

# **Impact of reflective practice on student engagement and confidence in a top-up bachelor programme**

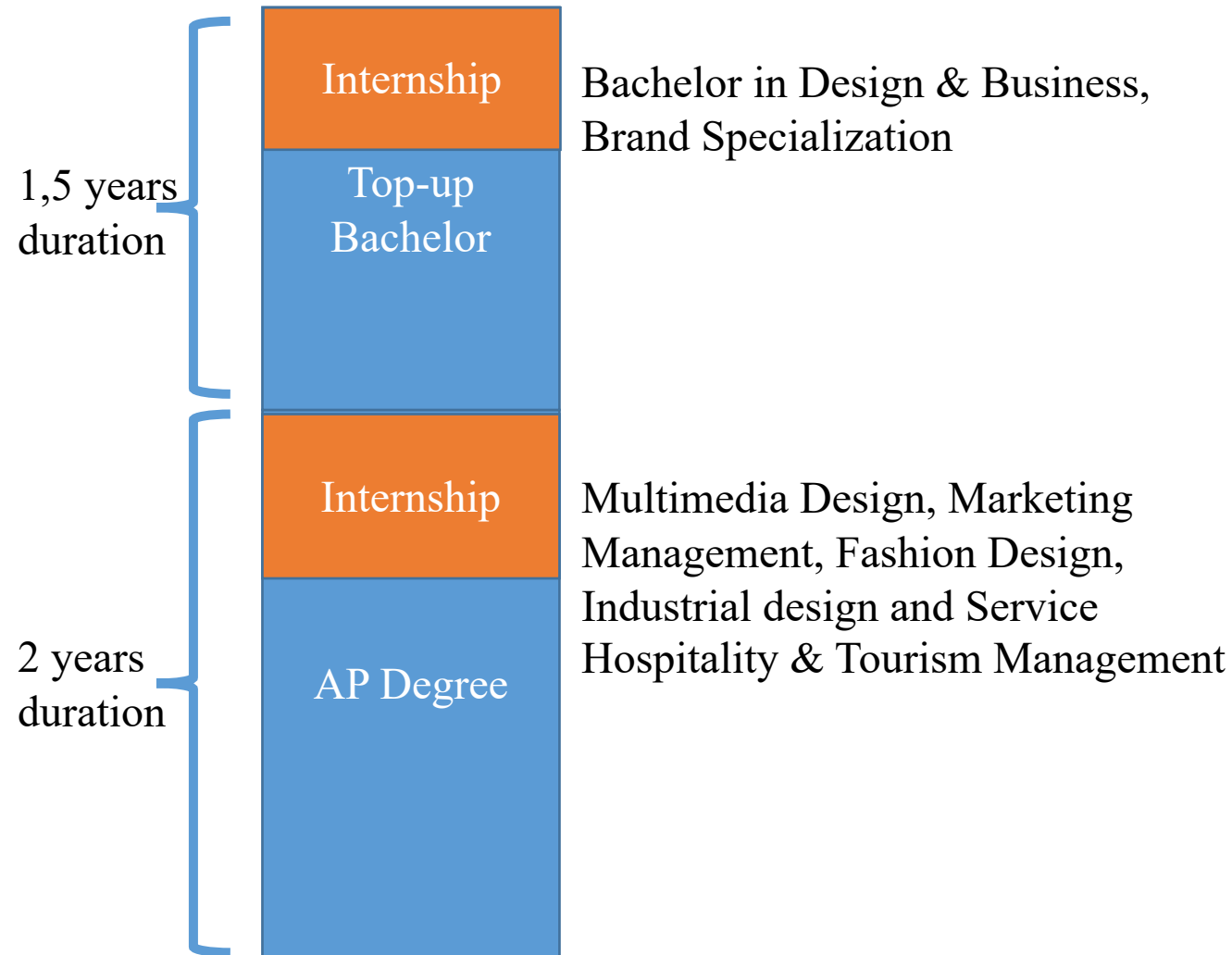
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# Agenda

- Background of study
- Research gap
- Aim of Study
- Design of pedagogical interventions
- Methods and materials
- Findings
- Conclusion
- Limitations and future studies

# The identified challenge



- Internship Companies addressed a lack of students engagement and confidence in surveys post being internship hosts.
- In preliminary data gathering (Pre survey) students expressed a confusion between previous and current professional goals.



Pedagogical intervention to facilitate personal and social competences, identity formation, and professional confidence. Identifiable as students' ability to identify and articulate their own strengths convincingly.

# Impact of reflective practice on student engagement and confidence in a top-up bachelor programme

- Development of professional self-efficacy or confidence have been widely studied and high levels of confidence have been linked to positive career choices (e.g., Ball, 2002, Albiol et al., 2020)
- Most scholarly contributions focus on teaching or nursing, (e.g., Du, 2021, Ranta et al. 2020) whereas more research is needed in the field of business studies.
- Thus, an identified need for pedagogical intervention to facilitate learning transfer between prior learning, education, and the needs of the labour market.
- In context of vocational Higher Education, reflective practice-based learning (RPL) is central in connecting theory with practice. (Horn et al, 2020; 16)
- Here we adopt the notions of reflection on, reflection in, and reflection with practice as argued by Dewey (1933), Schön (1990), Boud (1987), and Argyris and Schön (1991).
- Research has advanced in the topic of reflection and learner engagement (e.g., Ashwin & McWitty, 2015, Billett, 2019).
- However, there is lack of research on the impact of reflective practice on student engagement and learning transfer in top-up bachelor programs.

### This Study:

Explores the impact of reflective practice on the development of agency, co-participation, and engagement in learning affordances in what Schön terms “a Reflective Practicum”, i.e., a pedagogical space where students meet the workplace through internships or other physical interactions, case-based assignments, and other simulations. This is attempted by implementing methods of RPL in teaching settings.

- RQ: What is the impact of pedagogical interventions on student engagement and development of professional confidence in the top-up bachelor program?
- Action based research design
- 5 action cycles of interventions
- Duration of 5 months: Start November 2020-End of March 2021
- Students (N = 16) (age: 22-27)
- Prior education degrees: Multimedia, Marketing Management, Fashion design, Industrial design and Service design.
- Teachers (N = 2) Outside observer (N=1)
- Business professionals from local business ecosystem (N=4)

# Design of pedagogical interventions by the use of RPL

## Pedagogical principles (Horn et al., 2020)

No. 1:

The students' own experiences are incorporated into teaching and learning activities

No. 2:

Teaching and learning activities designed to include appropriate disturbances

No. 3:

Teaching and learning activities are organized as exploration

No. 5:

Lecturers and students work together on learning processes

No. 4:

The content of teaching and learning activities is based on the good example

No. 6:

Lecturers and students create room for dialogue

# Methods and Materials

Action cycle	Description	Evaluated by
Diagnosing stage to identify the gap between education and work.	Interviews with internship supervisors, student questionnaires about educational backgrounds and expectations to the Ba program, and notes from annual student interviews. The above were transcribed, coded, and analysed.	Researchers
1. Pre-survey	Mainly qualitative questions as well as 3 quantitative questions using a Likert Scale of a scale 1-7. A short Video reflecting on previous learning experiences.	Researchers
Video		Researchers
Action planning & -taking	Pedagogical interventions and guidance, facilitating reflection.	
2. Interview with Professionals	Interviews with company representatives in marketing positions, by groups of students. Student self-reported findings were presented in class and discussed in a collaborative learning process with instructors / researchers. Notes and student presentations were recorded by instructors during the session.	Students & Researchers
3. Business Model You (Clark, et al., 2012)	Assignment made by the students based on several self-reflecting exercises:	Researchers
Video CV's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two-minute student video CVs by students.</li> <li>Written accounts by industry professionals, providing formalised feedback to students on their CVs and display of confidence.</li> </ul>	Professionals Researchers
Feedback from Professionals		
Evaluation stage	Evaluation of the pedagogical interventions	
4. Interviews	Interviews with students in pairs carried out by researchers with the purpose of detecting the learning outcome of interventions.	Student
5. Specifying Learning	Evaluation of the pedagogical interventions using the “double -loop learning “ approach by Argyris and Schön (1978).	Researchers

# Findings in our Action based research cycle Diagnosing

1) Starting point for the individual journey of students, an average of 4.6 score on a likert scale of 1-7, with no students marking their work-readiness below three. However, only three students displayed some level of professional confidence in the self-recorded videos.

*“The internship gave self-assurance to what I can do. Made me believe in what I can do.” (Student interview)*

2) Student experience, were found to be related to previously held jobs, internship experiences, and personal interests or talents

*“ One example where things just worked out, was in my internship during my fashion design course. Things went well professionally and my grade was good. I learned so much and had many successes, which gave me confidence and motivation. And I was confirmed in my choice of career.” (Student interview)*



# Findings in our Action based research cycle Actions

Interviewed business professionals and shared findings. Formed a shared repertoire of competence needs in the industry. Produced a BMC You, and video CV's.

Industry professionals were commissioned to give feedback on these student accounts.

*“It is obvious that she acquired a wide range of skills from her work- and life experience.”*

*”The main message is to tell that he can bring creative solutions to our company - but what does that entail?” (Feedback from industry professionals)*

Student accounts were found to lack connectivity to the company needs for professional outlook.

Verbalising reflection in the context of transfer to professional competences came with difficulty.

Development of professional confidence, some could while others couldn't.

Identity formation, accounts strongly associated with prior professions - fashion design, marketing management, multimedia design etc.

# Findings in our Action based research cycle Evaluation

**In final evaluation closing interviews were carried out with pairs of students by the researchers**

Intentional collective learning was found actuated especially from the meetings with industry professionals, and shared exchange of findings in the classroom.

The use of BMC You tool prompted many students to re-evaluate their professional identity and wishes for their professional futures.

*”It was good to hear from her, that as long as you are a good person etc, then -all those tasks- they are something you will learn along the way and gain experience from your mistakes. It can be learned over time if you have the personal competences. It gave me reassurance somehow.”  
(Feedback from student)*

*“It made me think of the experiences I do have in a more positive light than I had previously done.” (Feedback from student)*

*“We don’t really have any professional experiences to pitch yet. So, it gave a lot of confidence for me to realise that I could use my personal experiences and my soft skills to describe me and what I can add.” (Feedback from student)*

# Conclusions

- The pedagogical interventions allowed students to exercise agency in their own learning.
- The pedagogical interventions enabled students to understand the meaning of prior learning to their existing personal learning trajectories, thus identifying goals, levels of progression, and activities needed to engage with to align their competences with needs of potential future employers.
- Due to the interventions, we gained valuable information to develop teaching strategies, and use of instructional materials with student groups from differing backgrounds. Co-participation in learning and inquiry with business professionals helped students voice the meaning of personal and social competences for their employability.

# Limitations and future studies

- This study is based on a small sample size and within a short duration of time. In a time period between 5-6th semester. November 2020-End of March 2021. Due to the time frame we have not had further interviews after the students second internship period.
- Purposeful enquiry to examine workplace needs assisted some students in confidence, but further methods should be developed to help them develop personal strategies for self-regulated learning. However, sharing findings from interviews etc. in a group assisted collaborative learning.
- It is evident that teacher needs to augment experiences at workplaces to student learning, it does not always happen by itself, or when students feel low confidence or have negative self-beliefs.
- Further study is needed to examine how student engagement can help transform curricula and how graduates contribute to the transformation of future workplaces.

# Litterature

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Questions?

