



MONITORING TRENDS IN VIETNAMESE GRADUATES EMPLOYMENT

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Connectivist teaching Approach
FH JOANNEUM, University of Applied Sciences
Graz, Austria



Nowadays most companies need managers who can cope with challenges of the cross-cultural environment. It means that business students are expected to possess a certain level of cultural intelligence to effectively adapt and perform in such multicultural environments (Putranto et al. 2015).



Decaying Knowledge?

(Arbesman, 2012)



“It turns out knowledge is a lot like radioactive atoms because it decays over time [...] researchers have found that half of the knowledge was overturned in about 45 years.” (Arbesman, 2012)

The amount of knowledge in the world “has doubled in the past 10 years and is doubling every 18 months.” (Siemens, 2013)

Educational institutions all over the world are facing a race. Educators need to teach students knowledge, that should not already be void when they leave the university.

Significant Trends in Learning

(Siemens, 2013)

- (1) The variety of fields in which learned knowledge will be applied is growing.
- (2) Informal learning is of growing importance.
- (3) Learning is a lifelong process.
- (4) The organization and the individual are both learning organisms.
- (5) Technology can support many learning processes.
- (6) Know-where, the understanding of where to find knowledge is essential.

Accepting the fact, that competences acquired in a class-room will be applied differently by different students in course of their future careers, leads to the logical conclusion that more than one learning path might be required and more than one result might be correct.



Connectivist Knowledge

(Downs, 2015)

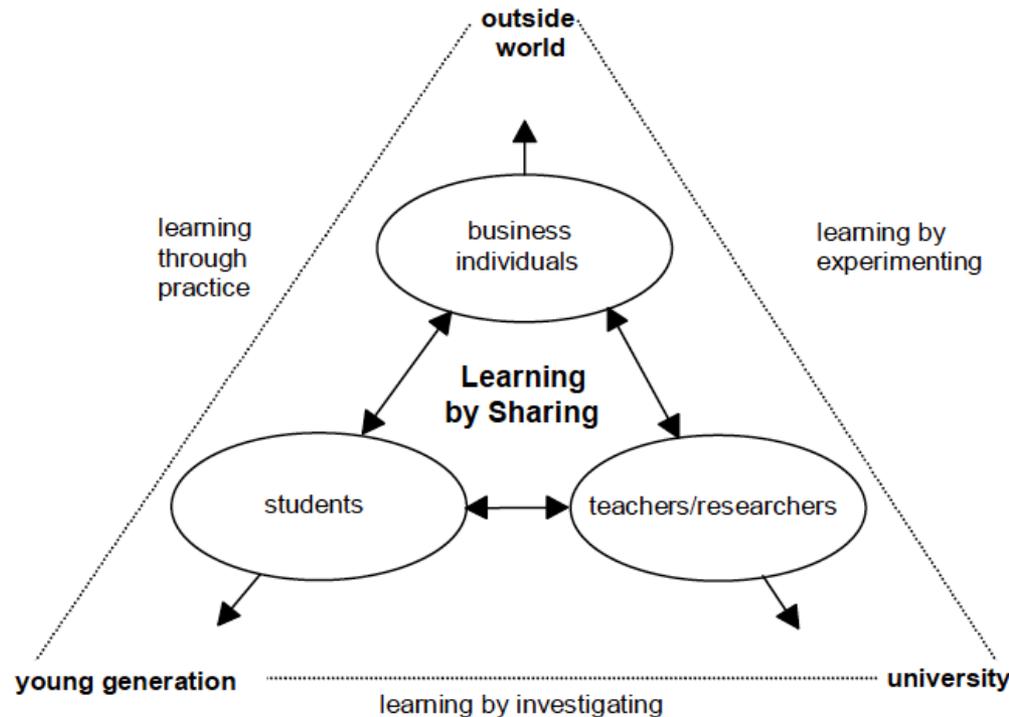
Following the argumentation of Downes (2005), we can add **a third type of knowledge** to the two types, namely qualitative and quantitative knowledge, which we already know and use. Downes calls it connectivist knowledge. This type of knowledge can be described as distributed, it is spread across more than one entity. The connection between two entities and more specifically the interaction between those two is what can be considered a new kind of knowledge. The knowledge of the interaction.

“If Janet votes a certain way because I told her to, an interaction has taken place and a connection has been established. The knowledge thus observed consists not in how Janet and I will vote, nor in how many of us will vote, but rather, in the observation that there is this type of connection between myself and Janet.”

Learning by Sharing

Thijssen & Gijsselaers (2006)

Thijssen & Gijsselaers (2006) formulated a learning by sharing model, which includes three learning styles: learning through practice, learning by experimenting, learning by investigating.



Connectivist Principles and Implications

(Siemens, 2015; Beinhauer & Liebl, 2016)

Siemens defined eight core principles which define connectivist learning. These have been analyzed and four implications for designing exercises have been concluded:

Providing Nodes:

Learning is facilitated by providing various connection points (nodes) for students, which allow to explore the topic from different angles. More than one solution can be applied to a problem.

Building Connections:

The exercise should make use of various interdisciplinary information sources and lead to the development of “Know where” and “Know who”. These information sources can be people, books, databases, social networks etc.

Output Orientation:

The exercise should involve current topics and should clearly indicate how the acquired competences can be applied. The competence of students is the aim, not the acquisition of static knowledge.

Student Centered:

Students make decisions about their own learning pathways. Lenses and filters which are involved in the learning process are actively addressed and become obvious. The teacher is taking the role of a moderator.



“Academic staff are naturally reluctant to change their methods of teaching and learning (and move from stage one—flapping—to stage two—flying) without a deep understanding of why and how and what the impact will be in terms of quality and any resultant benefits.” (Salmon, 2005)

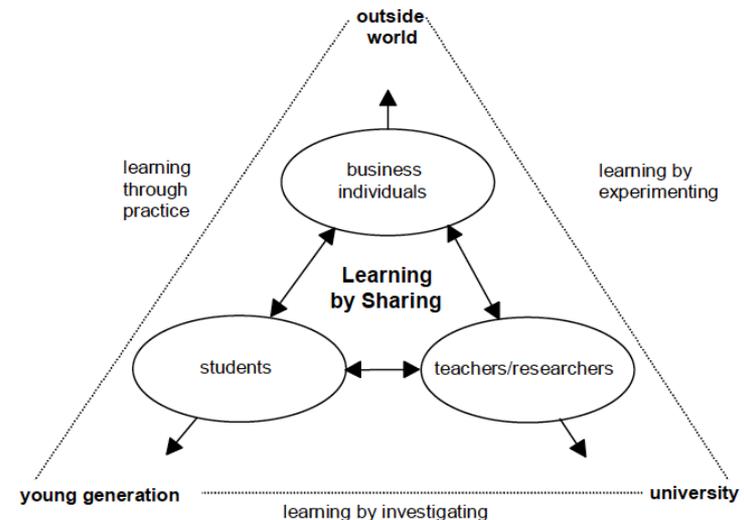


How to challenge students?

As proposed by the learning by sharing model from Thijssen & Gijsselaers (2006) we involved...

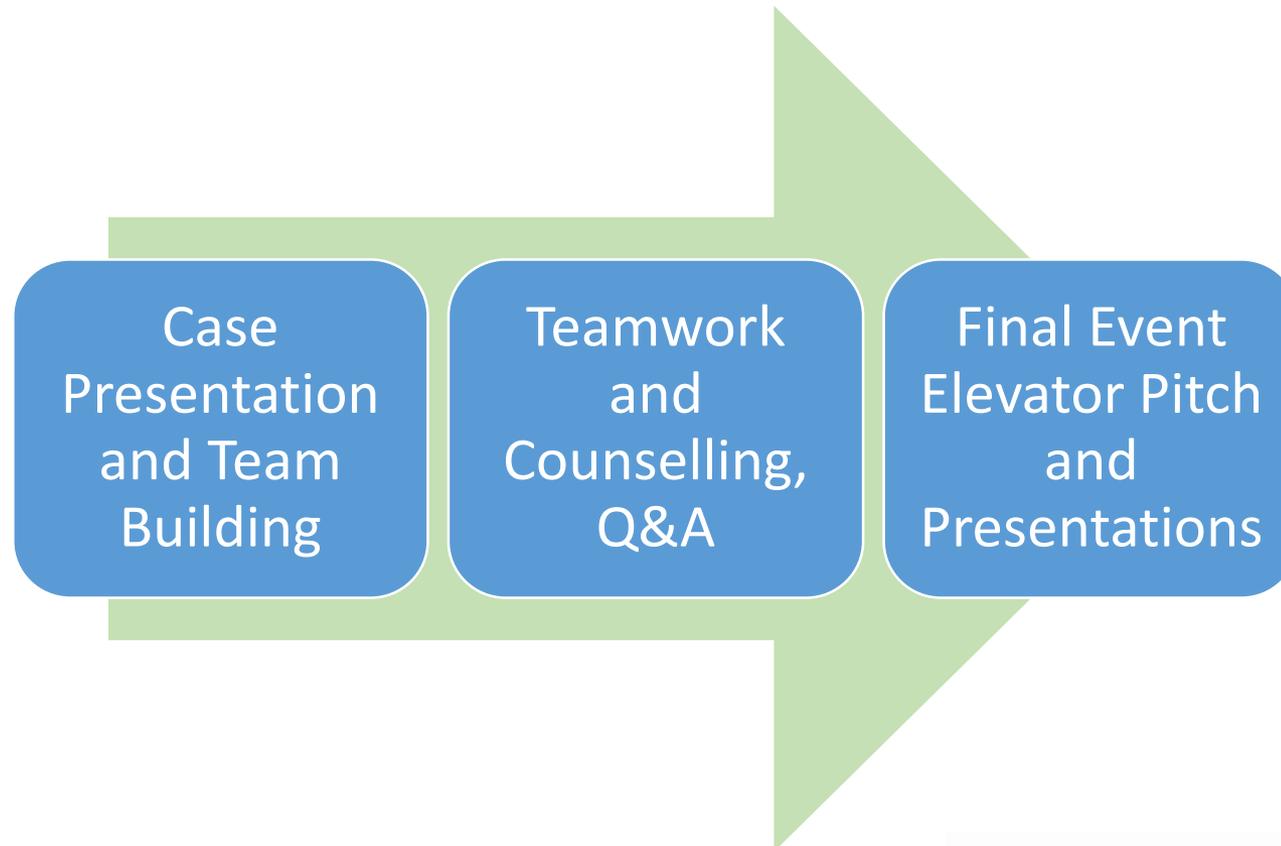
- about 100 students in 10-20 intercultural teams.
- entrepreneurs from our partner companies, who provided real live cases.
- lecturers at FH JOANNEUM act as coaches and moderators

The cases provided are screened by the involved teaching staff and adapted to the level of competence the students have already acquired in order to provide a challenge but no unsolvable problems.



Student Challenge

(Each year roughly 100 students participate)



Cases

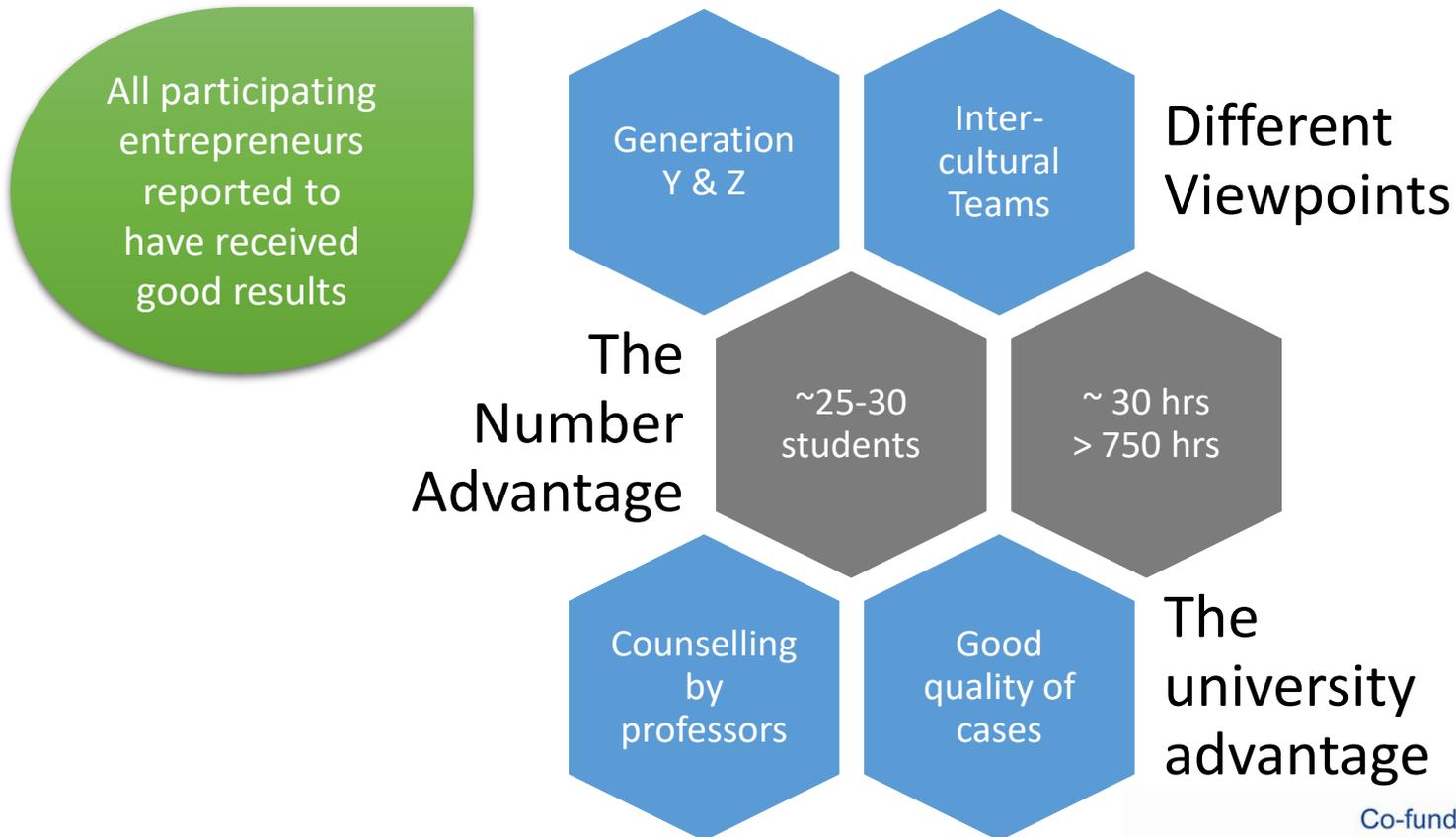
Szenario
(1-2 p.)

Needs
(1/2-1 p.)

Expected
Answers
(1/2-1 p.)

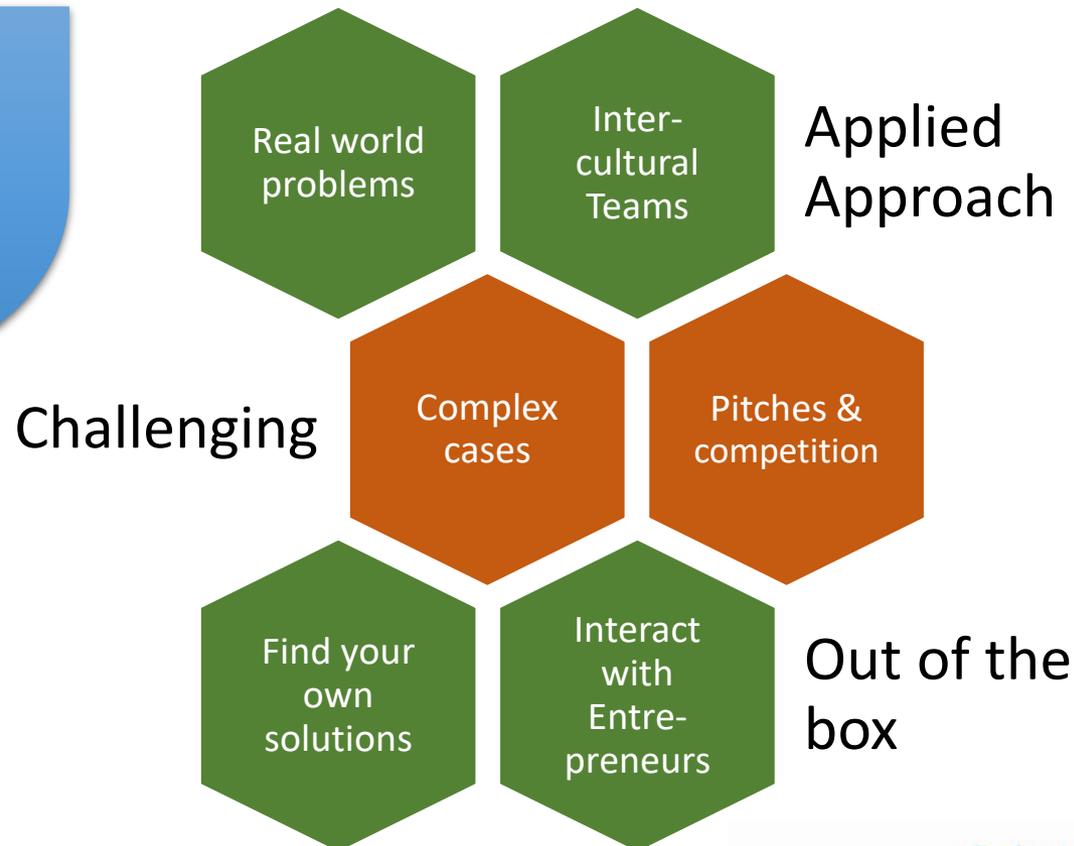
Attachments
and Links
(var.)

Results for the Entrepreneurs



Results for the students

97% of students
recommendet
continuing with
case challenges



Connectivist Principles applied

Providing Nodes:

Students are free to use any existing information source including existing electronic sources like blogs or social media. Starting points have been provided by the case givers. There is no single “best” choice and a nearly unlimited number of possible paths.

Building Connections:

Students are required find their own sources inside and outside the university, starting with choosing the right counselling person. They connect with the case-providers. They learn about how to verify their theories and how to ask the right questions.

Output Orientation:

The students learn, by applying the theories they have learned in class on real world situations. They understand how these theories interact with reality and how they can be further developed. By providing an analysis of the cases, they connect the provided nodes with their existing knowledge.

Student Centered:

The students make their own choices about nearly every element of the learning process, including the selection of their methodology and by designing the interaction with all the involved actors and their col-leagues.



Conclusions

By applying four simple principles, (1) providing nodes, (2) building connections, (3) output orientation and (4) student centered learning the connectivist learning paradigm can actively be used to provide a different, perhaps enhanced, learning experience to students.

The demonstrated principles can be used in very different fields of study, to explore very different concepts. The author has used the same principles very successfully to teach the application of statistical methods. The mentioned principles are not restricted to “soft” topics. Of course, certain adaptations are necessary according to the field of study. Nodes and connections can be very different, but very often the Internet, social media and existing groups and networks provide a good source of nodes to connect to.

The case challenge has been introduced on a permanent basis to our curriculum and is now combining the Global Business Program and the Bachelor Class in one Challenge.

Proof of concept

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	Austria	Russia
Setup	Case challenge with 71 students working on real-world cases with cultural element. Blend of local students in International management and international students.	Information needed to be self-found and theories were developed by the students, to be compared with existing theories later on.
Timeframe	1 full week (40 hrs) reserved for the course	Four months (2 academic hours every two weeks)
Organisation	13 intercultural teams of 5-6 students per team, working in pre-set MS Teams channel	10 intercultural teams of 5-6 students per team, working in a blended learning approach
Deliverables	An "elevator pitch", a two-minute summary of the results, and a detailed annotated presentation that was provided to the case givers.	Specific applied tasks, with own sources and self defined theories as starting points.
Presentation	Only the two best solutions per case presented their full presentations. The best per case were awarded on the final event.	Presentation and discussion in class. Peer review.

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Research concept

- Connectivist theory based innovative teaching approach in Voronezh and Graz
- RQ: “Will connectivism based approach for Cross-cultural management classes be able to enhance all components of cultural intelligence?”
 - Hypothesis: The approach increases the level of all CQ components
 - Effectiveness measurement: Expanded Cultural Intelligence Scale (E-CQS)
 - Measurement subscales: Motivational CQ, Cognitive CQ, Metacognitive CQ and Behavioral CQ
 - Measurement approach: before and after the courses

We assume that courses based on connectivist teaching principles can increase the level of all CQ components, including motivational and behavioral components.

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Results

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Group Descriptives - Before the Courses

	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
1-Motivational CQ	FHJ	58	5.80	5.78	0.530	0.0696
	VSU	50	5.77	5.78	0.538	0.0762
1-Cognitive CQ	FHJ	56	4.82	5.00	0.999	0.1335
	VSU	49	4.18	4.15	0.513	0.0733
1-Metacognitive CQ	FHJ	58	5.06	5.11	0.803	0.1054
	VSU	49	4.48	4.44	0.391	0.0558
1-Behavioral CQ	FHJ	59	4.47	4.56	1.015	0.1322
	VSU	50	3.71	3.67	0.481	0.0681

Group Descriptives – After the Courses

	Group	N	Mean	Median	SD	SE
2-Motivational CQ	FHJ	58	5.92	5.89	0.685	0.0900
	VSU	49	6.35	6.33	0.271	0.0387
2-Cognitive CQ	FHJ	55	5.29	5.46	0.839	0.1131
	VSU	51	5.19	5.14	0.364	0.0510
2-Metacognitive CQ	FHJ	56	5.39	5.56	1.028	0.1373
	VSU	49	5.53	5.44	0.521	0.0745
2-Behavioral CQ	FHJ	59	4.88	4.89	1.203	0.1567
	VSU	50	5.05	5.00	0.544	0.0769

Paired Samples T-Test - Austria

		statistic	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference
Motivational CQ	Student's t	-1.40	56.0	0.167	-0.129	0.0920
Cognitive CQ	Student's t	-5.01	52.0	< .001	-0.555	0.1109
Metacognitive CQ	Student's t	-2.41	54.0	0.019	-0.323	0.1339
Behavioral CQ	Student's t	-2.73	58.0	0.008	-0.409	0.1499

Paired Samples T-Test - Russia

		statistic	df	p	Mean difference	SE difference
Motivational CQ	Student's t	-9.84	48.0	< .001	-0.580	0.0590
Cognitive CQ	Student's t	-10.98	48.0	< .001	-0.998	0.0909
Metacognitive CQ	Student's t	-16.11	46.0	< .001	-1.066	0.0662
Behavioral CQ	Student's t	-16.36	48.0	< .001	-1.340	0.0819

Limitations and discussion

Limitations: Only 108 students; 2 study programmes; 2 countries

- Students developed higher CQ levels in all sub-dimensions including the Motivational CQ and the Behavioral CQ. All these rises have shown to be statistically significant, except for the Motivational CQ in Austria
- Used teaching approaches, based on connectivist principles allowed the students to develop their Metacognitive, Motivational and Behavioral CQs, in addition to their Cognitive CQ
- **Will a connectivism based approach for Cross-cultural management classes be able to enhance all components of cultural intelligence?**

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