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Report on Evaluation of Pilot-Course for students

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1 Structure of pilot course and evaluation process

„Introduction to Local and Regional Food in the South Baltic region“; this was the title of the Regfood pilot course that took place in Kristianstad (Sweden) from the 21th to the 25th of May 2014. 17 students from four different countries (Germany, Sweden, Lithuania and Denmark) participated.

The objective of the pilot course was to pre-test the relevance of the content of learning modules and effectiveness of teaching methodology of the common curriculum on local and regional food for students.

The whole course consisted of three modules:

MODULE 1: Basic aspects of regional food management

MODULE 2: Networking and management in the local and regional segment of the food sector

MODULE 3: Interdisciplinary perspectives of regional food

The concept of local and regional food in the South Baltic region as well as the regional meal and food culture in connection with the description of producers of local and regional food in Denmark, Germany; Lithuania and Sweden were the specific subjects of module 1. In preparation of the pilot course all students conducted interviews with local and regional food producers in their home regions. In Kristianstad the students exchanged their interview results in intercultural group and discussed and developed ideas of the common understanding of local and regional food producers in the South Baltic region. Afterwards the project members assumed the role of instructors and gave presentations on LRF in each country.

Passing these general introductions of local and regional food successfully the second module with the subjects networking and business strategies followed by the third module, which included the topics food quality and health aspects of local and regional food, were focused.

The four-day pilot course consisted of theoretical and practical parts and based on different pedagogic or didactic methods, such as group work, holding presentations, lectures and excursions.

The pilot course was accompanied by a process of evaluation that intended to improve the course regarding content, learning objectives and teaching methodology. Furthermore it was meant for the evaluation of two different conditions: the situation and knowledge level of the students before taking part in the pilot course and the situation after participating in the pilot course. The evaluation process comprised the three stations shown in the table below (table 1).

The first survey, the **expectation survey**, has five great areas: personal data, biographical background and knowledge, motivation and interest, expectations and objectives and additional aspects. It intended to adapt the course contents in response to the target group and should analyze the development of

students by conducting the evaluation survey afterward. Thus the data can be used for the education concept of the module. The second survey, the **evaluation survey**, consists also of five great main topics: development of knowledge, achievement of objectives, evaluation of learning arrangements, evaluation of contents in general and evaluation of each module. The survey intended to be used for improving and developing the education program. Both surveys were provided online.

In addition to these online surveys a “five finger feedback” was conducted to get a personal feedback on the pilot course. All participants, students and instructors, received a document on which they could see a drawn hand. The hand, which includes the five fingers, symbolizes the following expressions:

- Thumb: I really enjoyed...
- Forefinger: I think that needs to be improved...
- Middle finger: I didn't like...
- Ring finger: I will remember this knowledge/experience...
- Little finger: I wished to learn more about...

The participants were asked to take a pen and to write down their ideas and opinions grouped to the different fingers. After they added everything, they had the chance to present their main impressions to the group. All papers were collected after the pilot course and evaluated afterwards. The evaluation took part in the last two hours of the pilot course. The 17 students from the four countries who participated in the pilot course were asked to take part in the evaluation of the pilot course. Also the 10 instructors from the four countries who have been in charge in Kristianstad in the frame of the pilot course were asked to take part in the evaluation of the pilot course (five finger feedback).

Table 1: structure of the evaluation process

	Expectation Survey	5-Finger-Feedback	Evaluation Survey
	online survey (evasys)	narrative feedback	online survey (evasys)
Who?	students	students and instructors	students
When?	before pilot course	after pilot course (in Kristianstad)	after pilot course (back home)
What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal data, • biographical background and knowledge, • motivation and interest, • expectations and objectives • additional aspects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I really enjoyed... • I think that needs to be improved... • I didn't like... • I will remember this knowledge/experience... • I wished to learn more about... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal Data • achievement of objectives • professional personal development • evaluation of each part of the pilot course
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adaption of the course contents in response to the target group • analyzing development of students by conducting evaluation survey afterwards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving and developing national educational program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving and developing national educational program

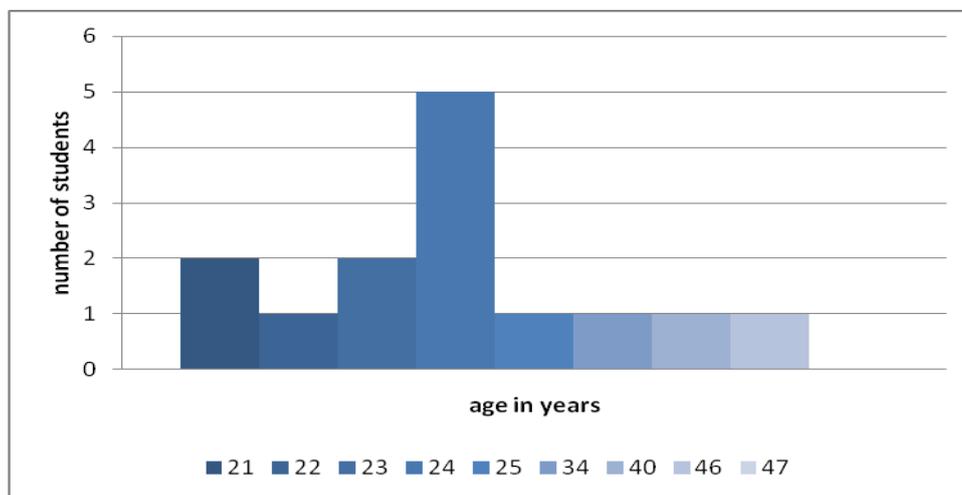
2 Main Results: Expectation and Evaluation survey

2.1 Expectation Survey

15 of the 17 students filled out the expectation survey. The expectation survey was provided online. The students were asked via email to fill out the survey. The email was sent in the beginning of May. Students who haven't filled out the survey until the start of the pilot course were asked directly in Kristanstad to fill it out immediately. All students answered to the survey.

Personal Data

Sociodemographic characteristics of students indicated an average age of 28.5 years. The bar chart below shows the age of the students, who participated in the pilot course.

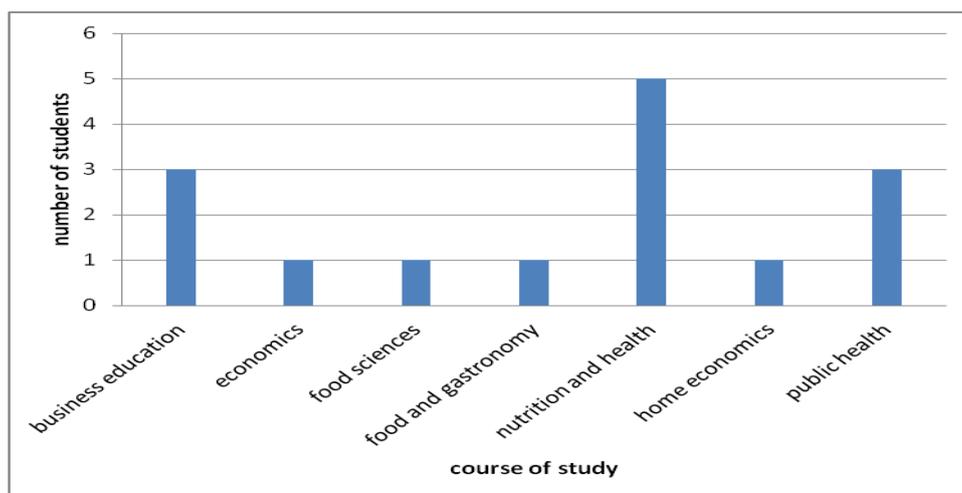


Bar chart 1: age of participants

The personal data of students also describes that most of the students are female (14 female, 1 male).

Biographical background and knowledge

The following bar chart represents the courses of study of the students. The data shows that students have a different educational background and teachers had to adapt the course contents in response to this interdisciplinary group of students. But the reciprocal profit that students gain from their different knowledge and experiences was a great advantage of the mixed composition. To enforce this exchange of knowledge and experiences the instructors used learning arrangements like group work and discussions.



Bar chart 2: course of study

According to their course of study students rated their prior experience regarding the contents “food and meal culture” and “nutrition and health” good to excellent. In the areas of “business strategies”, “networking” and “concept of local and regional food” students describe themselves on a low level of knowledge.

Interest and Motivation

The results of the survey regarding student’s motivation show that all students are motivated in each and every topic of the pilot course (table 2). They are highly motivated for improving their skills within food and meal culture, networking in general and the concept of LRF.

Table 2: interest regarding the content

content	very interested	interested
concept and idea of LRF	26,7%	66,7
management and Networking in LRF	40%	60%
interdisciplinary perspectives of LRF	26,7%	60%
food Science	26,7%	20%
health	26,7%	40%
internationality/Baltic Region	26,7%	60%

Besides their motivation regarding the specific subjects of the course students were questioned on their personal interests of participating in the pilot course. Most of the students answered that the practical and intercultural aspects of the course and the possibility to exchange knowledge are most interesting for them. They are also interested in using the knowledge generated in the course for their future and improving their international network by meeting people with different cultural and educational background.

Expectations

In a next step students were questioned which competencies they expect to improve during the pilot course. Mostly all students (93%) expected to improve their marketing skills. More than 70% of the students answered that they expect to improve their business strategy knowledge, their knowledge of the concept of LRF in general, their skills of food science, networking and in the area of food and meal culture as well as regarding health.

2.1 Evaluation Survey

Only 10 out of 17 students filled out the evaluation survey after the pilot course. The evaluation survey was provided online. The students were asked via email to fill out the survey. The email was sent two days after the end of the pilot course. The main results of the survey have been the following:

Development of knowledge

The students were asked to rate their skills regarding the specific subjects of the course before the pilot course in Kristianstad and afterwards (“How would you rank your knowledge of the following topics?”). The table below shows the amount of students in percent, who rated their skills as “excellent/very good”.

Table 3: development of knowledge

Topic	pre-evaluation (expectations survey)	post-evaluation (evaluation survey)
concept of LRF	33,3%	60%
food and Meal Culture	26%	40%
marketing	26,7%	30%
business strategy	20,0%	40%
Networking	26,7%	50%
food science	13,3%	0%
nutrition	42,9%	10%
health	60%	20%

The table 3 describes that students thought that they improved their knowledge concerning the concept of LRF, marketing and business strategy. The students didn't improve their knowledge in the fields of food science, nutrition and health. Due to these statements it has to be noted that the topics food science as well as nutrition and health were not the main subjects on which have been focused in the four days of the pilot course. Furthermore it has to be stated that the comparison of the results from both surveys is quite critical, because the two different surveys are not related to the same among of students. In the pre-evaluation 17 students answered to the survey while only 10 students filled out the post-evaluation survey. Considering the background of the variety of the different courses of study of the students that might occur a difference in the statements.

Achievement of learning objectives and personal objectives

Most students strongly agreed/agreed on achieving almost all defined learning objectives, but not in the following learning objectives: gaining knowledge of various definitions of food quality from different perspectives, enhancing the understanding of consumer perception of quality and safety and developing skills to describe different food products in relation to food quality. Only 40 percent and less answered that they achieved these three learning objectives. As described above (see: development of knowledge) a reason for this result may be that these specific subjects were not that in focus of the pilot course.

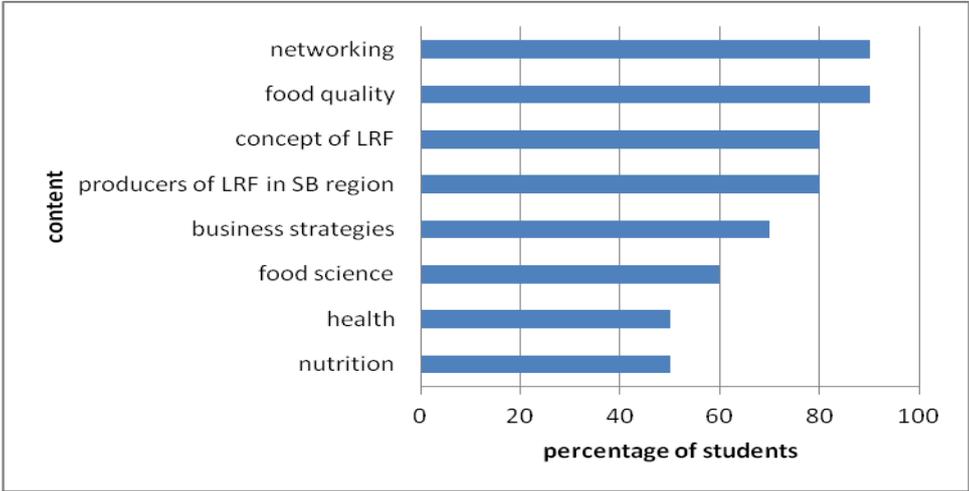
Most of the students reached all their personal objectives, e.g improvement of the intercultural and intercultural skills (ca. 70% of all student), development of self-competencies (ca. 90%) and experiencing something new and different (ca. 80%).

evaluation of learning arrangement and contents

The third part of the evaluation survey consisted of the evaluation of learning arrangements and contents of the pilot course in Kristianstad. Most of the students (more than 50%) assessed all learning arrangements as very interesting/interesting. The students ranked the learning agreements from the top to the bottom in the following way:

- 1 discussion (80% of all surveyed students)
- 2 excursions
- 3 group work
- 4 theoretical lectures
- 5 self-study
- 6 making presentations (50% of all surveyed students)

Furthermore students were asked 'which contents regarding local and regional food would you like to learn more about'. The following bar chart expresses that students are very interested in learning more about networking and food quality in the field of LRF. But students additionally want to learn more about contents like the concept of LRF, producers of LRF in the South Baltic region or business strategies.



Bar chart 3: evaluation of contents

evaluation of each module

The final part of the questionnaire was reserved for recording the assessment for each module of the pilot course. The table below contains the main aspect of students' feedback on the modules.

Module 1: Basic aspects of regional food management
<p><u>positive aspects:</u></p> <p>The students assessed the presentations of instructors about the local and regional food sector in the four different countries (Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Lithuania) as very nice and helpful. According to the questioned participants they also appreciated the interviews they had to conduct in preparation of the pilot course, because this was a good approach to get to know local and regional food producers. Furthermore students valued group work and discussions.</p> <p><u>negative aspects:</u></p> <p>One of the interviewed students criticized the fact of presenting isolated each group from another and the teaching techniques of some instructors. The student suggested using the same agenda for these presentations. Furthermore students liked to learn more about the specific vision/goals of the project and LRF.</p>
Module 2: Networking and management in the local and regional segment of the food sector
<p><u>positive aspects</u></p> <p>Like in module 1 the students rated the learning arrangements group work and discussions highly. They also liked the practical aspects of this module (working with case studies and interviews) and the interdisciplinary aspects (ensured by arrangements like working in intercultural groups).</p>

negative aspects:

Students criticized that the part about networking was interesting but could methodologically improved (group work, motivation part). They also evaluated the time pressure for group work (part networking and part about business strategies) negatively.

Module 3: Interdisciplinary perspectives of regional food

positive aspects

Students liked the part about food quality (interesting, good presentation). They also like the benefited discussions.

negative aspects:

Although students rated the discussions positively one student criticized the aspect that discussions were interrupted.

3 Five-Finger-Feedback (students)

The five finger feedback produced mainly the results shown in the following table.

I really enjoyed...

...learning arrangements: excursions, discussions, making presentations, lectures/presentations, interdisciplinary aspects, intercultural aspects, content: local and regional food in general

I think that... need to be improved

...structure/red line/clear objectives, rough time plan: more time for group work and discussions and more leisure time, fewer subjects → going deeper, more about networking and health, presentation and motivation techniques, intercultural aspects, content: local and regional food in general

I didn't like...

...time management/full time table, missing information about objectives, depth is missing, short times for presentation and group work, didn't use moodle

I will remember... (knowledge/experiences)

...knowledge about LRF, discussions, excursions: visiting the farm/ food festival, interviews with producers (preparation), methods: ball round game, 5-finger-feedback

I wish to learn more about...

...networking, concept of LRF/ background of producers, Healthy Food, business aspects e.g. strategies, entrepreneurship, Food quality/Labels of food quality, Meal and food culture, Marketing

4 Five-Finger-Feedback (instructors)

The feedback from instructors in the pilot course in Kristianstad produced mainly the following results:

Positive aspects: organization of HKR, learning arrangements: discussions, group work, excursion, mix of theoretical and practical things, interdisciplinary aspects, contents: networking, food quality, inspirations/new ideas/ new contacts, enthusiasm of students and teachers

Less positive aspects: focus on fewer topics, more time for group works, more discussions, clearer objectives of the course, clearer structure of the modules and clear responsibilities, different preparation of the students