

# Teaching and learning in multi-cultural classrooms: Host report for consortium visit to Arcada UAS in Helsinki

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Continuing the work on the Nordplus Horizontal project **Teaching and Learning in Multicultural Classrooms**, representatives of RISEBA University of Applied Sciences, the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences, International School of Tallinn, UCL University College in Denmark and VIKO University of Applied Sciences came to Helsinki from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2022, to visit Arcada University of Applied Sciences.



Figure 1. Arcada UAS campus in Helsinki.

The visit included both classroom observations, pedagogical discussions and great knowledge sharing among the Nordic-Baltic colleagues. The purpose of the visit was to observe teaching and coaching and to learn about each other's practices in higher education teaching with a specific focus on multicultural contexts. The meeting at Arcada was opened by the Department Head Maria Forss who welcomed the group to the Arcada campus in Helsinki. The agenda overview is presented below.

## Agenda:

### Day 1

- Welcome
- Internationalisation and Diversity at Arcada
- Lunch in canteen
- Pedagogical approach at Arcada
- 14- Free time
- Dinner

### Day 2

- Debrief and discussions on the observation
- Lunch in canteen
- Free time/cultural programme

#### Day 3

- At 10: Sum up of observations so far
- Lunch in canteen
- Time to work on report/article
- Observation 2 AT 1 PM: Personal Selling

### Internationalization and diversity at Arcada

On day one, the team had a presentation about internationalization (Sandra Slotte) and diversity (Christa Tigerstedt) at Arcada. The following guiding definitions were discussed:

*"Internationalization is the process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the **teaching, research, and service functions** of the institution."* (Knight, 2004)

*"Comprehensive Internationalisation is a commitment, confirmed through action, to **infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education**. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise. It is essential that it be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units. **It is an institutional imperative, not just a desirable possibility.**"* (Hudzik, 2011)

**Internationalisation for all and not the few needs to be the backbone of the HEI to be equitable, inclusive and sustainable:**

- from **strategy** to delivery
- as **systemic cooperation** and development by multiple stakeholders within and outside the institution, including the students and alumni
- **embedded** in the formal and informal curricula – not as a choice
- **data-driven** and connected to **quality assurance**
- involving **holistic and personalised support** to ensure equity
- involving the target group in **Service Design**
- encouraging students and staff to be **change agents**
- and done **together!**



Figure 1. Internationalization for all in HEIs.



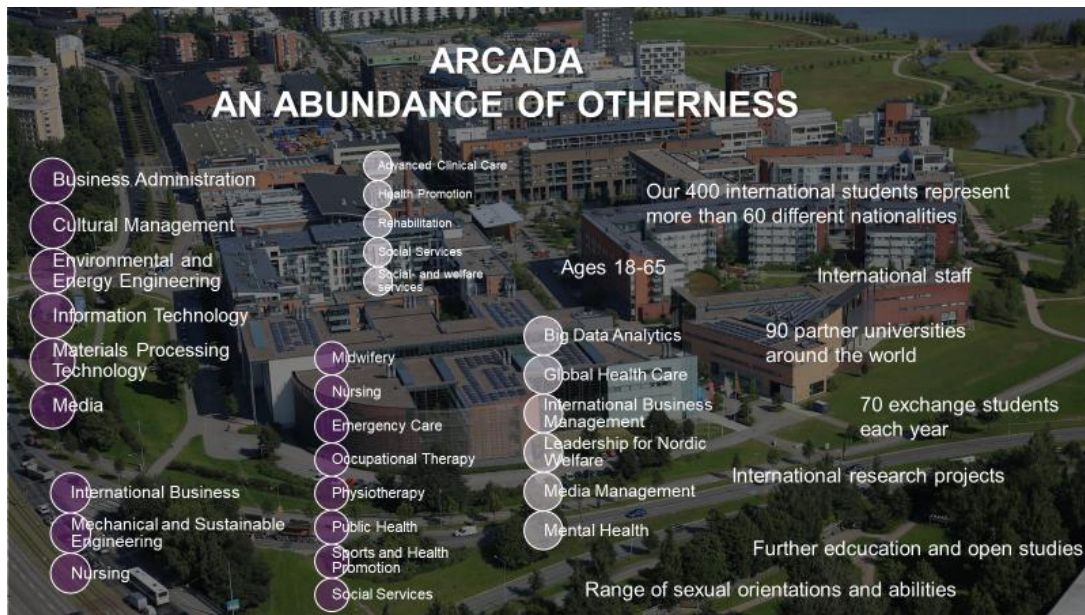


Figure 2. Some facts related to diversity.

Regarding diversity has Arcada a clear strategy and plan. It all begins with our values.

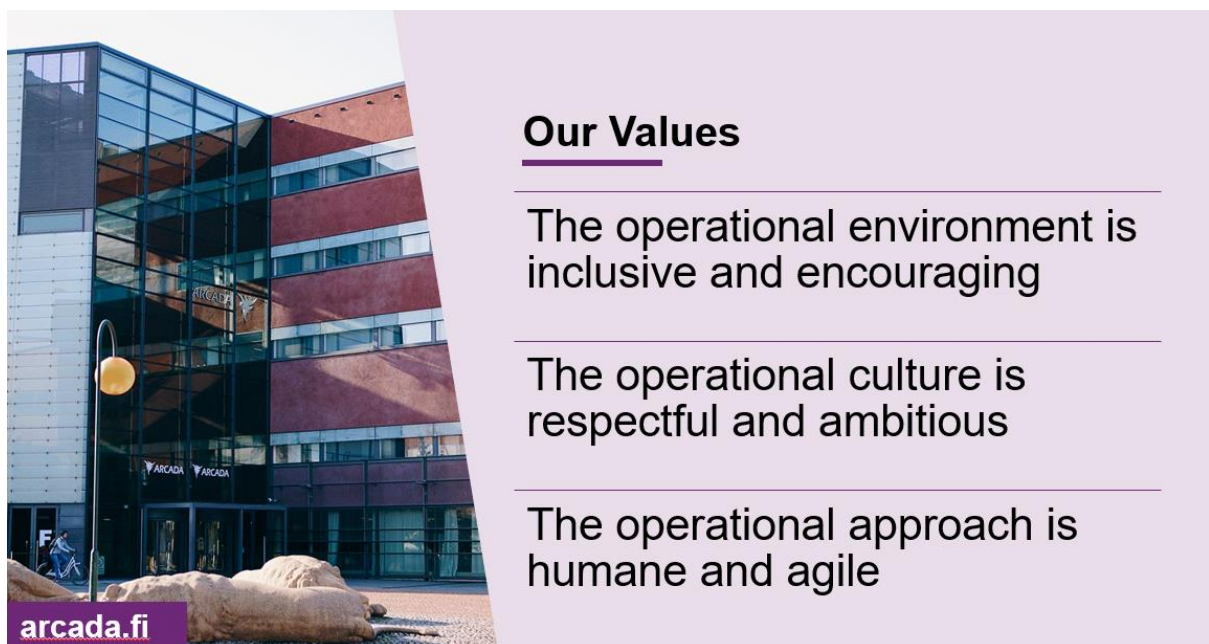
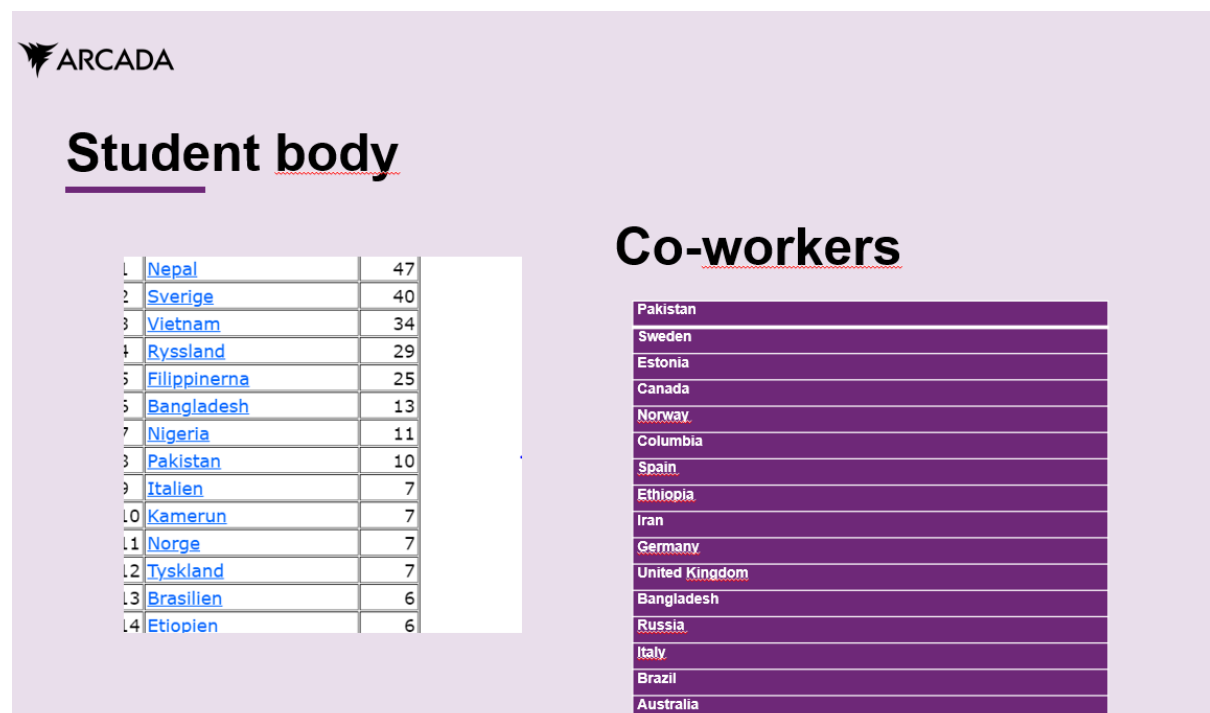


Figure 3. Values at Arcada.

Arcada wants to promote ethnic and social diversity. At Arcada we also want there to be many coworkers and students of another nationality than Finnish. For a sense belonging to emerge, it is essential that all actors feel included. Arcada promotes an active use of both Swedish and English in accordance with Arcada's language policy. Moreover, Arcada also strives to promote understanding between people on a wider scale, which is also communicated in Arcada's Internationalization policy. For students and potential applicants, Arcada offers guidance and support for integration in Swedish and English for individuals who want to integrate with Swedish as their first language (Arcada, 2022).

The group discussed Arcada's plan for equality and equal treatment and the actions each university already has in place and what types of challenges appeared across the different HEIs. The group also discussed the challenges of today's labor market and how they relate to most common workforce misalignments. The language barrier seems still to be one of the biggest obstacles for employment. Three out of four companies in Finland suffer from a shortage of available talent, but at the same time, nearly half of the affected companies insist that international employees speak native-level Finnish. Connecting the dots presented here shouldn't be particularly hard, but the requirements still don't seem to budge. (Futurice, 2022) The key question is how universities (or all HEIs) could help to overcome this challenge.

Tables 1 and 2. Some diversity figures from Arcada UAS.



### Pedagogical work at Arcada

The first day of the visit included a session about the pedagogical work at Arcada. How do we work with learning in higher education. What are the guiding principles? At Arcada a pedagogical council works continuously to develop and reflect upon the pedagogical practices inside Arcada, but also in the society at large.

A new pedagogical policy had been implemented during spring 2022 and the core ideas in the policy and in the pedagogical in general was presented. At Arcada the pedagogical work is seen as a work done by all co-workers, we work towards the same goal and an equal and good quality education for all.

Leading pedagogical principles have for many years been Constructive alignment and Collaborative learning. These were discussed and presented during the visit when the group also could look at examples from the curricula work that has been taking place as a part of the pedagogical development work and the renewal of the pedagogical policy in 2022. The constructive alignment led to a thorough

discussion about competencies and learning outcomes at Arcada. In 2022 all curricula were transformed and became competency driven. All learning outcomes should from now on be described knowledge, skills or attitude. Below, in the course description, examples of this can be seen. This was very interesting and offered new insight to the group.

On top of this the discussion with the guests circled around team teaching -another principle that Arcada had implemented many years ago. In practice, this means that teachers are more seldom alone with a course or group of students. Planning is done jointly as well as grading. Sometimes even in class teaching means having two teachers present at the same time. This has proven to be a great strength and it makes the work more joyful. Students get more perspectives and if a teacher for some reason cannot be present a colleague who is also involved in the course or study unit can step in. Joint planning also ensures more reflective choices.

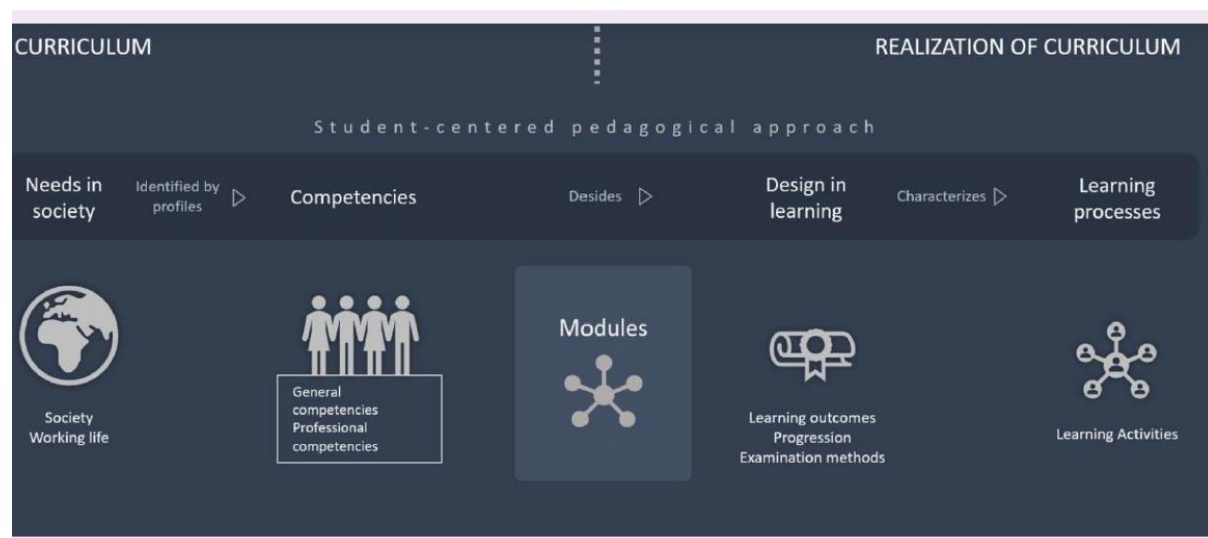


Figure 4. A competency driven curricula process with learning outcomes rooted in collaborative learning and constructive alignment.

### Course observation *Introduction to Research Methodology*, coaching teachers Linn Hongell, Minna Stenius

Year of Study: 1

Number of students: 140

Mode of teaching: Hybrid

Length of session: 90 min

#### Learning outcomes:

Explain some central for science and research relevant concepts (theory, empirical research, data collection, source critique, citation, plagiarism, etc) (knowledge)

Describe in broad terms how scientific research is conducted and how the scientific community operates (knowledge)

Explain what the role of theory is in knowledge building and discuss different types of data and

different ways to collect data (knowledge)

Explain how a scientific report/academic text is structured so that you are able to read and write similar texts, such as a thesis, yourself (knowledge/skill)

Use relevant databases to find scientific knowledge within your own professional field and use referencing tools (skill)

Explain why plagiarism is theft and be able to discuss ethical aspects of research (attitude)

Develop a critical approach to different information sources (attitude)

Demonstrate that you have rudimentary knowledge of different ontologies and epistemologies (attitude)

### Set up

The course is a basic introduction to research methodology for the first year students. It is taught as a hybrid course. Students can choose if they are on campus or online in Zoom. In this case, this session, 8 students joined on campus in the hybrid teaching space. The hybrid room is equipped with several cameras which react to sound etc. The rest of the group joined via Zoom (N= approx. 120).

The course is taught by two teachers and one of them is present in class (on campus) and the other one was online (only).

The session consisted of an introduction and so called theoretical part. This part introduced the day's topic to the students. After this the students could work in teams on selected exercises. The last part of the session contained discussions around the topic. In these discussions all students, online and in the physical classroom could take part.

### Observation and debrief

After the observation session in class we had the opportunity to discuss the session and the learnings. For the classroom observation an observation scheme had been prepared and this made the discussion easy.

In both the observation we had both teachers, researchers and students as observers which made the debrief a great learning session where many perspectives were highlighted. Topics that were in focus were hybrid teaching, the pandemic and interaction between student and teachers specifically in a hybrid learning context. In the debrief participants shared best practices related to the challenges of hybrid teaching.

### **Other activities**

The team did also visit the university's co-working spaces to understand how collaboration is stimulated among staff in open-space offices. At Arcada staff and teachers have no fixed seating and follow the activity-based workplaces idea. They also go to see the simulation center for the healthcare

education and the robo-lab where the two humanoids, Amy and Alf, which are part of Arcada's human robot interaction research were introduced to them.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:



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