia University Porvoo we found out that the planning of the new university started in 2007 and this building arose in an intense cooperation between the responsible people at Haaga-Helia University and the architects. The result of this cooperation is this impressive building where we went through wondering the whole day. As already mentioned above it is one step to the new generation. You have built a flagship university – many thanks for our chance visiting you!

Some facts at the end:

- approx. 280 students a year
- education in business and tourism lasts 3 years (graduation with bachelor)
- Haaga-Helia University provides their students notebooks for the whole study year (also for home work and private use)