

Future Experts

Brahea is coordinating a flagship project in Finnish university continuing education. FUTUREX – Future Experts Project aims at creating new learning pathways for experts in the world of work. Researchers and educators are working together to find future competences needed by university graduates.

- Many experts find themselves in challenging new positions a few years after leaving academia. Some of these positions also demand a common structure of knowledge, skills and competences. There is seldom a one single route to these new roles of expertise, says **Kari Seppälä**, Director of Brahea.

- People from various educational backgrounds occupy these positions and would benefit from further training to ensure their professional development. In an educational setting, the expertise of these professionals can be recognized, Seppälä continues.

Recognition of expertise may lead to a new career path, a better salary and a more stable position in the labour market. Training these experts is quite demanding. Some areas of expertise are still in the structuring process and there aren't many acknowledged masters to advice the novice.

- Educators should create rich learning environments, where academia is present with its broad expert networks. With a comprehensive network of actors from different universities, the project aims at finding new models of professional development for higher education graduates, adds **Heli Trapp**, Project Manager of the FUTUREX-project.

Validation means Recognition of Prior Learning

Learning takes place everywhere. A part of that learning is also meaningful while studying at the university. Recognition of prior learning is a procedure where learning from experience is made visible, assessed and credited in comparison to the formal education curricula.

- Recognition can be used in granting admission or entry to university studies for students with a nontraditional background. This is usually part of the widening participation agenda of higher education. With existing students, RPL procedures help learners to build on their prior learning and avoid enrolling in courses which they may have covered through learning at the workplace or being active in their community, says **Timo Halttunen**, Development Manager at Brahea.

- Validation can lead to a broader and deeper learning process. However, learning from experience is a different learning process from learning in a classroom. Knowledge and skills from prior learning have to be transferable to university curricula. Learning from experience may not always be assessed like formal learning. Therefore, universities need to rethink the curricula to allow more flexible learning routes, Halttunen continues.

In a broader sense, recognition of prior learning can lead to better self esteem,

motivation and interest in lifelong learning. This is usually defined as social recognition. With adult learners, RPL is a tool for negotiating between individual learning paths in the university and collaborative learning at their workplaces. To ensure equal treatment of learners, quality of RPL systems and procedures is very important. Universities need to build visible, predictable and transparent validation processes.



Timo Halttunen, Development Manager works as an expert in recognition of prior learning in Brahea

Learning from Finland

■ The high quality of Finnish education has made headline news around the world. Finland has been recognized as a country committed to creating a knowledge economy and providing quality learning opportunities for all its citizens. Results e.g. in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) have raised interest in learning from Finland.

As an active member in the Future Learning Finland (FLF) education cluster, Brahea is creating education and consultation services in the area of lifelong learning.

Contact our experts if you are interested in making full use of the potential of University of Turku!

A walk in the park

■ If you want to destress, go to a park! Only a few minutes just looking around a park makes you feel better physiologically, on top of other positive effects. But don't take parks for granted, for they too are facing stress today.

In Brahea we are working for a more sustainable society and to manage the need for changes by putting research and practice together. Brahea is for example coordinating a project called DEVEPARK – Sustainable historic park management and development in Finland and Estonia 2009–2012.

Parks are facing different challenges, and historic parks are facing even more, because they are not yet recognised too widely as being a class of their own. Even if their values are recognised, they are difficult to protect, manage, and develop within sector-based governance, as they include both cultural and environmental values. Historic parks are also unique works, and each park must be managed individually. Historic park expertise is diversified, and there are only few specialists.

Most of the DEVEPARK project's results are information-based and openly available on the project website. More concrete results are seen in pilot parks of the project partners (see the website). You are warmly welcome to visit and make your contribution to historic parks.

<http://www.devepark.utu.fi/>



Open university goes international

■ The open university in Brahea is coordinating the LEMON project (Learning Communities of Modern Liberal Adult Education). The aim of the project is to develop and reform centres for liberal adult education in Finland and Estonia. Institutes of liberal adult education are long-time partners of open university studies in Finland. The project lasts three years and there are eight partners from Finland and five from Estonia.

So far the LEMON project has trained 1 154 participants in pilot courses, and 150 teachers have participated in training. One of the most popular topics has been the use of social media in education. The Facebook page 'OPI Turun seudulla' is the latest example of what kind of collaboration educational organisations can carry out with social media.

The LEMON project is the latest one in a series of similar projects that has been carried out with Estonian partners over more than 20 years. The central focus in the projects has been innovative development of new learning methods: open and distance learning (ODL), blended learning, and e-learning. There has been at least one project running every year; very often partners from other Baltic countries as well.

Turku open university along with Tallinn open university, are organizing the Finnish–Estonian Open University Seminar (FINEST OPEN) in Tallinn 8–10 June 2011. The seminar is linked to the European Capital of Culture activities in Turku and Tallinn. This is the first time ever that open universities from the two countries meet together. In addition to comparing open university activities in Finland and Estonia, attention is paid to lifelong learning challenges in Europe and the latest development in open learning.

Additional information:
LEMON <http://lemonproject.ning.com/>
FINEST OPEN <http://goo.gl/JmOUE>



Brahea is forerunner in

- Finland-Estonia Cooperation
- Practices of Universities' societal interaction
- Implementation of lifelong learning principles
- Recognition of prior learning (RPL)
- Outcomes-based higher education
- Tutoring unemployed graduates
- Integrating immigrants into the community and working life
- Promotion of rural entrepreneurship and operational possibilities of rural SMEs
- Promotion of local food
- Supervising, coaching and process consulting
- Phototherapy methods
- eLearning and learning environments
- Congress services

Brahea Centre for Training and Development University of Turku

Our services

- Open university studies and professional continuing education
- Regional and international development projects
- Congress services

In brief

- Students: 12450
- Projects: 48
- Staff: 75
- Overall expenditure: total 5,1 (€ 1000) (Statistic figures year 2010)

<http://brahea.utu.fi/en>

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