Cross-life project in Malta workshop 22.9-26.9.2008  
Written by Tiina Sampakoski from Finnish home group

It seems that being part of such a workshop has had a deep impact on me and also to my academically thinking and growth in research making and also observing the things deeper from certain aspects. It has been given us as a group a change to get to know each other as individuals but also in a cross cultural level. I think in this point we all have been growing to learn to look at the thinks from a large approach. And that has been given us all a change to look at and to listen each others ideas and through that to learn to understand each other. It is amazing how much we have been growing in this aspect. It has been challenging for all to learn that it is possible to be able to look at the thinks in a deeper approach and that we should never see thinks only one-sided. We have learnt to respect each other which is very important, in order to learn to work in ‘around‘ table. And it seems that in everything, we should take in concern those deeper contexts and layers that are actually there. They are often hidden, but they are there. This helps me also to deepen my thoughts in many ways.

In Malta we were going through different pedagogies. There were deeper aspects that we point out of the pedagogies. The limit of a space and the limit of the time were there, not to forget the identity. I was amazed how deep results we got just by going to walkabout. We observed Malta on our walkabouts and little trips around it. We find nice history and beauty of the country. But again we manage to go further than that. For example in my group I realised, how we in a group could see the thinks in so different ways. We saw the limit of the space in the ways how the houses had been build tight near each other gaining to upwards with many floors. Even the roof was used as a balcony. Because there were no green threes in the area, you could see the need of it. People had planted their seeds in a pottery to get their little garden in front of their houses. There was also this social aspect in that. They would ask the neighbour to come for a coffee in that tiny little spot -where there was hardly space for two chairs - and they would have their chat. But on the pathway to their homes, there was this big door and few other little doors to inner house. That showed us, that there is a need for privacy. They told us that when you are all the time under supervision of the tourists.. It has given them a feeling, that all the time there is somebody who was watching, cause of that, they would never ask even a good friend or a stranger to come to their homes for a visit. This has got to do with the identity. This is linked to our wondering where the children would play when there was no place and everywhere you look, there is buildings. Heavily crowded as that island is, we manage to find a nice open area were the boys were playing football near the church. Maybe it belonged to that church, which is actually playing a big role for Maltese people. The Churches are actually in the middle of the villages and towns in Malta. This is the way how it has become close to the people and the role of a priest must play a big importance
for local people. Small villages seemed to work as nice neighbourhoods and the people seemed nice and helpful. Even though they have this need to show how good and developed they are in everything, it seems that they have to do that, because they have always done it and cause there was such a must for it. For being such a little island they have had to be offensive and self-sufficient. They had to find they way to survive already in times of their forefathers. Somehow you could easily see how the old and the new are hand by hand in Malta. In the walkabout we good see how the schoolchildren game home to the main square of the town and run to the shop in the corner. In that shop there, it was possible to buy everything you could imagine between earths to heaven. And how the old grandfather was watching over from the balcony of his house; memorising how it was in his time in that very same spot. This is the way how we saw the old linked to new generations. Probably those children would always carry that little shop in the square of that community in their hearts memorising the safety feeling of their home. Even the filthy tourist with their jumbo jets landing to the island, would not be able to take away that feeling or that memory.

As we all are carrying a story, it is inevitable for me that everything we have experienced in our lives will have an effect to the way we are observing and looking the world. Cross-life has given me a lot of new perspectives and a whole new approach within it`s multi-methodology.

For being isolated by the sea, some Maltese might find it depressive even though the tourist would bring them a blow of something new from the other world. There is something else which links them to the other part of the world... it is the English language that they are so keen on. Even the books at schools are brought over sea and the English language plays big role in Malta. Its seems that they want to feel they are vulnerable and that with the language, they can be competitive with the other world. Even as a tiny island they would be able to feel powerful with the technology they have achieved. Perhaps that has something to do with the history of Valletta. They built it to show we are vulnerable; we have also the power and our way to protect ourselves in order to survive.

About the identity, it is seems clear to me, that I learn to live in a place where there is a lot of space around me. And that the threes are very important for me... in Malta you could not see any threes. I noticed it at once I arrived there. But what... there is stones! And what kind of stones... Someone told me that those stones have a story for us to tell. That story brings us back to our roots and they are very important to memorize. Even we made a joke about dead stones...It was not very thankful of us to do so. It is difficult to think how old those stones were and what is it that they were telling us?

In Malta even the stones are living and telling a story!

Cross-life workshop in Tampere
I was memorising Tampere workshop and remember specially the visit to Work museum and the visit to TAKK. The museum was very interesting for me, because it reminded me about my own life history. All those textiles actually brought my mind my own childhood. I remembered how we had those textiles in our home as curtains, pillows and covers or as a textile in my mothers or sisters dress. They brought to my mind a lot of memories from the past. As a group we were seeing there a lot of different things, but there was also others who were telling me, that they were memorising there their own history. That museum was working as a learning environment, like a classroom.

I could feel the hard work that Finnish women had done in that factory of Finlayson and how they were the key-persons of the history of the city of Tampere. It was also nice to see how they had been living those hard times very close to each other, sharing the kitchen with four families. It made me to think how far we are from that collective way of life today and how this individual way of life has been changing us.

We were also thinking, how the working life has changed and what does it mean for the education and especially for vocational schools and in the academic world?

Visiting to TAKK was also interesting for me. I realized how important it was to go and visit them and see, how they are teaching different adults and how they were working together with work life and studying. We divided in small groups and visited different sections of workshops, were the student’s were learning. The learning environment was interesting. Our group visited a workshop where there were unemployed people. They were learning to fix motorbikes or do some woodworks or painting the walls. They were like in a little communion, because they had their own teachers and coordinators, who would help them if there was help needed. They worked individually and get help only if they asked for it. They had also their own social worker over there, cause of the problems with drugs and alcohol with those long term unemployed students. Students were very closed to that social worker, you could feel it from the way, she spoked about them and how she remembered them by name.

In Tampere workshop I realized how it was much easier to work together as a Cross-cultural group, because we already knew each other and we felt much closer to each other. It was also very well organized. (I know how much work it needed to become a workshop like that, because I had a little change to be involved by attending various meetings...not to forget our good advises in London, how to develop the workshops further.)

We had various and interesting lessons dealing with worklife and studying. We also had a change to get to know how to use multimethod in research and in academic learning environment.
Reflecting the London workshop  
Written by Tiina Sampakoski from Finnish home group

I think that in London we were experiencing very closely, how it is to work in a multicultural group. We differ from each other very much, but that should not be a problem, still we can learn to understand each other and keep it richness. I felt there were many differences, in how we had understood for example the presentation-task. It was disturbing yet not something to speak about it so much.

I was many days still in London, after I came back to Finland. I had picture of London tower and Big Ben in my mind and all the courageous buildings I saw there. I was talking to my children in English and having English breakfast on the mornings...

Content

From all the ideas that we shared in that week, I remember the best the travelling ideas. As much as we talked about those ideas and were thinking about them, they started to live in my mind and I have found out many ways, how the travelling ideas are influencing in every day life. I have been interested about the social anthropology and it is actually very interesting how the anthropologist's are thinking about the travelling ideas. They take in concern the past (the history), the traditions and how the travelling ideas are integrating between the modern- and the old world. Somehow all the people in all over the world are influenced all the time by media and TV. They all have mobile phones and internet and possibility to travel quickly to far countries. So we are influenced all the time with modern world and the ideas it brings to us. But it doesn’t have to mean, that we should all change to be the same. We can develop and learn from each other, but we don’t need to change to be the same. We see the ideas from our own point of view and somehow we have this need to localise the things. In the end we change without losing our own culture or something what we have learned in the past that is deep inside of us. We are growing and learning and developing. It means we must change, but we are adapting the new ideas to be suitable for us (hopefully not copying them straight ahead).

If I’m looking back to history, there were many Finnish people who were travelling to Europe, to get new ideas from famous educationalists and philosophers and when they came back to Finland, they brought the new ideas with them and that was helping them to develop our education system. It seems that the ideas are travelling also from the history to this day and have still a great influence.

In London I felt safety at once that I arrived there, because everywhere I went, I was able to hear people speaking English. That was nice, homely feeling!! In most of the countries I've been, there was always this feeling of being outsider, because you didn’t know the language. It is so important to be able to communicate and to have a feeling, that this is where I belong to, here I can manage and here I can be understood.

I was happy to get to know so many new people and I hope we will still meet next time here in Tampere to get to know each other even better. Throughout the cross-cultural communication we
can learn and to understand better each others cultures and educational targets. I think this will also help us to work together as a group. Cause we are a group, aren't we?

Virve Kallioniemi-Chambers  
21.5.2008  

Cultural pauses as important elements in higher education?

It is already over two months since we had Crosslife workshop in Tampere. After some days it would have been difficult to raise any special theme or issue over the other. I experienced many meaningfull situations during the week about crosscultural collaboration, organizing the workshop and got also ideas about globalizing working life and education to reflect further. The temporal distance provides a bit different ankle for the workshop.

In education we get used to it that the studies are coordinated in a way which communicates where to go on certain time and what is the topic/ lesson on that time, etc. If it hadn't been done often it would be a chaos. The educational workshop has also a programme. It tells for participants what is the plan for different activities day by day and also something about the contents of the week. The programme orientates and also raises expectations among participants. It provides some shared understanding for gathering together. It includes, more or less, some breaks and informal time. The aim of the planning the programme is to support learning, but it does not ensure that it finally will take place.

I pay attention on the breaks in the programme. For me the informal discussions during the coffee breaks and walking from place to place were fruitful and inspiring, and as I have understood, they are in general in academic conferences, workshops etc. I can't say that “I learned during the breaks more”, but the personal discussions seem to be the ones which you remember well also afterwards. The breaks and ‘free time’ in the programme seem to be important in aiming to develop the community.

I’m very happy about the Tampere workshop programme, and all presentations and discussions within the programme, but the breaks and meaning of them for participants lead to think the crosscultural studies and curriculum in general from this perspective.

It would be interesting to make some research on pedagogy in higher education and have focus on it what kind of cultural pauses for peaceful reflections it includes if at all. I find that the current tendency in university studies as it is in other kind of studies as well, seem to be that you have to be effective and be able easily to show what are the benefits of your efforts and struggles. Is the idea embedded, though perhaps invisibly, also in the study plans and curriculums? Are pedagogical and research processes taken as they were the same kind in time consuming as working processes in industry? Does the general cultural governance in higher education press us to fill in all available time with planned programme and take out “the loose time”? I would like to defend the kind of higher education pedagogy, which recognizes that the professional growth takes time and it is sometimes very invisible. ...But for the task I need to clarify the concepts and my theoretical approach.
Virve Kallioniemi-Chambers  
30.11.2007  
Crossing pedagogical practices

London workshop was inspiring for me in many ways. In this short reflection the focus is on pedagogy of the workshop which interests me. In my work history I have been working especially with adults in Open University context. There it is own kind of challenge to develop pedagogy which is culturally sensitive, especially because the groups are culturally quite homogeneous.

In London the group was clearly multicultural in many ways. Different national cultures and academic cultures was a setting to start to work together. Small group working, discussions, visit to Lewisham College, reflections of the visit, lecture and panel discussion were pedagogical possibilities to increase the understanding and meaning of cultures in the collaboration. I had especially one emancipatoric experience: In the group we finally didn’t try technically form small crosscultural groups but we left it a bit further into future. I interprete the situation that we took seriously the meaning of crossculturality. We didn’t try to use common pedagogical methods, which usually means that the teacher has strong influence on it when and how the groups are formed. Our pedagogical method was more content orientated and situational. Here lies also one core goal of Crosslife: one aim of the studies is to develop academic apprenticeship idea and research based collaboration. Commitments, or in fact lack of them, to work together are often a problem in long term collaboration according to many researches.

If London workshop participants are able to find their own small groups after taken a little bit time for reflections after the workshop, we are developing pedagogy which is crossing some common practices in academic pedagogy. In Crosslife one quite uncommon pedagogical feature is that there are more than one teacher/tutor at the same time working with students (at least in Tampere it is not common). During the workshop it became clearer for me that this is the method which is really a big resource for research based academic discussions and for forming small research groups.

The pedagogy of the workshop gave also some inspiring thoughts about the travelling ideas. I recognized that students from different universities they were used to student centered activities, while at the same time it came up that the lecture is the method which is expected to be a part of academic pedagogical practices. All the tutors, having more or less experiences as a teacher at the university, have organized learning processes by using lecture but also many kind of group working methods seemed to be known for all. So, there are some ideas of academic pedagogy which have travelled. It would be interesting in future to discuss more about pedagogical practices in different academic cultures, and to become more aware if there are similarities and differences and how to understand them contextually and historically.

Learning journal - Tampere workshop  
Marko
The key focus for the Tampere workshop was globalizing working life and education; what travels and what doesn’t. In workshop we looked at the effects of globalization and education by focusing on working life at an organisational level. During the week we had many kinds of activities like poster presentations, group working, visit to museum and TAKK, lectures and group discussions relating to our goals.

The workshop left a quite confused feelings and opinions for me. I jumped into the CrossLife-train only few weeks before the seminar and actually I didn’t know exactly where the train was coming and what direction it was suppose to go. In addition the topics and themes of workshop were quite wide and not so easily understandable only by reading them.

In spite of all the workshop was an outstanding experience and learning opportunity in many ways. Naturally during the first one or two days the content of seminar was mostly to get myself familiar with other members and become acquaintance of aims of the workshop. Then, after getting used to other peoples and using English it was time to concentrate more on the real content and aims of the workshop.

Most powerful feelings after the workshop for me was that the effect of globalization seems to be quite similar in different countries all around the world, especially if we look at it from the viewpoint of working life and education. The participants in CrossLife -project have a different kind of background and they come from different culture and context but even then their thoughts about the globalization very convergent. I think that was a quite surprising.

According the aims of the workshop we were suppose to discuss very interesting and important questions also from the viewpoint of my own research - the effects of globalization focusing at an organisational level. Somehow I feel that we didn’t get very deep in that sense. We do discussed a lot about the concepts of crossculturality, values and globalization in changing world, but I was waiting more concrete connections between the concepts and the real working life. In that sense, of course, the TAKK visit was an exception and it showed us one concrete example about the effects of globalization from the viewpoint of vocational adult education institution.

In conclusion, I think I have now much better understanding what the aims and expectations of CrossLife -project generally are, but at the moment personally I do not know precisely what our project outcomes will particularly be and how they are going to be shaped. I hope that before the Malta workshop this major question will also become clearer and more formulated for example by handling it in our home group meetings. Like in any kind of activities, most important is to know what precisely you are reaching for and why.

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**London seminar**

**Learning Journal summary**

**Minna Pulli, Tampere home group**

I have been written my personal learning diary (in Finnish) since spring 2007, when I got into crosslife -learning pathway. It is quite interesting to look back now, what kind of processes accures. It seems that first the personal point of view is in the major part, then the group dynamics and finally the content. And now, when I am reflecting the London seminar, I can find the same
process in my diary; from personal aspects and questions (What is happening? What is the meaning in it? What do I expect? What do I pursue?), then to the questions about the group and collaboration (Who are you? Where are you from? What are your expectations? Fears? Just like Terri also asked us to think about at the first day in London.). After that it was possible to think a little bit the content - travelling ideas. I say a little bit, because I feel that the group things took most of the time in London. And it’s good; I think that in crosscultural collaboration it’s very critical to pay attention and give people time to know eachother. And I don’t necessarily mean free time, pubs and so on (I love pubs, don’t get the wrong impression!), but rather the methods, how we work together with the content. I mean, working together with time we develop as a group little by little. In crosscultural cooperation it’s even more important to have time to discuss and dwell on topics with no hurry, because we have to operate with foreign language (I am really sorry about my clumsy English). A good experience for me was when we were reflecting the site visits in a little groups. I found it inspiring to hear different thoughts about: What is the same? Different? Interesting?...and so on (but again, there wasn’t enough time to that reflection).

I am interested in these process issues in crosscultural learning and collaboration and I would like to share my thougts with you during this learning pathway. What kind of experiences you have?

Then I have picked up some themes about the content from my personal diary. Ronald Sultanas floor about the power and how it is connected to ideas and how the ideas travel was inspiring. (And relieving also). It expanded my cultural conciousness in a way when I reflected it afterwards. I began to thought over my own experiences in my working life. I am a teacher of nursing at the university of applied sciences. Nowadays there is many kind of pressures to deal with and most of the things are understandable. But still, In the back of my head (or heart) there is questions and doubts also (What’s going on? What are the goals we are serving? What about the values? Where does this all “stuff” come from?) which touches upon my work as a teacher (organizational and pedagogical). And it doesn’t feel good. Now I call this emotion moral distress. I have noticed through my research work (my research interest is in professional ethical growth of student nurses) also, that nurses for example, experience in their work moral distress, which means that a person has to do again and again against her own values or what she think is right. And now I think that power has to do something with this phenomenon.

So, if someone share this interest with me, it would be nice to think it further together.

See you in Tampere!
Minna

Kirsti Lindh

In the beginning of the London visit of Crosslife – “Cross-cultural Collaboration in Lifelong Learning and Work" we wrote down our expectations. I wish I could find the paper. (What I learn: Do write down everything in each phase and do it systematically.) I realize I had to enlarge some of my concepts and my pre-perceptions were changed. What I say first is positive or neutral, definitely not negative: The London meeting was quite different than I expected. Actually my concept of “Cross-cultural collaboration” was strongly connected with communication, relationships, identities and values. Now the London meeting content was mainly about concrete dimensions:
comparative research concerning educational systems, how to implement “travelling ideas” as for best practises and innovations and how to put in practise the Bologna and Copenhagen declarations. My main disappointment: No time for the library & joint study of reference literature!

There were very nice “best-practices” demonstrations available for us during the visit, arranged by the Institute of Education. The Knowledge Lab, by introducing several interesting projects, offered for many of us opportunities to seize potential cooperation networks or partners who share the same interests. For me especially the lecture of Dr. Shakuntala Banaji was such an experience by her research initiatives on the media literacy, cultural identities and how young people act in the web.

In Lewisham College, the Beauty Academy was an inspiring example of combination of work and education, especially as the college is, like we were told, concentrated on the needs of deprived youth. It was impressive to see the pupils work in their real beauty saloon, with clients like Tony Blair and other MPs – it certainly is up-lifting to their confidence. Also the lecture was an inspiring demonstration of good practises: how the teacher combined theory and practise, class-room work and new technology, balanced individual and group work, used her PPT-notes in an interactive, participatory way and had the pupils commit themselves in serious and responsible learning, combined with evaluation and reflection through the way.

At the moment I see a more holistic picture about “cross-cultural learning and collaboration”: a content-approach and a process-approach. The latter is informal; much of it implicit and it actually becomes visible through “critical incidents”, one of which rose up in the middle of the visit. It might have seemed inflammatory but personally I experienced it fresh and healthy. Some of the students stood up to air the general feeling: a mixture of nice expectations, tension and uncertainty. For me this speaks powerfully for one of the main themes of my own research: Indeed, emotional questions are more crucial than cognitive ones in the success of cross-cultural learning and collaboration. There is a lot of scientific evidence on this but it is not generally acknowledged.

I see it so clearly: If the emotional challenges are met and the tests passed successfully, then there is a good prospect for overall success. In the London discussion, that situation was quite demanding especially for the leaders and tutors, yet personally I felt it was very fruitful. Fortunately it turned out to become a dialogue and not a confrontation. Stephanie put the general feeling openly: “We are now not a group; we feel lost.” And Ronald answered in a constructive manner: “This was very articulate; we need to put it as a top priority.” “A top priority” he said, able to get the point. What Terri had to add at this point was also very crucial: “One must come with good will, commitment and curiosity but of course we need structure…” She continued by giving a glimpse of the whole picture: combining different expectations and obligations, different contents for concepts, jetlags, so many layers, organising six universities and nations to work together. Having worked as the coordinator of an intercultural learning project I definitely know what she was speaking about and the truth of it. We indeed need time for reflection and ability to bear uncertainty in the beginning; it takes time to form a group and working relationships. There were many questions that remained open. I am excited at the future. For me this is a good position to continue. Thanks to all the dear new friends and fascinating new colleagues I met!!! I appreciate
you and I admire the huge wonderful diversity of your specialities, your competence and your personalities!

Yours, Kirsti Lindh, Finland, 11 December 2007