

EEVA KUOPPALA

The Cultural Event as a Test Bench of Work-Based Pedagogy in Vocational Higher Education

*A study of strategic partnership, commitment,
and expansive learning in a regional network*

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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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Tampere University, Faculty of Education and Culture
Finland

*Responsible
supervisor
and Custos*

Associate Professor
Hanna Toiviainen
Tampere University
Finland

Supervisors

Emeritus Professor
Reijo Miettinen
University of Helsinki
Finland

Professor
Jaakko Kauko
Tampere University
Finland

Pre-examiners

Professor
May Britt Postholm
Norwegian University of Science
and Technology
Norway

Adjunct Professor
Teemu Rantanen
Laurea University of Applied
Sciences
Finland

Opponent

Professor
May Britt Postholm
Norwegian University of Science
and Technology
Norway

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Mikkeli, March 2019

Eeva Kuoppala

ABSTRACT

This research analyse collaboration and learning in a regional network of a vocational higher education (VHE) institution and working-life organisations during the production of a cultural event that offered a test bench for the implementation of a new model of work-based pedagogy (WBP). The conditions of collaboration and learning were studied on the levels of strategic partnership, commitment, and expansive learning of the students, the teachers, and the working-life partners. Implementation of work-based pedagogy is complex and requires a multi-perspective and multi-conceptual approach. Such research is rare but increasingly needed because of the reform of vocational education highlighting the attainment of working-life skills.

Research questions were: 1. How did the strategic partnership between the regional institution of VHE (the University of Applied Sciences) and the cultural institution (the City Theatre) develop through the initiative of the cultural event? 2. How did the participants' commitment to the planning and implementation of the cultural event emerge in the larger regional network? 3. How did the cultural event test and challenge the work-based pedagogical model of Vocational Higher Education (VHE) and enhance the participants' expansive learning?

The methodological and ontological framework for an abductive analysis was cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT), particularly the concepts of the object of activity, historical phases and events, contradictions, dimensions of expansion, and a zone of expansion. The data consisted of audio-recorded and transcribed meetings and interviews and the meeting memos collected during 13 months of the developing process of a new regional cultural event the Mikkeli Meets Russia (MMR). The MMR event answered the needs of Russian tourists visiting Mikkeli over the New Year. It emerged from the strategic partnership between the University of Applied Sciences (UAS) and the City Theatre to involve a larger network of local organisations.

The analysis of the first research questions showed that the development of a strategic partnership between the UAS and the City Theatre proceeded through four phases with characteristic critical events, the object of collaboration, and developmental contradictions. These findings were further interpreted by means of the dimensions of expansion entitled Anticipatory-temporal, Social-spatial,

Instrumental expansion, Moral-ideological and Systemic-developmental. The dimensions of expansion of collaboration seem to follow a developmental logic when emerging and evolving along with the phases of partnership.

For the second research question the researcher developed a multi-conceptual method of analysis to study commitment in a regional network. The concepts employed were intensity of participation, concerns of collaboration and conflicts of interests. The analysis revealed three types of commitment, Developers, Realisers, and Leavers. Weak or selective commitment prevents the subjects from throwing themselves into a creative process in which the subject and object modify each other and generate expansive learning. The leaders of the process should be capable to deal with all participants' motives and orientations involved in the object construction.

The third research question cast light on the functionality of the WBP model and its pedagogical elements seen from the perspectives of the key participants. It was analysed how the contact lessons and guiding clinics mediated the students' developmental assignments and how the model as the whole oriented the participants towards the shared object of the cultural event. Comparison of two development assignments demonstrated that even a sophisticated implementation of a WBP model cannot be but partial, if the working-life assignment lacks a solid knowledge orientation basis that connects between the theory and practice to solve the dilemma of school learning. In addition, collective implementation of the WBP model during the MMR event formed a "zone of expansion" that beyond the participant-specific features of expansive learning demonstrated the need for the expansion of pedagogical vision, pedagogical mediation, relational expertise and crossdisciplinarity.

In sum, the findings reveal that the production of a cultural event offers an interesting test bench for work-based pedagogy, even when the object of collaboration and the division of labour are unclear and uncertain, at the outset. The most critical question concerning WBP is how its implementation enhances equal learning possibilities among the students, teachers and working-life partners. VHE institutions still carry the main responsibility for learning, but taking a lead role in regional working-life networks requires new and expanded capabilities of teachers and other pedagogical actors. Strategic partnership is an efficient tool for longitudinal developing activities and participants' learning, but may complicate the commitment of other participants. Overcoming the dilemma of school learning and a dichotomy between theory and practice calls for the mastery of WBP models, in which students,

teachers, and working-life partners construct the object of activity through relational expertise and expansive learning.

Keywords: commitment, cultural-historical activity theory, expansive learning, regional networks, strategic partnership, Universities of Applied Sciences, vocational higher education, work-based pedagogy, work-based learning.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tutkimuksessa analysoitiin ammatillisen korkeakoulutuksen ja työelämäorganisaatioiden yhteistyötä ja oppimista alueellisessa verkostossa uudenlaisen kulttuuritapahtuman kehittämishankkeen aikana. Kulttuuritapahtuma toteutti ammattikorkeakoulun uutta työelämäpedagogiikan mallia, jota testattiin hankkeessa. Opiskelijoiden, opettajien ja työelämäkumppaneiden yhteistyötä ja oppimista tutkittiin strategisen kumppanuuden, sitoutumisen ja ekspansiivisen oppimisen näkökulmista. Työelämäpedagogiikan toteuttaminen on moniulotteinen prosessi, joka vaatii moninäkökulmaista ja monikonseptista lähestymistapaa. Tämän tyyppinen tutkimus on harvinaista, mutta kasvavassa määrin tarpeellista ammatillisen koulutuksen uudistusten painottaessa vahvasti työelämätaitoja.

Tutkimuskysymykset olivat: 1. Miten ammatillisen korkea-asteen koulutuksen (AMK) ja kulttuuriorganisaation välinen strateginen kumppanuus kehittyi kulttuuritapahtuman kehittämisprosessissa? 2. Miten laajan alueellisen verkoston osallistujien sitoutuminen kulttuuritapahtuman suunnitteluun ja toteuttamiseen ilmeni? 3. Miten kulttuuritapahtuma testasi ja haastoi ammatillisen korkea-asteen koulutuksen työelämäpedagogisen mallia ja edisti osallistujien ekspansiivista oppimista?

Metodologinen ja ontologinen viitekehys abduktiiviselle analyysille oli kulttuurihistoriallinen toiminnan teoria (CHAT), erityisesti käsitteet toiminnan kohde, historialliset vaiheet ja tapahtumat, ristiriidat, ekspansion ulottuvuudet sekä ekspansion vyöhyke. Aineisto koostui äänitetyistä ja litteroiduista kokouksista ja haastatteluista sekä kokousmuistioista. Aineisto kerättiin 13 kuukauden aikana alueellisen uuden kulttuuritapahtuman Mikkelin Meets Russia (MMR) kehittämisprosessista. MMR-tapahtuma vastasi erityisesti venäläisturistien ohjelmakäytäntään Mikkelissä vuoden vaihteen sesonkina. Tapahtuma sai alkunsa ammattikorkeakoulun ja teatterin välisestä strategisesta kumppanuudesta ja laajeni alueellisten organisaatioiden verkostoyhteistyöksi.

Ensimmäisen tutkimuskysymyksen analyysi osoitti, että AMK:n ja teatterin välinen strateginen kumppanuus eteni neljän vaiheen kautta, joita voitiin luonnehtia kullekin vaiheelle ominaisten kriittisten tapahtumien, yhteistyön kohteen ja

kehitysristiriitojen avulla. Näitä tuloksia tulkittiin edelleen ekspansio ulottuvuuden näkökulmasta, joita olivat ennakoiva-ajallinen, sosiaalis-spatiaalinen, moraalis-ideologinen ja systeemis-kehityksellinen ulottuvuus. Ekspansio ulottuvuudet näyttivät seuraavan kehittymislogiikkaa ilmaantuen ja kehittyen rinnan strategisen kumppanuuden vaiheiden kanssa.

Toiseen tutkimuskysymykseen tutkija kehitti käsitteellistä viitekehystä sitoutumisen analysoimiseksi alueellisessa verkostossa. Käytetyt analyttiset käsitteet olivat osallistumisen intensiteetti, yhteistyön aiheet ja intressiristiriidat. Analyysi paljasti kolme sitoutumisen tyyppiä, jotka tutkija nimesi Kehittäjät, Toteuttajat ja Lähtijät. Heikko tai valikoiva sitoutuminen esti toimijoita heittäytymästä luovaan prosessiin, jossa toimija ja toiminnan kohde muokkaavat toisiaan ja luovat ekspansiivista oppimista. Prosessin vetäjillä tulisi olla valmiuksia käsitellä kaikkien osapuolten motiiveja ja orientaatioita, joilla toiminnan kohdetta rakennetaan.

Kolmas tutkimuskysymys valotti työelämäpedagogisen mallin toimivuutta ja sen pedagogisia elementtejä avaintoimijoiden näkökulmista tarkasteluna. Analysoitiin, miten lähiopetustunnit ja ohjauslinikat linkittyivät opiskelijoiden kehittämistehtäviin ja miten malli kokonaisuudessaan orientoi osallistujia kohti jaettua kohdetta, kulttuuritapahtumaa. Kahden kehittämistehtävän vertailu osoitti, että hienostuneinkin työelämämallin toteutus jää osittaiseksi, jos työelämän kehittämistehtävästä puuttuu teorian ja käytännön yhdistävä tietoperusta. Lisäksi kollektiivinen työelämäpedagogiikan mallin toteuttaminen MMR:n aikana loi ekspansio vyöhykkeen, joka – osallistujille erityisten oppimispiirteiden lisäksi – osoitti tarvetta pedagogisen vision laajentamiselle, pedagogiselle välittäjyydelle, suhdeasiantuntijuudelle ja monialaisuudelle.

Tiivistetyt tulokset osoittivat, että kulttuuritapahtuman tuotantoprosessi tarjosi työelämäpedagogiselle mallille kiinnostavan testialustan, vaikka yhteistyön kohde ja työnjako olivat lähtökohtaisesti epäselviä. Kriittisin kysymys liittyy siihen, miten mallin toteutus edistää yhtäläisesti opiskelijoiden, opettajien ja työelämäkumppaneiden oppimismahdollisuuksia. Ammatillinen korkea-asteen koulutus kantaa edelleen päävastuun oppimisesta. Johtavan roolin ottaminen alueellisissa työelämäverkostoissa vaatii kuitenkin opettajilta ja muilta pedagogisilta toimijoilta uutta osaamista. Strateginen kumppanuus on tehokas väline pitkäjänteiseen toimintojen kehittämiseen ja osallistujien oppimiseen, mutta saattaa vaikeuttaa muiden osallistujien sitoutumista. Käytännön ja teorian välisen dikotomian ylittäminen sekä kouluoppimisen dilemman ratkaiseminen vaatii työelämäpedagogisten mallien hallintaa. Malleissa opiskelijat, opettajat ja

työelämäkumppanit rakentavat toiminnan kohdetta suhdeasiantuntijuuden ja ekspansiivisen oppisen kautta.

Avainsanat: sitoutuminen, kulttuurishistoriallinen toiminnan teoria, ekspansiivinen oppiminen, alueelliset verkostot, strateginen kumppanuus, ammattikorkeakoulu, ammatillinen korkea-asteen koulutus, työlähtöinen pedagogiikka, työssä oppiminen

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ABBREVIATIONS

CME	Cultural Management Education
HE	Higher Education
MMR	Mikkeli Meets Russia event
MUAS	Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences
RDI	Research, Development and Innovation
SP	Strategic Partnership
UAS	University of Applied Sciences
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VHE	Vocational Higher Education
WBL	Work-Based Learning
WBP	Work-Based Pedagogy

1 INTRODUCTION

This research is about new forms of collaboration and learning in a regional network of Vocational Higher Education (VHE) institutes and working-life organisations. The excerpt below is from a networking meeting at which representatives of the University of Applied Sciences (UAS), the City Theatre, local enterprises, the city, and a development company planned a new cultural event for the region. The main question for this meeting concerned the event's funding; it was not clearly owned by any of the organisations but was intended to be genuinely shared and beneficial for everyone.

Excerpt 1.1 Networking meeting

Representative of the City Theatre: [...] The core [of the new event] is that there is going to be a broad range (of programmes). [...] The aim is to sell a better ensemble, and that no one be concerned with his or her own special niche – and this will give us power [to be stronger in the market]. [...] What if we don't achieve the goals – who will take the loss? [...] This is the huge question here.

[...]

Representative of the UAS: This is the first time we have bumped into this in city X's cultural activity. They had a fund for cases where losses had been made, from which the event managers could apply for some funding.

[...]

Representative of the city: But it must be remembered that this [having a fund for losses in the city's budget] is not a standard route at all – to have a certain amount in the budget for this automatically. We don't have anything like that, but everything must be agreed separately if we're involved.

[...]

Representative of the City Theatre: [...] Each event producer will also take financial responsibility for their own programme. This is unfortunately the starting point now. As a matter of fact, the idea we had was to establish an RDI [Research Development and Innovation] project and apply for money. This kind of project application has been rejected once before. Is that a precedent?

Representative of a development company: If we do apply for project [RDI] money, it will need to be for more than one event.

[...]

Representative of the City Theatre: [...] And another thing is that we now have a few million euros for various projects in the area of general education funding. The purpose of this money is to support various good things and to develop and market and so on. [...] But the enterprises which are involved have put their own money in. They don't perceive this [the planned MMR event] at the moment, because it doesn't exist yet, so it is hard to commit to it.

This excerpt offers an insight into the challenges related to the process of creating something new with new collaborators with very different core tasks. Even this short extract from a discussion illustrates that developing work in a heterogeneous network involves a complex ensemble of various interests, investments, and forms of commitment (Dlouh et al. 2018; Mader et al. 2013). At the same time collaboration between vocational education and working life has become increasingly topical, highlighted by education research (e.g. Mandrup & Jensen 2017; Mikkonen et al. 2017) and required by education policies nationally and Europe-wide (European Commission 2017; Ministry of Education and Culture 2017).

This dissertation is rooted in this pedagogical and academic discussion on collaboration and learning between VHE and working life. It focuses on how VHE institutions, the UASs (in Finnish *'ammattikorkeakoulut'*), seek links between education and working life through new forms of collaboration and exploiting regional networks. It therefore aims to widen the discussion relating to work-based pedagogy (WBP) in VHE and shed light on the challenges and contradictions related to mutual collaboration and learning in education and working life.

1.1 Work-Based Pedagogy (WBP) in Vocational Higher Education (VHE)

There is extensive research regarding the general theme of work and education (Burke et al. 2009; Grunman, Barrows & Reavley 2013; Lester & Costley 2010). WBP emphasises the value of experience, reflection, and community as a means of learning (Burke et al. 2009; Grunman et al. 2013). Its value at the personal level lies in facilitating personal growth and development (Lester & Costley 2010) and in promoting deep learning (Baeten et al. 2010). Pedagogically, the essential point is to guide students in analysing the relationship between their experiences and the theoretical content of their studies. There remains a need for good examples of how

students may get involved in the exciting projects of the communities around them, and what all the partners, not only the students, can learn in the process.

The relationship between education and life in practice has been a feature of pedagogical discussion for decades (Dewey 1925; Engeström 1987/2015; Isacsson 2013; Miettinen 1990; Tynjälä et al. 2006). Dewey's (1916) idea of 'learning by doing' is the classical guideline, and this is how he discusses occupational learning:

The only adequate training for occupations is training through occupations. The principle stated early in this book (see Chapter VI) that the educative process is its own end, and that the only sufficient preparation for later responsibilities comes by making the most of immediately present life, applies in full force to the vocational phases of education. The dominant vocation of all human beings at all times is living – intellectual and moral growth (Dewey 1916, Chapter 23).

Dewey's intellectual and moral growth may have changed to today's 'generic skills' discourse (e.g. Binkley & al. 2012; Jääskelä, Nykänen & Tynjälä 2018), involving critical thinking, communication skills, complex problem solving, social skills, and creativity (Jones 2009; Nykänen & Tynjälä 2012; The Future of Jobs report 2016). When the history of education is traced, the gap between the knowledge and skills needed at work and those produced in formal school education seems to prevail (Engeström et al. 1984; Gibbs & Armsby 2010; Miettinen 1990, 1999; Stenström & Tynjälä 2009; Stetsenko & Vianna 2009). This has led to a questioning of institutionalised vocational education: Ramstad (2008) argues that formal education and training is an inadequate way to guarantee the sufficient knowledge and skills needed in working life.

Through work-based learning students are involved in work-related cases, which need to be solved by students' activity and interaction between students, teachers, and working life (Burke et al. 2009). The study of work-based learning (WBL) has been a growing field in the 2000s (McIver Nottingham 2017). The perspectives taken vary. They are typically learner-centred and learner-managed, advocating a shift from a discipline-based to a transdisciplinary approach. Influence outside the universities has increased and large-scale partnership projects have been undertaken (Garnett 2016; McIver Nottingham 2017). McIver Nottingham summarises that pedagogical research continues to use concepts adapted from studies' WBL, but that academic practitioners are developing pedagogy to meet the needs of current workplace and education policy. In Finland this is seen, for example, in the latest alignments of the Ministry of Education and Culture (2017, 2017a). These alignments emphasise both higher education's (HE) and vocational education's strong collaboration with working life. Vocational education reform aims to renew secondary vocational

education and training by 2018 (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017a). This means that a considerable element of vocational studies is conducted at workplaces. HE is also encouraged to collaborate more closely with working life in teaching and research, development, and innovation (RDI). Funding is one efficient tool used to effect this change (Kohtamäki 2009).

Perhaps because of the persistence of the idea of learning by doing, WBL is often viewed as synonymous with practical training when it should rather be the consequence of active, goal-directed actions with authentic cases both at work and in the classroom. Universities have traditionally been seen as cradles of scientific knowledge, which is why WBP at universities is challenging. The dichotomy between theory and practice needs to be resolved if WBP is to be successful (Stenström & Tynjälä 2009; Stetsenko & Vienna 2009).

From companies' perspective university involvement in WBL often occurs at three levels: first, at a strategic level, where the company views this kind of activity as contributing to its intellectual and structural capital (Garnett 2001); second, at a tactical level with specific or general staff development aims (Nikolou-Walker 2007); and third, at a less formal level, where employer involvement is organised in relation to individual learners (Lester & Costley 2010). My research contributes mostly to the strategic level, because it best demonstrates the convergence of all three points and because both action and policy emerge from strategy. Thus, we can be simultaneously holistic and action-oriented in this research.

The role of HE institutions in regional networks can be defined in three ways: 1) in how HE institutions collaborate with regional actors in the framework of universities' fields of activity; 2) with respect to the level of HE institutions' involvement within regional networks; and 3) according to the type of networks that HE institutions and regional stakeholders collaborate (Mader et al. 2013). The first sees networking mainly from the universities' perspective as a platform for education and research. The second widens the focus to regional networks, where universities are seen as gatekeepers, bridging institutions, and spokespersons. The third highlights universities' and working-life partners' collaboration as innovation, knowledge, and information networks. This research focuses on networks of HE and regional stakeholders. This means that learning is broadly understood as a mandate not only for students but also for teachers, administrators, policymakers, employers, and other stakeholders participating in the same process.

1.2 From Triad to Triple Helix in Work-Based Pedagogy

Triad of learning

WBL is often characterised as a triadic learning endeavour, in which the industry specialist and university tutor assist students to create a synthesis of practical and theoretical knowledge (Dalrymple, Kemp & Smith 2014; Hakkarainen, Palonen & Paavola 2002). The alignment of these three agents is seen as crucial to bridging the learning gap between theory and practice (Costley 2007; Garnett 2016; Lester & Costley 2010; Tynjälä, Välimaa & Sarja 2003). The synthesis of practice and theory is the key principle of the Triadic Model. A meaningful synthesis of practical and theoretical knowledge cannot be achieved without the learner's proactive role and all three participants' fully harmonised roles (Dalrymple et al. 2014).

The role of the academic teacher is centred on introducing and exploring generic concepts in the student's learning and development. The role of discipline specialist is assigned to the industry-based specialist. All participants in the Triad are seen as equal, aiming at the realisation of learning by establishing together a learning context in which theory and practice cohere (Dalrymple et al. 2014). Dalrymple et al. (2014) use the term 'realisation of learning', but their specification of learner seems inappropriate. The Triadic Model arises from the university-based idea of the student as a learner orienting him or herself to the curriculum's learning goals, instead of emphasising all participants' learning.

However, some studies of the Triadic Model of WBL give greater emphasis to all participants' learning. In Triadic Models the development of expertise evolves in an individual-community-object interaction. Teachers', students', and working-life partners' competences develop collaboratively, working on shared objectives. Shared objectives can be research objectives, tools, methods, concepts, and theories used in development. This gives reflection and interpretation skills a key role (Hakkarainen, Palonen & Paavola 2002).

To conclude, Triadic Models struggle to find solutions to the tradition of discipline-centred learning (Garnett 2016; McIver Nottingham 2017). WBL is based on transdisciplinarity, which is defined as a multi-dimensional methodology. Epistemologically, transdisciplinarity sees knowledge as emergent. Ontologically, it recognises multiple levels of reality. Its third basis is an inclusive logic allowing for co-existing contradictions. Transdisciplinarity allows us to better understand the world's complexities and contradictions (Garnett 2016; Max-Neef 2005). Nevertheless, the discussion of WBL has largely focused on the individual learner's

achieving of an academic qualification. Garnett (2016) underlines that this individualisation of learning means that there is little interaction between the academic structures of education institutions and other organisations. Pylväs (2018) presents similar results concerning secondary vocational education. She claims that apprenticeship training should focus more on stakeholders' understanding of the development of vocational expertise, and teachers need to play a stronger role in sharing their pedagogical expertise in workplaces.

Triple Helix in education

While the Triadic Model of WBL emphasises the interaction between the student, teacher, and working-life stakeholder for coherence of theory and practice, the Triple Helix seems to take a wider approach to WBL. The Triple Helix is based on the idea that interaction between the university, industry, and government is the key to improving innovation in a knowledge-based society (Etzkowitz 2003). It is placed in the same category as science and innovation policy concepts such as 'mode 2', 'innovation system', and 'third task'. All these represent the new type of knowledge creation and emphasise innovation support (Ramstad 2008). Traditionally, the university has been seen as a support for innovation, producing labour, research results, and knowledge for industry. This has changed in recent years. Universities have become involved in the formation of companies and, through this, creating innovation. Each participant in the Triple Helix plays its own role in collaboration. Industry is the locus of production and government the source of contractual relationships guaranteeing stable interactions and relations. The university is instead the source of new knowledge and technologies (Etzkowitz 2003).

Innovations occur in the collaboration between actors from different sectors with different interests and resources (Mandrup & Jensen 2017; Miettinen 2013). The Triple Helix Model seems more natural for the technical and economic sciences, but it can also still be examined through other sciences. As innovation is the focus of the Triple Helix, the technical and economic fields are insufficient. Other disciplines are also needed if solutions for the complex problems of society are to be found.

The role of universities has changed over the centuries (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff 2000). Current Finnish national higher education policy expects clear profiling, efficient operating structures of institutions and their units, internationalisation, and increasing cooperation between institutions from UASs. One of the most challenging strategic issues related to academic operations is the aim to systematically develop UASs' RDI mission and its relationship with teaching (Kohtamäki 2015).

Etzkowitz (2017) presents a vision of the entrepreneurial university based on the idea of the Triple Helix. The tenet behind the entrepreneurial university is that the highly specialised curricula of the Industrial Society no longer fully meet the needs of an emerging Knowledge Society. The Knowledge Society requires citizens with entrepreneurial and intercultural capabilities to innovate and respond to change in an increasingly interconnected world (Etzkowitz, Ranga & Dzisah 2012).

The entrepreneurial university enhances the traditional research university with dynamic movement between the problems of society and enterprises, and academic research and innovations. The key elements for Etzkowitz include: '(1) the organization of group research, (2) the creation of a research base with commercial, potential, (3) the development of organizational mechanisms to move research out of the university as protected intellectual property, (4) the capacity to organize firms within the university and "graduate" them, (5) integration of academic and business elements into new formats such as university–industry research centers' (Etzkowitz 2017).

Mandrup and Jensen (2017) present an interesting application of the Triple Helix to WBL. They develop an approach that combines Educational Action Research and the Triple Helix Model ('EARTH'). Educational Action Research examines collaborative projects with various internal and external partners (Mandrup & Jensen; Ramstad 2008). The teacher is seen as action researcher and coordinator, playing a central role in initiating projects and emerging communities with different interests. Educational Action Research underlines cooperation, co-learning, and collective action in a democratic participatory process (Mandrup & Jensen 2017). Mandrup and Jensen (2017) present the Triple Helix and Educational Action Research as the bridge between the common emphasis on action as knowledge generation and engagement in collaborative, equal, and voluntary constellations across different contexts attempting to develop new ideas, solutions, or societies. They underline that in twenty-first century universities action research with a practice-based effort creates new forms of collaboration between teachers, students, and working-life partners, creating entrepreneurial programmes, research, consortiums, community action, and strategic partnerships (Mandrup & Jensen 2017).

According to Mandrup and Jensen (2017) integrated relationships between the three stakeholders, 'taking the role of the other', represents the transition from the Industrial Society to the Knowledge Society. Academic intellectual resources and human capital become foundations for innovation and collaboration. Academia can take a leading role as Innovation Organiser, taking responsibility for initiating and organising innovation projects that serve participants' interests (Etzkowitz &

Leydesdoff 2000; Mandrup & Jensen 2017). However, Todeva and Danson (2016) have presented a critique of the regional representation of the Triple Helix Model. They claim that the Regional Innovation Organiser (Etzkowitz & Klofsten 2005) is abstract and does not envisage a specific institutional embodiment, and the regional representation of the Triple Helix remains vague.

Although Triple Helix and Educational Action Research both underline the equality of the partners, by allocating the role of organiser to the university they still appear to be somewhat education-based approaches. Mandrup and Jensen (2017) also present a critique of the Triple Helix and Educational Action Research. They point out that actors from different sectors may not be equally involved or resourceful, and an Innovation Organiser necessarily takes the lead.

Ultimately, is this education-based thinking inevitable in discussing learning? Ranga and Etzkowitz (2013) suggest that industry can also play the role of the university in developing education and training solutions. If the working-life stakeholders work as ‘Innovation Organisers’ or facilitators, can educators avoid the education-based approach and ‘surrender’ to equal collaboration? I claim that when we involve students in the process we introduce to the discussion aspects of education such as learning goals and schedules, which partly start to guide the process in a certain direction. The question remains whether the participants of WBL can ever be equal or whether the processes are always education-based. This question is further complicated in the transition from the triple to “quadruple” models that involve democratic processes of new groups of stakeholders, users and citizens (Kolehmainen et al. 2016). Table 1 summarises the key principles, actors, goals, and roles of the actors in the Triadic and Triple Helix Models.

Table 1. Factors in Triadic and Triple Helix Models

Approach	Key principles	Actors	Goals	Actors' roles
Triadic Model (Dalrymple et al. 2012)	Learner's proactive role Synthesis of practical and theoretical knowledge requires all three parties' contribution	University facilitator Industry specialist Learning participant (e.g. student)	Confluence of university facilitator, industry specialist, and 'learning practitioner' (e.g. student) together establishing learning context for the coherence of theory, practice, and disciplinary knowledge.	All members of the Triad are central to the realisation of learning
Triple Helix Model (Mandrup & Jensen 2017)	Interaction of university-government-industry is the key to improving conditions for innovation	Academia Government Industry	Universities equal partners of Triple Helix in producing innovations	Industry – the locus of production Government – the source of contractual relationship guaranteeing stable interaction and exchange University – the new knowledge and technologies

In examining the research into WBL from a theoretical-historical perspective, we see that the focus has been on students' learning and on the needs of education institutions. However, some expansion of discussion of the needs of working life and education policy can be observed, as has been mentioned. All participants' learning in collaboration becomes an important theme when vocational training is increasingly taking place at work. Approaches emphasising the equality of working life and education are emerging in the field of research (Jääskelä et al. 2018; Mandrup & Jensen 2017). Is equality a realistic project, and what will the role of the university and VHE be in building partnerships? How can WBL be opened to society and expand to enhance all participants' learning? This chapter has considered strategic partnerships, the construction of long-term commitment and working-life partners in collaboration with education, and the understanding of all participants' various interests and learning. Based on the chapter's discussion, I see research gaps in all these relationships. This study's aim is to contribute to this discussion of WBL in HE, explore the development of the strategic partnership between the UAS and working-life organisations and the commitment of regional networks to the process of the Mikkeli Meets Russia (MMR) event, and evaluate the WBP model in the

context of MMR. The overall aim is to increase knowledge and understanding of the complex collaboration processes of WBL, both from the perspectives of HE and working life.

1.3 Mikkeli Meets Russia Event

Based on the previous discussion of the Triad and Triple Helix in vocational education and learning, it seems the partnership, commitment, and learning of those involved in WBL need more exploration. I argue that when an education organisation is involved the process is inevitably affected by the biases of learning goals and agendas, which jeopardises partners' equality. In the present study I will participate in this discussion by studying a regional cultural event called 'Mikkeli Meets Russia' (MMR). MMR offers an opportunity to explore the development of a strategic partnership between VHE institutions and working life, the commitment of regional networks to collaboration, and to test the WBP model. It is a promising case for increasing understanding of the processes and structures of the WBP model in VHE. With the increasing number of RDI projects and authentic cases in teaching these WBP themes have become one of the trickiest questions in VHE (see e.g. Kohtamäki 2015).

The most essential working-life partner of the Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences, Cultural Management Education (MUAS/CME) degree programme was the City Theatre. In 2008 directors of the MUAS/CME degree programme and the City Theatre signed a strategic partnership agreement to develop both organisations' activities and the Mikkeli region. While a strategic partnership is an intentional way to help leaders achieve the goals of an organisation, the role of the directors is essential both in signing the agreement and in creating the meaning of the agreement for the staff (Eddy, Amey & Bragg 2014; Toivianen 2003, 2007).

Local discussion of the lack of programme services for Russian tourists during the New Year arose on the agenda of the strategic partners when they were planning ways to implement the agreement. As a solution for this, as well as to meet the need for new productions at the City Theatre, the idea of a new cultural event, later named 'Mikkeli Meets Russia' was brought to the planning group of the MUAS and the City Theatre.

In 2009 the number of Russian tourists coming to Finland had doubled. The growth was largest in Eastern Finland, where Mikkeli is situated. The number of tourists was an important economic factor for the region (Länsi-Savo 19.11.2010).

The large numbers of Russian tourists visiting the area of South Savo during the first days of the New Year prompted the idea for the event. The beginning of the year is typically a holiday for Finns, so the problem of satisfying tourists' desire for activities and the Mikkeli area's economic needs while also giving Finns their traditional holiday was acute. There had been public debate about this problem for several years. The idea for an event emerged at meetings between the teachers of CME and the director of the City Theatre. Some twenty different agencies from various sectors in the area were invited to a meeting where the idea was introduced, and the interest of the invited agencies gauged. What everyone present had in common was that all had some contact with Russian tourists. There seemed to be a shared interest, because there were five networking meetings at which the attendance varied from ten to eighteen – a substantial figure in this region. The strategic partners played the role of facilitator, inviting other stakeholders to plan the event and supporting the process.

After more than a year's planning the event was held between 1st and 6th January 2010 and seemed quite a success. MMR proved to be a series of events held at the City Theatre, a local wine farm, and a local ice rink. The MUAS/CME degree programme and the City Theatre, as strategic partners, produced the event. The development of a strategic partnership (Eddy & Amey 2014; Ortega 2013) during MMR constitutes my first research question.

While strategic partners played a strong role in planning and producing MMR, other stakeholders' roles varied during the process and its actual production. This variation partly reflects the commitment (Andrésen, Lundberg & Roxenhall 2012; Sol, Beers & Wals 2013) of the stakeholders to the process, which is the study's second research question. Following the idea of the WBP model, MMR offered developmental assignments for students of the MUAS/CME degree programme to bring together theoretical and practical knowledge (Dalrymple et al. 2014; Grunman et al. 2013; McIver Nottingham 2017). Scrutinising the implementation of this work-based pedagogical model of the MUAS/CME, the challenges and the possibilities of expansive learning, forms the third research question of the study.

The goal of the MMR network was to hold an annual event from 2012. The hope was that the New Year events in Mikkeli would become widely known in Finland and the area around St Petersburg (Länsi-Savo 24.11.2010).

The idea of MMR took shape at networking meetings involving the MUAS/CME degree programme, the City Theatre, and local organisations, which form the study's essential data. The purpose of these networking meetings was to plan the concept of the event and find the resources to produce it. Along with the networking meetings

in the spring of 2009 the planning group worked on the draft of the event. The group consisted of a teacher from MUAS, the manager of the City Theatre, and a representative from a travel agency. They established a structure for the event, arranging programmes and services during the first week of the year. In the spring of 2009 MUAS obtained a grant from the Ministry of Education to support the developing work of MMR (see Villacís 2009). The decision was taken to commit one teacher to produce the event. A student who linked her practical training and thesis to the MMR project was employed as an assistant for the production.

The event's production phase began in the autumn of 2009. This was the phase when students were involved in the process with their developmental assignments for marketing and briefing. Teachers responsible for the courses in marketing and speech communication saw that MMR would offer suitable cases for the application of the course's theoretical knowledge. The pedagogical model of CME consisted of contact lessons (theoretical knowledge), developmental assignment (practical knowledge), and guiding clinics (teachers' guiding for the assignment). The focus of WBL is the attempt to integrate theoretical and practical knowledge, generally supporting students' learning and professional development (Dalrymple et al. 2014; Garnett 2016; Pylväs 2018).

Multidisciplinarity is one of the goals of WBP (Garnett 2016) and was also pursued in MMR. Besides the students of CME students from the degree programmes in Tourism, Healthcare, and Secondary Vocational Education also attended MMR. Tourism students conducted a customer survey; healthcare students were responsible for first aid; and secondary vocational education students offered fantasy make-up. From this multidisciplinary ensemble I will focus on the perspective of CME because of its pedagogical model. Besides the data of networking meetings this complex structure of collaboration between the UAS and working life is studied through meeting memos of the MUAS/CME degree programme about the strategic partnership and interviews with students, teachers, and representatives from working life.

After the first MMR in January 2010 participants in the production and strategic partners in various meetings evaluated the event and the process. Planning for the next event began soon afterwards. The overall development of the first MMR and the key organisations and their participants are presented in Table 2. The key organisations were selected for this table based on their attendance at the networking meetings. These four organisations participated at every networking meeting. The term 'Others' in the table refers to additional organisations involved in the process. At the top of the table are the process's phases.

Table 2. The participants and phases of the Mikkeli Meets Russia event

Participants	Pre-planning	Planning	Production	Evaluation
The MUAS/CME	Drama Lecturer and Principal I Lecturer	Drama Lecturer, Researcher, Head of Department	Event Management Teacher, Researcher, Course Teachers, Head of Department	Event Management Teacher, students, Researcher, Head of Department
The Theatre	Manager	Three Managers	Four Managers	Two Managers
Travel Agency		Marketing Assistant and Manager	Marketing Assistant	
Local enterprise		Different people at different meetings		
Others		Different organisations (A)	Different organisations (B)	Workers and students at the children's event
			The MMR event	
Time Dimension	Autumn 2008	Spring 2009	Autumn 2009	Spring 2010

The target group for MMR was families with children from Russia and Finland (Appendix 1). This pilot project in 2010 created a basic structure for future planning. The event was held again in 2011, when the name was changed to ‘Mikkeli New Year Events 2011’. Even more participants attended: the attendance, which was expected to double from 2,500 to 5,000, reached 5,500 (memo of CME team meeting 4.2.2011). Regional networks present a complex learning environment. MMR is an example of a regional network where participants from a variety of backgrounds and interests seek the same goal. The organisational structure of MMR is presented in Figure 1.

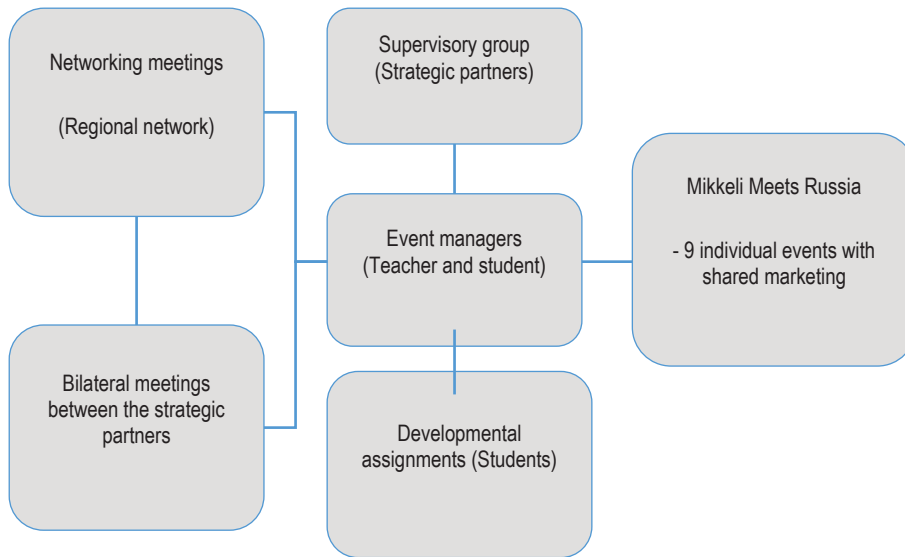


Figure 1. The organisational structure of MMR (from the MMR final report, 2010)

Figure 2 is an illustration of the MMR event which gained interest in the local media.



Punatulkun ja Pöön puuhapäivät Mikkelin teatterissa keräsi runsaasti sekä suomalaisia että venäläisiä kävijöitä jo ensimmäisenä päivänä. Lumikin asun soorustanutun pietarilainen Julia sai kauniin kasvomaalauksen Päivi Asikaiselta.

Venäläiset lomailevat Mikkelissä perheen ehdoilla

Vuodenvaihdte on Venäjällä tärkein lomasesonki. Pietarilaiset arvostavat Mikkelin rauhallisuutta ja läheistä sijaintia.

Mikko Kääräinen
MIKKELI

VENÄJÄN ja Mikkelin kohtaaminen on sujunut hienosti. Jokavuotiseksi kaavailtu Mikkelin ammattikorkeakoulun koordinoima tapahtuma Mikkelin meets Russia tarjoaa jokaiselle jotakin.

Lauantaina ja maanantaina Mikkelin teatterissa järjestetty lastentapahtuma Punatulkun ja Pö-

lön puuhapäivät keräsi jo ensimmäisenä päivänä noin 150 innostunutta vierailijaa.

–Arviolta 60 prosenttia kävijöistä on ollut venäläisiä. Täällä on näkynyt myös kaksikielisiä perheitä, kertoo Mamkin kulttuurituotannon opettaja **Anja Lappi**.

Mikkelin teatterin hallituksen puheenjohtaja **Markku Turku** on havainnut, että venäläiset lomailivat perheen ehdoilla. Siksi heille suunnattu lastentapahtuma sopii kain neni päähän.

–Jottavenäläiset saadaan pysähtymään Mikkelin, pitää olla hyviä tärkyä, Turku sanoo.

PIETARISTA kotoisin olevat **Grigori Gaponenko** ja **Anna Smirnova** ovat tyttärensä **Julian** kanssa ensimmäistä kertaa Mikkelissä. Jo yhden päivän oleskelu on ehtinyt tehdä perheeseen vaikutuksen.

–Luonto ja maisemat ovat täydelliset ja ajotiet hyvissä kunnossa, pariskunta hymyilee.

” Jos vastaava tapahtuma järjestetään myös ensi vuonna, tulemmme varmasti takaisin.

Anna Smirnova

Venäläiseen mittakaavaan suhteutettuna Mikkelin ja Pietarille lähestulkoon naapurikaupunki. Jos rajamuodollisuudet eivät kestäisi useaa tuntia, matka-aika lyhenisi vielä rutkasti.

GAPONENKO KERTOO, että perheen Suomen matkan päämää-

räksi varmisti Etelä-Savo, koska Pertunmaalta löytyi sopiva mikki tukikohdaksi. Autolla läkkumalla tapahtumiin ja nähtävyyksiin on helppo tutustua.

Tietoa Mikkelin meets Russia -tapahtumasta perhe löysi alun perin venäläiseltä nettisivustolta.

–Pietarissa kaikki lastentapahtumat ovat valtavia ja täynnä itkeviä lapsia. Täällä on rauhallisempaa, Gaponenko perusteli Mikkelin tuloa.

–Jos vastaava tapahtuma järjestetään myös ensi vuonna, tulemmme varmasti takaisin, Smirnova lupasi.

ENSIMMÄISTÄ KERTAA tänä vuonna järjestetty tapahtumakonaisuus on paitsi kokeilu, myös harjoittelua jatkoa varten. Mikkelin toiminnanjohtaja **Janne Viltamies** kertoo, että kävijät ovat löy-

täneet hyvin myös Ice Skate Park -yleisöluistelun Hänninkentällä.

–Joka päivä on ollut joutain kymmeniä venäläisiä vieraita, ja tietysti myös suomalaisia.

Viitamielen mukaan yleisöluistelu on ollut hyödyksi myös paikallisille urheiluliikkeille, sillä monet ovat jäällä käyttäen ostaneeet tuleräät hiihtimet. Kun vielä säät ovat suosineet tapahtumaa, järjestäjillä on syytä tyytyväisyyteen.

Mikkelin Ice Skate Park pidetään loppiaisena jälkeiseen lauantaihin 9. tammikuuta saakka joka päivä kello 14–16. Tapahtumaan ja jäälle on vapaa pääsy. Hänskissä on myös luistinten vuokrausta.

Tästä päivästä alkaen Hänskissä voi nauttia luistelun lisäksi mäenlaskusta kentän pohjoisreunan rinteeseen tehdyssä liukumäessä.

Figure 2. Russians spend their family holidays in Mikkelin (Länsi-Savo 5.1.2010).

1.4 Structure of the Study

The study is structured as follows: Chapter 2 discusses the study's theoretical framework, following the focuses of the research questions. It begins with discussions of strategic partnership, proceeding to the commitment in networks, and finally to WBP in the context of the UAS. Chapter 3 presents the WBP model of the MUAS/CME degree programme. I use activity theory (AT) as the study's ontological and methodological framework to understand collaboration between education and working life. This is discussed in Chapter 4. AT scrutinises activities and learning from multiple focuses, pursuing an analysis and understanding especially of multivoicedness, objects, and contradictions of activities (Engeström 1987/2015). It also focuses strongly on new forms of learning. In Chapter 4 I present the essential AT concepts used in the study.

Chapter 5 formulates the research questions. Chapter 6 presents the study's data and methods and Chapters 7 to 9 include the results of the empirical analyses. Chapter 7 focuses on the analysis of the first research question concerning the development of the strategic partnership between the MUAS/CME and the City Theatre. I therefore present four phases of development through which the strategic partnership between the MUAS/CME degree programme and the City Theatre developed in the context of MMR. The second research question explores the commitment of the regional network to MMR. Chapter 8 presents the analysis. I classify the commitment by type. Chapter 9 presents an analysis of the participants' learning in the context of MMR and the implementation of the pedagogical model of CME, which is the focus of the third research question. Chapter 10 summarises the results of the three empirical chapters. In Chapter 11 I present the implications of the study for WBP and evaluate the research process and the validity of the study. Chapter 12 is the conclusion of the study.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In this chapter I discuss the theoretical concepts of this research. These concepts are important to deepen understanding of the work-based pedagogical (WBP) model. The development of the work-based pedagogical models in the Finnish VHE has progressed during the past years (e.g. Aaltonen, Isacson, Laukia & Vanhanen-Nuutinen 2013; Taatila & Raij 2012). However, the review of the WBP models is outside the theoretical focus of this research. We are interested in the model developed and piloted by the community in a specific cultural-historical context, which creates the conditions for learning. The critical comparative research of the WBP models implemented in various contexts of VHE still waits to be done. I start with the strategic partnership in the context of vocational higher education (VHE) and working life. Next, I discuss the concept of commitment in regional networks. At the end of the Chapter I discuss learning and teaching in collaborative relationships between the Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) and working life.

2.1 Strategic Partnerships in Higher Education

It has been suggested that partnerships and networking between education and working life are crucial in work-based learning (WBL) (Costley 2007; Dalrymple et al. 2014; Laitinen-Väänänen & Vanhanen-Nuutinen 2013). To overcome the hegemony of the discipline-based university, Garnett (2016) builds in the implementation of WBL (Garnett 2016). The strategic partnership is a long-term, agreement-based form of collaboration between education and working life and a way of organising WBL in higher education (HE) (Eddy et al. 2014; Salimova, Vatolkina & Makolov 2014). This section first discusses the concept of the strategic partnership and why organisations enter into these kinds of collaborative relationship (Eddy et al. 2014; Elmuti, Abebe & Nicolosi 2005; Ortega 2013). The discussion continues with an assessment of the meaning of strategic partnerships for HE and the enhancement of WBP.

The concept of the strategic partnership has its roots in business (see Barringer & Harrison 2000), but it has been used to describe and study collaboration in various contexts such as between nations (Gentimir 2015; Gilson 2016), business organisations (de Man 2013; Kelly, Schaan & Joncas 2002), and education institutions and organisations (Eddy et al. 2014; Ortega 2013; Salimova et al. 2014). A strategic partnership is defined as an arrangement between two or more companies that establish an exchange relationship to improve their competitive position and performance by sharing resources, but without the involvement of joint ownership (Barringer & Harrison 2000; Ireland, Hitt & Vaidyanath 2002; Lowensberg 2010). ‘Strategic’ refers to the purposeful and planned use of partnerships in the management of companies to distinguish them from more spontaneous evolutionary interpersonal and inter-organisational relationships (Eddy et al. 2014). The 1990s witnessed an explosion in the number of strategic alliances between companies (Ireland et al. 2002; Kelly, Schaan & Joncas 2002). Nevertheless, the process and learning in the strategic partnership between education and working life need greater exploration because of the increased demands in HE and vocational education for closer collaboration with working life (Ministry of Education 2017a).

Organisation studies on strategic partnerships emphasise the benefits and challenges involved in the interacting companies’ collaboration (e.g. Barringer & Harrison 2000; Eisenhardt & Schoohoven 1996) and organisational learning and management (e.g. Bierly, Kessler & Christensen 2000; Crossan & Berdrow 2003). Lowensberg (2010) has suggested that there are six widely used motivational paradigms in the formation of strategic partnerships: 1) transaction cost economics; 2) resource dependence; 3) strategic choice; 4) stakeholder theory; 5) organisational learning; and 6) institutional theory. There are several other studies emphasising the economic and knowledge-based views of partnerships (Barringer & Harrison 2000; Latham, Bengtsson, Henriksson & Sparks 1998). Organisational learning is a focus of studies of cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) (Engeström 2001, 2004; Engeström & Kerosuo 2007; Toiviainen 2003).

A key tenet of partnering is that through collaboration individual partners can achieve goals they cannot alone (Eddy 2010; Min et al. 2005). This tenet is coloured by the ideal of equality and mutual benefits. Partners are seen in collaboration as equals with a willingness for cross-functional departments to work together: to share ideas, information, and resources and to develop and achieve collective goals (Ellinger, Daugherty & Keller 2000).

Although the concept of strategic partnership is intended to achieve positive outcomes for the partners, it is not an easy concept to realise. The risks of

collaboration are often related to its goals and economic issues. This entails disagreements and conflicts concerning sharing costs and ideas of collaboration and the benefit of the results (Barringer & Harrison 2000; Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven 1996; Min et al. 2005). Cultural differences, differences in objectives, and external factors have been reported in relation to strategic partnerships (Elmuti et al. 2005).

In the context of strategic partnerships in education Eddy et al. (2014) have defined four motivations for collaboration. Each operates differently in different contexts and depending on an organisation's mission. The motivations are: 1) economic goals; 2) policy mandates; 3) value alignment; and 4) strategic leadership. First, as in organisation studies (e.g. Lowensberg 2010) and in the context of education (Salimova et al. 2014), economic goals drive strategic partnerships. Partners can share resources and risks. Second, policy mandates often frame how partnership develops. I claim that this motivation is notable in the context of HE in Finland, where the direction of development is guided by policy through funding (Kauko 2011; Kohtamäki 2009). Third, in value alignment shared goals and values both at an individual level but also an organisational level are important motivators for strategic partnerships. These underlying similarities in values and cultural understanding are especially important in strategic partnerships that seek to connect with strategic mission. For example, 'possessing the common goals of access and student learning can create a platform ripe for working together' (Eddy et al. 2014, 20). Finally, in strategic leadership motivation institutional objectives can motivate leaders to seek other organisations as partners to achieve the goals of the organisation.

Elmuti et al. (2005) have also found very similar factors behind the strategic partnership between universities and business organisations. They list as noteworthy growing global competitiveness, the increasing need for innovation in products and processes, lower Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) expenditure, and technological transfer opportunities. They present these factors especially from companies' perspectives. The university's role is seen as being to obtain research funding, access to proprietary technology and research tools, and to provide an opportunity to develop and market technologies. Reasons for collaboration also include obtaining industrial expertise, exposure to practical problems, and employment opportunities for graduates (Elmuti et al. 2005).

Finally, it is notable that national policy defines regional development as one of the core tasks of the Finnish UASs (Kohtamäki 2015; Ramstad 2008). This core task, which often manifests itself in RDI projects, drives UASs in collaboration and the

development of their regions. Besides the implementation of WBP, VHE therefore has other reasons for enhancing partnerships and regional network building.

The literature suggests that the ideal scenario is the equality of the partners in collaborating in something that is beneficial for partners, both behind the strategic partnership (SP) and WBP. As discussed above, the benefits of SP in education are similar to those of SPs between business organisations. However, they have their own characteristics which should be considered. In both cases the benefits could be summarised as economic and knowledge-based (Geyskens, Steenkamp & Kumar 1999). The knowledge-based benefits include learning, knowledge-sharing, and knowledge-building (Barringer & Harrison 2000; Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven 1996). An SP as a longitudinal agreement for collaboration with agreed goals offers HE a fertile platform for learning and development (Laitinen-Väänänen & Vanhanen-Nuutinen 2013). It enables the setting of goals for long-term collaboration, while collaborative relationships with other working-life partners can be more *ad hoc*. In a sense an SP's longitudinal nature provides a way to work for the partners and to develop new forms of learning and developing perseverance. Processes and duration present challenges in education which usually last considerably longer and are more longitudinal than in working life. This challenge for SPs can partly be tackled because of their longitudinal nature.

If the strategic partnership has its challenges in the economic and social context, this is no less problematic in the context of education (Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven 1996; Elmuti et al. 2005). One such challenge relates to the question of the partners' equality. In the Triple Helix context I posed the question of the possibility of partners' equality when an education organisation is involved in the process. HE in Finland has relatively strong structures, such as learning goals and schedules, which guide activities. What often happens in practice is that these structures also guide collaboration with working life, which starts to evolve around them. This creates situations which test the equality of the partners. The risk is that instead of participants developing equally, the process proves to be education-driven, creating limits and conditions. As in the context of WBL, the question of partners' equality is also relevant in the context of a SP between HE and working life. Are strategic partners equal in collaboration and what is their role in wider regional networking? This is one of the questions for which this study seeks answers.

2.2 Commitment in Organisational Networks

Commitment has been established as a key factor in partnerships' success (Rampersad, Quester & Troshani 2010). Organisation studies have focused on individuals' commitment to an organisation and its operations and goals (Becker 2009; Brown 1996; Meyer & Allen 1991; Meyer, Allen & Topolnytsky 1998; Neubert & Wu 2009). Members' commitment to organisational change has also been analysed (Bouckennooghe, Schwarz & Minbashian 2015). Commitment is a dyadic relationship influenced by several factors such as trust, communication, and the length of the relationship (Andrésen, Lundberg & Roxenhall 2012). In business studies that analyse customers' commitment to a service provider or product manufacturer, the perspective on commitment is organisational. The focus is on relations between companies (Garbarino & Johnson 1999).

Among studies of the individual's commitment to the organisation one of the most cited models is Meyer's and Allen's (1991) Three-Component Model. The model distinguishes between affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment denotes an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in an organisation. Continuance commitment, also called calculative commitment (e.g. Roxenhall 2011), denotes the perceived costs associated with leaving an organisation. Normative commitment reflects instead a perceived obligation to remain in an organisation. The individual's commitment to an organisation has also been studied in relation to employees' job attitudes and performance (Lee et al. 2010).

What concerns me in the present study is network partners' potential commitment to longstanding development activity that is characterised as open-ended and uncertain in terms of its outcomes and the benefits accruing for each member. Studies of network commitment get closest to this (Andrésen et al. 2012; Sol, Beers & Wals 2013). The individual is seen in this study as a representative of his or her organisation. In making decisions about participating and investing in activities, individuals also express the organisation's commitment to the collaboration project. Commitment in organisations is an established field of study (Bryant, Moshavi & Nguyen 2007; Klein, Becker & Meyer 2009). There is less literature on network-level commitment. To analyse commitment in an emerging regional network, I present the studies by Sol et al. (2013), Roxenhall (2011), and Andrésen et al. (2012) and complement these with two related concepts, namely intensity of participation (Rondinelli & London 2003) and concerns of collaboration (Sullivan 2010).

First, Sol et al. (2013) propose that social learning appears as the dynamic interplay of shared reframing, trust, and commitment. Reframing refers to the emergence of new, shared perceptions of the issues faced by a relatively heterogeneous group that explores a mutually perceived but somewhat ill-defined challenge. They maintain that social learning entails an interactive and dynamic process in a multi-actor setting, where knowledge is exchanged and actors learn by interaction and co-creating knowledge. This definition can apply to individuals as well as groups. Sol et al. (2013) argue that actors' diversity is a key, if problematic, factor in social learning. The heterogeneous composition of a multi-actor network with different values and interests, combined with the very messy character of the complex problems involved, is often reflected in large differences of perception (Sol et al. 2013).

Second, Roxenhall (2011) has studied network commitment and network structure. Whereas Meyer and Allen (1991) claim that all three components of commitment can be intertwined, Roxenhall suggests that in long-term and lasting relationships the affective component is stronger and plays a more important role than the other two. He continues that the affective component is closely linked to shared values, trust, and relationships and such values are created in direct relationships. It is therefore reasonable to assume that there is a positive correlation between the network's direct relationships and the affective component (Roxenhall 2011).

Third, Andréßen et al. (2012) set the concept of commitment in the context of the network. They distinguish between attitudinal and behavioural commitment. Attitudinal commitment concerns the process by which organisations scrutinise their relationships in assessing how much the organisation intends to invest in a network. Behavioural commitment concerns the process by which companies actually invest in their relationship in terms of concrete activities in the network (Andréßen et al. 2012; Meyer & Allen 1991).

We can conclude from this review that the two obvious basic components of commitment are affective and calculative commitment. Organisational members are emotionally committed, and they construct rational features in committing themselves to organisational activities.

However, the perspective on commitment is richer in the partnership literature, where the levels and depth of partnership are analysed with the goals of collaboration. I therefore consider the level of intensity of participation and the concerns of collaboration. First, Rondinelli and London (2003) analyse interaction in cross-sector collaboration between corporations and environmental non-profit

organisations (NPO). Rondinelli and London (2003) argue that the objectives and benefits of intensive collaborations and alliances can differ substantially from those of arm's length relationships. In intensive collaborative relationships both organisations must decide whether the value created by collaboration is worth the required investment.

Second, Sullivan (2010) defines four dimensions of ways of collaboration in her study of collaboration for a public purpose. The dimensions are: concerns of collaboration; substance of collaboration; problems of collaboration; and significance of collaboration. Concerns of collaboration answer the question: what are the matters with which collaboration is concerned? The indicators of goals or purposes of collaboration cover economic, social, and political purposes. The economic purposes relate to providing services or infrastructure cost-efficiently through partnership. The social purposes include achieving difficult policy goals such as community safety. The political purposes are related to empowering citizens to act, for example, for neighbourhood renewal. Sullivan (2010) argues that the focus has shifted more explicitly to using collaboration to cut costs and improve efficiency, whereas other purposes are easily pushed to the background.

To summarise, intensity of participation (Rondinelli & London 2003) and concerns of collaboration (Sullivan 2010) expand the concepts of affective and calculative commitment (Andrésen et al. 2012; Meyer & Allen 1991; Roxenhall 2011). These conceptual expansions are especially needed in moving from analysing individuals and separate companies to analysing inter-organisational collaboration, where the object and interests of collaboration are increasingly complex.

2.3 Integrating Theory and Practice in Work-Based Pedagogy

The question of integrating theory and practice is foundational in vocational education. Today, this question culminates in the design of WBP with a deep understanding of the needs of working life and working-life competences. The discussion of working-life competences is based on the distinction between job-specific and general (generic) competences (Jääskelä, Nykänen & Tynjälä 2018). Working-life competences, or generic skills, include creativity and innovation capacity, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, learning to learn, and communication and collaboration (Binkely et al. 2012; Jääskelä et al. 2018; Salonen et al. 2017; Future of Jobs 2016).

Jääskelä et al. (2018) identify four models of how HE institutions organise the development of generic skills. They are the Specialist Model, the Science-Based Renewal Model, the Project-Based Integrative Model, and the Model of Networked Culture. The distinctive dimensions of these models consist of structural factors, pedagogy, and guidance practices as part of education.

In the Specialist Model the task of developing working-life skills is centralised to experts, and the skills are taught in separate courses. In the Science-Based Renewal Model working-life relations focus on the research field's academic networks. The development of generic skills is seen to develop in a variety of the subject's learning situations through participation and doing. The Project-Based Integrative Model typically seeks close connections between education and work. The learning of generic skills is linked to theoretical teaching in various pedagogical arrangements. Jääskelä et al. (2018) underline that this model is usually applied in individual courses combining theoretical knowledge, practical competences, and self-regulative skills. In the last model, Networked Culture, 'educational workplace relations and the development of generic skills are seen as involving the internal and external networks of the entire educational institution, where workplace aspects are an integral part of educational structures, management systems and curricula' (Jääskelä et al. 2018, 139). While universities operate mainly with the Specialist, Science-Based Renewal, and Project-Based Integrative Models, the UASs also occasionally use the Model of Networked Culture (Jääskelä et al. 2018).

Each of the four models presented by Jääskelä et al. (2018) has pedagogical implications for organising the relationship between theory and practice and promoting students' working-life competences. They define the characteristics pertinent to learning environments that facilitate the development of generic skills. Learning environments should be interactive and activate teaching that strives for an understanding of the main concepts, collaborative learning, feedback and support, and versatile evaluation methods (Jääskelä et al. 2018).

In the WBP model in VHE the developmental aspect arising from the combination of theory and practice is crucial (Dalrymple et al. 2014). It raises learning activity to a level where, besides developing individual competences, the development of working life also becomes possible. This happens by expanding the ways of working through theoretical knowledge and communal knowledge creation. Dalrymple et al. (2014) suggest that the most effective configurations of WBL involve the confluence of a university facilitator, an industry specialist, and a 'learning practitioner', who together establish a learning context in which theory, practice, and disciplinary knowledge cohere.

In addition to the general skills discourse, the academic skills discourse is meaningful in the context of HE and academic work. Academic skills are seen as measurable properties of individuals, assessed by academic achievement tests (Hughes, Moore & Bailey 1999). Howard (2012) defines academic skills as including: finding and evaluating information; academic writing skills; reading and notetaking, preparing for exams; working in groups; presentation skills; referencing and avoiding plagiarism; time management; and critical thinking. Raviv (2009), on the other hand, lists the following skills: using texts as instruments for learning; writing skills in communicating complex ideas and information; critiquing and extrapolating knowledge and weighing its merits; and utilising information. These, however, are somewhat abstract formulations.

There are two essential factors relating to the WBP model in HE in different European countries (Dalrymple et al. 2017). First, they are increasingly obliged to bring together different academic disciplines to serve the emerging needs of industry and to develop interdisciplinary approaches. These needs accord with governmental insistence on employability as a core driver of the education agenda. Second, they are obliged to take the fullest possible account of the learners' needs – mature, experienced adults who in some instances may have few formal qualifications, but who possess considerable knowledge of their field of professional practice.

There is a need for alternative models of science forming an intersection of theory, methods, and practice in both VHE and universities that abandon claims to 'objectivist' scientism (Stetsenko 2015). The ontological and epistemological rationale behind this kind of pedagogical thinking is the notion of people as collaboratively transforming their world through the process of agentively contributing to collaborative and communal modifications of existing realities (Stetsenko 2015, 107).

This closer collaboration between universities and society is also critiqued. The role of the university has changed from the Humboldtian ideal to a pragmatic university model, where the Triple Helix relations of university, business, and society have challenged the discipline-based practices of universities (Penttinen, Skaniakos & Lairio 2013; Tynjälä et al. 2003).

The WBP model for CME offers us a case to explore one attempt to unify theoretical and practical knowledge to promote students' professional and working-life competences. This model, and how it is intended to enhance WBL, is presented next.

3 THE WORK-BASED PEDAGOGICAL MODEL FOR CULTURAL MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

The European and Finnish trends in vocational higher education discussed thus far have influenced the local-level pedagogical solutions of the Cultural Management Education (CME) of the Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences (MUAS). The reform of 2005 created the guidelines for work-based pedagogy (WBP) and student-centred learning. The teachers of CME took this reform very seriously and dug deeply into the curriculum's foundation and the pedagogical methods in use. Students' feedback had revealed a need for subjects in economics and productisation, as well as a request for 'real-life projects' (meeting memo of the curriculum discussion for CME 27.5.2004). Teachers defined the goals of the MUAS/CME degree programme, formulated the strategy and vision for the teaching, chose partners for WBP, developed virtual pedagogy as part of teaching and guidance, and strengthened working-life networks (Department of Cultural, Youth and Social Work, goals and proceedings for 2006).

The next major curriculum reform took place as early as 2007. The objectives of this reform were to develop WBP, multi-professionalism, and student-centred learning. The teachers of CME continued their development work on its basis. The result of this work was a new pedagogical model for the degree programme. In this new model learning took place in local collaborative networks with working life. The goals of the CME pedagogical model were to inculcate strong working-life competences and networks in cultural managers, develop the cultural field in local collaboration, and enhance all participants' learning (Havukainen 2007; Kuoppala 2012). Both reforms (2005 and 2007) were university-wide, providing the framework and guidelines for the curricula of MUAS.

What did the pedagogical model for 2007 analysed in this research look like? It sought to promote students' working-life competences (Jääskelä et al. 2018) by bridging the gap between theory and practice (Costley 2007; Garnett 2016; Lester & Costley 2010; Tynjälä et al. 2003). In relation to the definition of Jääskelä et al. (2018) concerning the conduct of WBP models the CME model was largely a manifestation of the Project-Based Integrative Model, although there were attempts at a

Networked Culture Model. The Project-Based Integrative Model seeks close connections between education and work. It is usually applied in individual courses combining theoretical knowledge and practical competences; in the Networked Culture Model education, workplace relations, and the development of generic skills involve the networks of the entire education institution, where workplace aspects are an integral part of education structures, management systems, and curricula (Jääskelä et al. 2018). Attempts at a Networked Culture Model were seen in CME's efforts in curriculum development. The curriculum was developed in interaction with working life.

The model was composed of three main elements: contact lessons, developmental assignments, and guiding clinics. The purpose of contact lessons was to offer students the theoretical basics of the course. Developmental assignments were authentic working-life cases related to the objectives of the course and offering a practice context for the theoretical basics. The idea of the guiding clinics was to combine the course's theoretical and practical contents. Students were able to work on their developmental assignments under their teachers' guidance. The guiding clinics were intended to unify the objectives of the course/module with the working-life project and the student's personal goals. The student's personal goals were described in a personal study plan (abbreviation 'HOPS' in Finnish, Figure 1). The term RDI refers to research, development, and innovation projects financed by different funding organisations, for example, the European Social Funding (ESF). These RDI projects are significant instruments for a UAS's regional development and learning environments, and they are usually conducted in the network of the UAS and working life. In the present model all these goals could be united in the developmental assignment (abbreviation DL in Figure 1). Figure 1 shows the simple illustration used to present the pedagogical model's interrelated goals (Havukainen 2007).

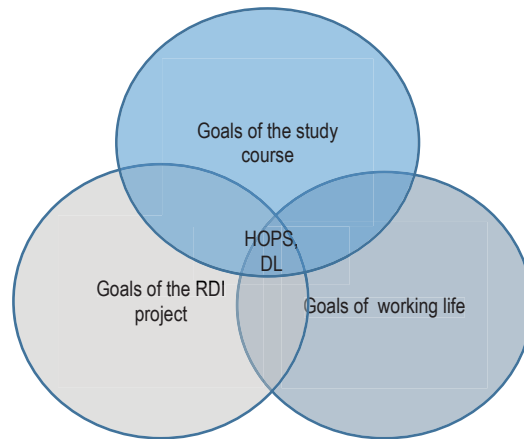


Figure 3. Goals of the WBP for the MUAS/CME programme (Havukainen 2007). HOPS=Personal study plan, DL= Developmental assignment.

The new pedagogical model of the MUAS/CME degree programme was intended to change teaching and learning practices at three levels: learning assignment; schedule; and assessment (Havukainen 2007; Kuoppala 2007). The focus of the developmental learning assignments was transformed from offering theoretical knowledge to applying academic knowledge in authentic working-life contexts. Developmental assignments were in most cases worked on in student groups. The principle was that working on real cases would strengthen motivation, promote working-life competences, offer valuable working-life networks, and enhance deep learning (e.g. Baeten et al. 2010).

The second change in the new model scheduled the course as an intensive study period. Contact lessons were therefore scheduled to happen twice, and guiding clinics once, a week. The remaining days of the week were reserved for reading, writing, and group meetings. For practical reasons the students preferred to organise the days so that half a day was for lectures and half a day for the guiding clinic.

The third change to the CME pedagogical model related to assessment. Previously, assessment happened mostly through the teacher, sometimes supplemented by the student's self-evaluation and peer evaluations. In the new model assessments were conducted by the teachers, students, and working-life partners. This kind of multifold assessment is seen as important in WBP models, where projects should include perspectives and assessments from every sector participant (Mandrup & Jensen 2017). The objectives of the course, developmental assignments, and assessment of all participants (student, teacher, and working-life partner) were described in the competence passport developed by the teachers.

Students received personal assessments and feedback from the teacher and working-life partner. They presented their developmental assignments to the other students for peer evaluation and feedback. By the end of the course the student had filed the working-life partners' network for use after graduation, for example, for employment (OPSU 2007: Pedagogical starting points for Cultural Management Education). The dimensions of these pedagogical changes are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Dimensions of changes in the MUAS/CME degree programme

Dimension of change	Object before	Object in WBP model
Learning assignment	Text as an object	Authentic developmental needs of working life as an object of learning. Developmental assignments as a tool.
Schedule	Five days/week contact lessons	Two days/week contact lessons, a day for mentoring clinic and two days for meetings, reading and writing.
Assessment	By the teacher, sometimes peer evaluation and self-evaluation	Teacher's, students', and working-life partner's evaluation. Competence passport as a tool to make goal setting and assessment visible.

The CME model was based on activity-theoretical roots (Engeström 1987/2015; Leont'ev 1978; see Chapter 4) and on the idea of integrative learning environments. Learning was seen as a collaborative and experiential process, happening through participation in the activities of the community, leading not only to personal but also to community learning. The goal of the learning was to produce new knowledge or activity in collaborative networks between education and working life (Komonen 2007; Kuoppala 2007, 2012). The basis of the learning was authentic developmental challenges in working life, which were responded to through collaboration between education and working life (Kuoppala 2007).

The connection between theory and practice materialises in two course assignments the students undertook in the Mikkeli Meets Russia (MMR) project. One student group undertook a marketing plan; the other undertook a briefing plan. In the marketing course (3 cu) the objectives were to outline the basic concepts and developmental lines of marketing, understand the general and special requirements relating to the marketing of services, projects, organisations, and companies, analyse factors affecting quality, and devise a marketing plan (Study Guide, MUAS 2006-2007). The developmental assignment for marketing was to devise a marketing plan

for a real-life organisation. In contact lessons students learned what a marketing plan was and the teacher presented them with the structure and tools to produce it.

In the speech communication course the goals were worth five credit units, and two credit units were available in the context of MMR. The overall goals of the course were to realistically evaluate students' own speech communication skills and recognise their own strengths and weaknesses as communicators, to understand the value of speech communication skills from the event manager's perspective, and to motivate the development of their skills in various situations. Further goals set for the course were to become familiar with different speaking, listening, and non-verbal communication skills from the perspective of CME, and to learn how to communicate purposefully and effectively in meetings, negotiations, interviews, and in the media context (Study Guide, MUAS 2006-2007).

The developmental assignment for speech communication was to produce a briefing plan for MMR. The perspective of the teacher was inquiry-based, meaning the theoretical knowledge relating to the assignment had been taught in an earlier semester. The theoretical content of the contact lessons was therefore not directly attached to the case of the briefing plan.

4 CULTURAL-HISTORICAL ACTIVITY THEORY AS A METHODOLOGICAL AND ONTOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) is an ontological and methodological framework providing conceptual means to apply a dynamic learning-network approach to complex working-life projects. CHAT is theoretically and historically rooted in the works of Vygotsky (1978), Leont'ev (1978), and Ilyenkov (1977/2008). Examples of network research within the CHAT tradition are studies of expansive learning in the context of heterogeneous networks (Engeström 2016) and multi-professional teams (Daniels & Warmington 2007), innovation trajectories and networks (Lehenkari 2000; Miettinen, Lehenkari & Tuunainen 2008), learning in working-life networks (Toiviainen, Kerosuo & Syrjälä 2009), and the analysis of inter-company collaboration and learning in small Finnish industrial businesses (Toiviainen 2003, 2007). The guiding methodological principle in all these studies is to follow the complex object of a network's activity (Foot 2002; Miettinen 2005; Toiviainen & Vetoshkina, 2018), to understand the network activity through intersecting multi-voiced and contradictory processes (Edwards 2011), and to trace the potential and outcomes of expansive learning (Engeström 2009; 2016), which transforms the activity of 'the whole network' (Knight & Pye 2005; Provan, Fish & Sydow 2007).

The evolving collaborative network can be seen as a learning network because of its efforts to change network-level properties such as shared practices and processes (Knight & Pye 2005; Peters, Pressey & Johnston 2016) and its deliberate establishment as an enhancer of inter-organisational learning (Toivianen et al. 2009). This inter-organisational learning is involved in the collaborative process and the outcomes are future-oriented and only partly foreseen (Toiviainen et al. 2009).

Learning networks are heterogeneous and complex (Andrésen et al. 2012; Elmuti et al. 2005; Kerosuo et al. 2015; Sol et al. 2012). I use CHAT (Engeström 1987/2015; Ilyenkov 1977/2008; Leont'ev 1983; Vygostky 1978) as an ontological basis and

methodological lens for an investigation of the complexity of networked activities and learning.

Human activity is realised through object-oriented and tool-mediated actions embedded in multi-voiced communities with a certain division of labour and rules (Engeström 2016). Activity systems are historically evolving and contradictory. Learning is seen as a collective socio-cultural and historical creation of knowledge, which transforms itself into a learning provision for individuals (Vygotsky 1978). The Vygotskian approach to learning emphasises social context and collaboration. Following this line of thought Stetsenko (2017, 232-233) defines development and learning as follows:

[...] development and learning is a collaborative work-in-progress of activist nature not confined to people adapting to what is 'given' in the world; instead, these processes are reliant upon, and realized through, people forming future-oriented agendas and carrying out social changes in line with these agendas, within collaborative projects of social transformation.

In the present study I especially focus on the concepts of object of activity, contradictions, and expansive learning to explore the development of strategic partnership, commitment, and pedagogy and learning as they emerge from the creation of the Mikkeli Meets Russia (MMR) cultural event.

4.1 The Object of Activity

The object of activity is a generator of attention, motivation, effort, and meaning (Engeström 1987/2015; Engeström & Kerosuo 2007; Kaptelinin 2005; Leont'ev 1978; Nardi 2005; Virkkunen 2006). The object of activity is a collectively constructed ideal and material entity, whose purpose is to satisfy human needs (Engeström 1987/2015). The need state typically emerges in a diffuse form of dilemma and disturbances (Engeström 1987/2015; Foot 2002; Miettinen 2005).

The object of activity is not a stable goal, but a complex and contradictory assembly of social and economic relationships and materials. It requires a division of labour and utilisation of a variety of specialised expertise (Miettinen 2005). The motives of activity are found in the emerging contradiction of activities and possibilities of creating new artefacts. Motive arises from working on the object, and it involves a willingness to find solutions and new ways of acting in communities.

The members of an activity are not usually fully conscious of the motive of their joint activity or its social significance and consequences, because no single individual

can access them alone. Thus, any attempt to characterise the object of activity is necessarily limited (Engeström 1984; Miettinen 2009; Nardi 2009; Stetsenko 2005).

Engeström and Blackler (2005) emphasise that two essential aspects must be noted regarding objects. First, objects are constructed by participants; they are not merely given. Second, objects have histories and built-in affordances; they are not constructed arbitrarily, based on the activities observed. The objects of activities are dynamically constructed, based on various constraints (Kaptelinin 2005). These constraints are, for example, the activity's requirements, the available means, and other participants with their motives and objects (Kaptelinin 2005).

The object of an activity emerges in two forms in relation to the subject. First, it emerges in its independent existence, in which it transforms the subject's activity. Second, it appears as the image of the object. This occurs as a result of the subject's activity and cannot otherwise be realised (Leont'ev 1978). The relationship between the subject and object is dynamic. This means that when we work on the object, the object itself works back on us, affecting our subjectivity (Edwards 2005; Stetsenko 2005). The dynamic relationship between subject and object means that object construction is simultaneously the construction of a subject's commitment to the object.

As Toiviainen (2003) points out, many network dynamics are missed if the object of collaboration remains unquestioned in network collaboration research. The object is also the key to the study of commitment in networks. The object of activity and the interests involved in its collective creation need to be revealed to gain an insight into participants' commitment. In Toiviainen's study (2003) partnership activity seemed to represent a high level of commitment to collective network activities, rather than being oriented towards individual companies' interests. If the object of activity is the key to commitment, a motive for participating in the construction process of the object is crucial. The motive for participating in object construction may be understood as the participating activity system's attempt to expand or transform its basic activity to resolve contradiction or the central problem of an activity (Miettinen 2000).

The object of activity is an essential analytical concept in the present study, and I use it in every research question. In the first research question, concerning the development of strategic partnership, I use it to analyse the object of collaboration. In the second research question, concerning the commitment of the regional network, I examine the object of commitment. In the third research question the object is used to analyse the object of learning in the context of the implementation of the WBP model.

4.2 Developmental Contradictions

CHAT offers an approach for analysing change, development, and learning through developmental contradictions. Contradictions are historically accumulating structural tensions that emerge in the execution of day-to-day activity. Contradictions make people change their activities and, simultaneously, themselves (Engeström 1987/2015; Igida & Aanestad 2009; Schaff 1960).

Engeström especially (1987/2015) has developed the concept of developmental contradictions in the model of expansive learning. The model presents learning as a cycle of the learning actions which form the phases of expansive learning. The motivation for change always arises from tensions or contradictions in organisations (Engeström 1987/2015). Contradictions are necessary but insufficient for expansive learning (Engeström & Sannino 2010), and they are conceptualised as appearing in its various phases: (a) the primary contradictions within the constitutive elements of the activity system; (b) the secondary contradictions developing between two or more elements (e.g. between a new object and an old tool); (c) the tertiary contradictions between a new and previous mode of activity; and (d) the quaternary contradictions between the newly reorganised activity and its neighbouring activity systems in a network (Engeström 1987/2015).

Contradictions become actual driving forces of expansive learning when they are dealt with in such a way that an emerging new object is identified and transformed into a motive (Engeström & Sannino 2010). A result of expansive learning is the formation of a new, expanded object and pattern of activity oriented to the object (Engeström 1987/2015).

First, in the questioning phase primary contradictions are inner contradictions within each constituent node of the central activity system (tools – object – division of labour – community – rules – subject) (Engeström 1987/2015). The questioning phase is about criticising or rejecting some aspects of accepted practice (Engeström & Sannino 2011). The primary contradiction in capitalism is between the use-value and change-value of commodities (Ilyenkov 1977/2008). Primary contradictions are intrinsically connected with a society's system reproduction: they are about what that system is (Fairhurst, Cooren & Cahill 2002). The primary contradiction can therefore somehow be seen as the fundamental contradiction of activity. In this study it is the ultimate motivation for MMR.

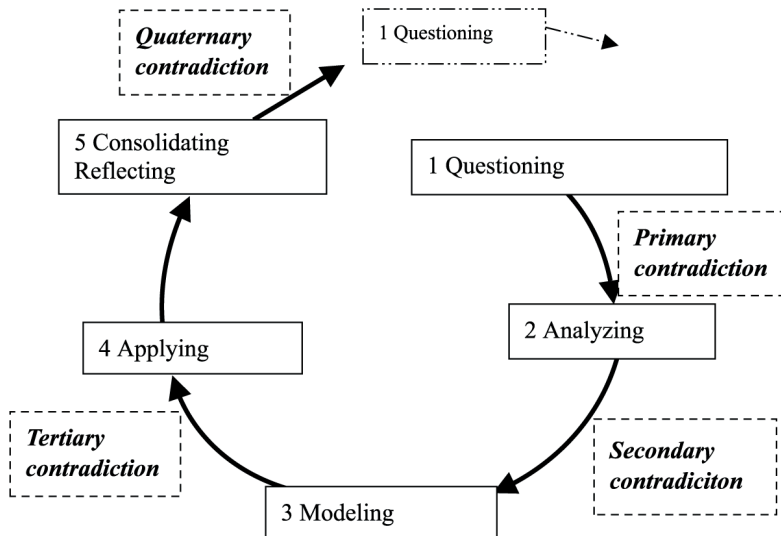
Second, in the analysing phase participants in an activity attempt to find causes or explanatory mechanisms for the situation. This phase prompts 'why?' questions and explanatory principles. Secondary contradictions emerge when there is a

contradiction between nodes in the activity system, causing double-bind situations (Engeström 1987/2015; Eri 2012). Double binds (Bateson 1972/1987) are ‘processes in which actors repeatedly face pressing and equally unacceptable alternatives in their activity system with seemingly no way out’ (Engeström & Sannino 2011, 376). Fairhurst et al (2002, 507) have defined secondary contradictions as ‘any opposing ideas, principles, or actions that are made bipolar, negating, or incompatible’. Secondary contradictions depend on primary contradictions or can emerge as their result (Fairhurst et al. 2001).

Third, tertiary contradictions in contrast emerge between the object of the central activity’s dominant form and the object of a culturally more advanced form of it (Engeström 1987/2015). This somehow is a contradiction between old and new ways of acting. In the expansive learning cycle tertiary contradictions relate to the phases of modelling and testing the new model (Engeström & Sannino 2011; Toiviainen 2007).

Fourth, quaternary contradictions appear between the central activity and its neighbour activities (Engeström 1987/2015). This entails contradictory situations between the activity system, which has expanded the object of activity through expansive learning, and external activity systems. In expansive learning quaternary contradictions usually appear in phases reflecting on the process and consolidating and generalising the new practice (Engeström & Sannino 2010; Toiviainen 2007).

The process of expansive learning is a process of construction and resolution of successively evolving contradictions. The cycle of expansive learning is not a universal formula of phases or stages. A concrete collective learning process which might cleanly follow the ideal-typical model can probably never be identified (Engeström & Sannino 2010). The cycle of expansive learning is presented in Figure 2.



Source: Engeström (1987)

Figure 4. The cycle of expansive learning and contradictions (Engeström 1987/2015)

The contradictions do not follow each other mechanically, even if this model presents them as cyclical and sequential. Each contradiction becomes acute in a particular developmental phase. Nor are contradictions finally resolved when they move from one phase to another. They exist latently throughout the developmental trajectory (Toiviainen 2007, 347).

Contradiction is a philosophical-theoretical notion that can be empirically analysed through its manifestations in activity and discourse – paradox, tension, inconsistency, conflict, dilemma, double bind, etc. (Engeström & Sannino 2011). In addition to these I elaborate on the manifestation of the conflicts of interest emerging in heterogenous networks. Several study fields have considered conflicts of interest, such as the medical sciences (e.g. McCoy et al. 2017; Steinbrook 2009) and organisation studies (Davis & Stark 2001, MacDonald, MacDonald & Norman 2002). A conflict of interest is defined as a situation in which a person’s personal interests influence the objectives of his or her official duties (MacDonald et al. 2002).

In the present study conflicts of interest will not be analysed on a personal level, but in the complex and heterogeneous interactions of the collaboration of multiple organisations. Participants in networking meetings are seen as representatives of their organisations and reflecting their interest in the MMR process. For this reason

I analyse conflicts of interest through the manifestation of critical conflicts, which are situations where individuals face contradictory motives that cannot by themselves be resolved (Engeström & Sannino 2011). This means that participants need other people in finding solutions to critical conflicts.

The present study utilises contradiction as an essential analytical concept of CHAT in analyses of the development of strategic partnership and commitment. In the former I use developmental contradictions to explain the emergence of developmental phases. In the latter the conflicts of interest are examined by identifying the discursive manifestations of critical conflict in the MMR meeting data.

4.3 Expansive Learning

Expansive learning represents processes in which learners are involved in constructing and implementing a new, increasingly widespread, and complex object for their activity under transformation (Engeström 1987/2015). In expansive learning learners are learning something that is not yet there (Engeström 2016). The theory of expansive learning is epistemologically rooted in Marxist dialectic (Engeström & Sannino 2010). It places primacy on communities as learners, on the transformation of culture, and on the formation of theoretical concepts that form the orientation basis for everyday activities. Arising in part from these aspects of learning, the theory of expansive learning has been especially useful in cases where traditional learning theories seem not to explain the transformation and activity of workplaces (Engeström 2016).

The previous section presented the cycle of expansive learning and the contradictions relating to it. The expansion of the object of activity is the key indicator of expansive learning (Engeström 2016). Hasu (2000) has defined, based on Engeström (2000), four dimensions of the expansion of the object. I use this division to analyse the expansive learning potential of strategic partners in MMR's object construction (Chapter 7).

The first dimension of expansion is the social-spatial dimension. It is concerned with widening the circle of people and settings of an activity. The social-spatial dimension involves challenges such as 'Who should be included?', 'Who is learning?', and 'Where does learning happen?'. Second, the anticipatory-temporal dimension deals with the extension of the activity's perspective of the future and the past. It is condensed in the questions 'What is the timeframe of learning?' and 'What previous and forthcoming elements should be considered?'. The third dimension is the moral-

ideological dimension. It asks, ‘Who is responsible and who decides?’ The final dimension is the systemic-developmental dimension, which asks ‘How does this shape the future of the activity?’ (Hasu 2000).

The model of expansive learning offers an analytical tool to study learning in non-traditional learning contexts (Engeström 2016). In this study I apply it in exploring the development of collaboration between the strategic partners of a regional network consisting of an institute of vocational higher education (VHE) and a working-life organisation. The dimensions of expansion offer an analytical tool to explore networking and learning between strategic partners and a regional network in MMR’s object construction process. I use the dimensions of expansion as a mirror to see whether the object of the process expanded, and whether expansive learning occurred in the object construction between the strategic partners and the regional network.

4.4 CHAT and the Dilemma of School Learning

In higher education pedagogy the discussion on acquiring vocational capability and professional development through a cohering of theoretical and practical knowledge has been on the agenda for decades (Costley 2007; Dalrymple et al. 2014; Garnett 2016; Lester & Costley 2010; Tynjälä et al. 2003). As discussed in Chapter 1, new models of collaboration and learning are needed to promote both students’ working-life competences and innovation for society (Etzkowitz 2017; Jääskelä et al. 2018; Mandrup & Jensen 2017). In the context VHE the role of research, development and innovation (RDI) projects (Kantola & Kettunen 2012; Kohtamäki 2015; Ramstad 2008) as a learning environment and the promotion of students’ working-life competences (Jääskelä et al. 2018; Tynjälä et al. 2006) have been on the agenda. Various WBP models have developed to address these challenges (Kettunen 2011; Taatila & Rajj 2012).

The relationship between theory and practice is one of the most complex aspects of learning. Dewey (1916/2008) wrote about the fundamental problem of separating theory and practice. He claimed that people were separating them in their quest for absolute certainty. Dewey described the separation of theory and practice as the distinction between blind and understanding activity. He pointed out that guiding and information are the only ways of changing blind action to understandable action.

WBP models seek solutions to this gap between theory and practice, individual learning goals, and collective learning among partners from working life and

education (Dalrymple et al. 2014; Jääskelä et al. 2018; Tynjälä 2009). Next, I explore how this pedagogical-theoretical dilemma has been formulated with activity-theoretical concepts.

Stetsenko and Vienna (2009, 39) trace the roots of the dichotomy between theory and practice to ancient Greek philosophy, where theory and practice were two ‘separate realms, with no immediate connections between them, and no easy way to traverse the gap that divides them’. In activity-theoretical discussion understanding the gap between theory and practice has longstanding theoretical-historical roots (Edwards 2011; Engeström 1987/2015; Miettinen & Peisa 2002; Stetsenko & Vienna 2009; Stetsenko 2015; Vygotsky 1978). In Finland the discussion was initiated as critiques of ‘school learning’ (Engeström 1987/2015; Miettinen 1999).

Ordinary school-going can be far from a learning activity (Engeström 1987/2015). Students remain the subjects of separate learning actions, not a whole system of learning activity. The problem in school learning is that the object of a learning activity is reduced to a text and the separate actions of studying. The text should instead be an instrument, a cultural-historically created artefact that will be collectively shared in the learning activity of communities (Engeström 1987/2015).

The memorisation and reproduction of school texts has been characteristic of school learning, accompanied by an instrumental motivation for success which tends to eliminate substantive interest in the phenomena studied and the knowledge learned. The fundamental problem is that information thus learned is difficult to use or apply to life outside the school (Miettinen 1999).

Miettinen (1990) points out that a historical perspective on school learning may go beyond school learning itself. Learning should connect with students’ reality. Information should be used to explore and solve problems that are important from the perspective of a society and its students. This is the point of the Work-Based Learning (WBL) Triple Helix Model (Etzkowitz 2017) as well as the goal of recent pedagogical reforms in the Finnish education system (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017). This would mean new forms of activity in schools and new kinds of connection with the surrounding society.

Engeström et al. (1984) present a critique of the traditional didactic triangle, which consists of teacher, student, and subject matter (Engeström et al. 1984, 129). This traditional model neglects learning’s social aspects. Modelling school learning (figure 3) is an early attempt to analyse school learning from the perspective of activity theory. ‘Content’ refers to the previously discussed theoretical knowledge as the studies’ content. Engeström et al. (1984) use the term ‘objectified school knowledge (tools)’ and include in this to a great extent books, theoretical models,

and computer programs (Engeström et al. 1984, 140). I call this ‘content’, including the content of the course, following the objects of studies, and academic skills. In school learning, learning actions happen on the content-student axis. There is a risk that practice, which means in the context of WBP working-life actions, will be omitted. If the connection between content and practice is disturbed, the students will not necessarily understand the content’s meaning, since it is not anchored to their professional life at work. In WBL the risk is that learning actions happen on the student-practice axis, omitting content. This may result in the learning actions connected with the development of knowledge being disturbed (Miettinen 2009).

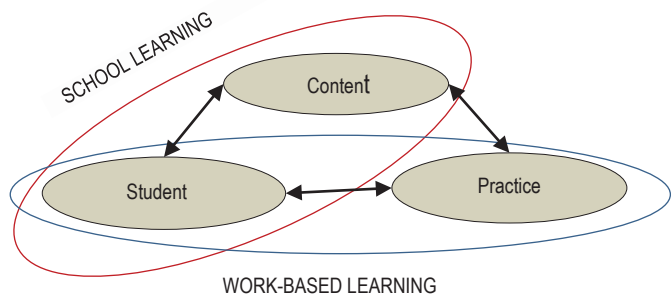


Figure 5. The dilemma of school learning and the potential dilemma of work-based learning (Adapted from Engeström et al. 1984)

Despite a timespan of decades and the progress that has been made, the dilemma between learning in school and in ‘real life’ still exists. Engeström (2016) has presented the hypothesised primary contradiction of the learning sciences in the two forms of activity systems: one with the object of learning in the classroom; the other with learning in human life. The former’s outcome is school improvement; the latter’s is transformative learning. This idea is in line with the goals of WBL, where the object of learning can be conceptualised as learning in human life, producing transformative learning. In this research the critique of school learning is used to analyse the functionality of the WBP model of Cultural Management Education (CME) in the context of the development of a new cultural event (Chapter 9).

5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the complex collaboration and learning that takes place when a new model of work-based pedagogy (WBP) is implemented in a regional network. It is a challenge to analyse and understand the learning needs and interests of both vocational higher education (VHE) and working life. The research approach is abductive, which means that knowledge formation proceeds through a creative combination of rich empirical observation and theoretical reasoning and sense making (Johnson & Christensen 2008; Paavola 2004). In their study of industrial networks Dubois and Gadde (2002) use an abductive analytical process, ‘systematic combining’, in which the theoretical framework, empirical framework, and case analysis evolve simultaneously. Matching and directing/redirecting play an essential role in the process (Dubois & Gadde 2002). Matching entails going back and forth between the theoretical framework, data, and analysis. Directing/redirecting are instead seen as an important factor in achieving matching. In this context Dubois and Gadde (2002) emphasise the impact of different sources of data and methods of data collection. Multiple sources allow the researcher to address a broader range of issues, and this strengthens the conviction of research.

By applying the abductive approach, understood as the combination of and interaction between the empirical case and the methodological-theoretical framework, three research tasks are set. In this approach the production of the Mikkeli Meets Russia (MMR) cultural event is conceptualised as the test bench for the WBP model and network learning pursued by the regional University of Applied Sciences (UAS) in VHE. The first task is to analyse the development of the strategic partnership between the VHE institution and the working-life organisation, the City Theatre, which resulted in this initiative for an ambitious cultural event. The second task is to analyse the commitment of the larger regional network to the planning and implementation of the cultural event. The third research task is to analyse the WBP model’s functionality and the students’, teachers’, and working-life partners’ learning in the implementation of the WBP model through their learning experiences.

Research question 1: How did the strategic partnership between the regional institution of VHE (the University of Applied Sciences) and the cultural institution (the City Theatre) develop through the initiative of the cultural event?

The first research question investigates collaboration between the VHE institution and the working-life organisation as a strategic partnership development. Alongside the growing importance of WBP models the number of studies of strategic partnerships between education and working-life organisations has increased (Eddy et al. 2014; Elmuti et al. 2005; Ortega 2013; Salimova et al. 2014). This research contributes to the discussion of strategic partnership between education and working life, increasing our understanding of the relationship between the strategic partnership and WBP. The empirical questions set for each developmental phase are formulated as follows:

1. What is the critical event of the phase?
2. What is the object of collaboration?
3. What is the developmental contradiction?

Research question 2: How did the participants' commitment to the planning and implementation of the cultural event emerge in the larger regional network?

The analysis of commitment within the regional network is expanded by focusing on the intensity of participation (Rondinelli & London 2003), the concerns of collaboration (Sullivan 2010), and conflicts of interest (Engeström & Sannino 2011). Participants' commitment to the collaborative processes of VHE is a prerequisite for the realisation of equality of learning and *vice versa*. The empirical questions are:

1. At what level of intensity did the members participate in the networking meetings planning the MMR event?
2. What concerns of collaboration emerging in the networking meetings were manifested in the participants' commitment?
3. What were the conflicts of interest and how were they resolved?

Research question 3: How did the cultural event test and challenge the WBP model of VHE and enhance the participants' expansive learning?

I use this research question to scrutinise the functionality of the WBP model in the context of the cultural event. I analyse the model's potential to overcome the gap between theory and practice (Stenström & Tynjälä 2009; Stetsenko 2008), seen from the perspective of both teachers and students. I also scrutinise the model from the perspective of all the participants' learning, both in the VHE institution and some key work organisations. This approach remains largely absent in studies of the WBP model. The empirical questions for the analysis of the third research question are:

1. What are the challenges faced and development ideas created in the implementation of the pedagogical model of work-based learning?
2. In the light of students', teachers', and working-life partners' reflection what is the expansive learning potential of the pedagogical model implemented?

6 DATA AND METHODS

This study's methodological framework is cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT; Chapter 4). CHAT sees human activity as object-oriented, historically developing, and socio-materially mediated (Engeström 1987/2015; Leont'ev 1978). Activity theory provides both theoretical and methodological tools to scrutinise the development of partnership, commitment, and learning as they appear in the empirical world of collaboration between the education organisation and working life. In this chapter I present the data collection and the methods of analysis used to undertake the three research tasks (Chapter 5).

6.1 Data

Diverse sets of data were collected to gain empirical richness in the research tasks (Dubois & Gadde 2002). In the following I will report on my own actions as the collector of data. As the senior lecturer of the MUAS/CMA and a responsible project researcher I participated in the meetings, collected the project documents, and carried out the interviews that form the main data of this research. The CHAT approach was involved in the MMR project in many ways: it was the starting point for the design of the work-based pedagogical model (see Chapter 3), it directed data collection in order to pursue multi-perspective, object-oriented research material; finally, the CHAT methodology was applied consistently throughout the analysis of data and the interpretation of findings. In this project the CHAT approach was not used as a method of developmental interventions, which means that I compiled the data by acting as a participating action researcher rather than an active learning interventionist (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). I will evaluate my researcher position and research ethics in details at the end of Chapter 11.

Memos of the meetings dealing with the strategic partnership and work-based pedagogy.

Parts of the meeting memos came from intra-organisational and intra-departmental meetings of the Cultural Management Education (CME) degree programme. They were concerned with the different forms of collaboration with working life as a learning and development environment for work-based pedagogy (WBP). These meeting memos date to 2004 and 2008, giving us an insight into the first steps of strategic partnership and the WBP model.

Another set of meeting memos came from bilateral meetings between the University of Applied Sciences (UAS) and the City Theatre at which the partners planned their collaboration. These meeting memos date to 2008, prior to the signing of the strategic partnership agreement on 9th September. The meeting memos date to the period between 21st and 24th April 2008, providing information about the partners' expectations of and plans for collaboration. The meeting memo of 9th September 2008 concerned the signing of the strategic partnership agreement; that of 19th December 2008 documented the decision to commence planning the Mikkeli Meets Russia (MMR) event in the wider regional network. There were six meeting memos and approximately sixteen pages of data in total. Various representatives of the CME programme wrote the meeting memos.

Audio-recordings of regional meetings dealing with the MMR cultural event.

Planning meetings were bilateral meetings between the CME programme and the City Theatre in the spring of 2009. The content of planning meetings related to the planning of MMR. The researcher or the event manager audio-recorded meetings, which were then transcribed by a professional transcriber. The total duration of the audio-recorded meetings was five hours forty-six minutes. The length of meetings varied from forty-four minutes to two hours. The total amount of transcribed text was 295 pages, of which eighty-five were concerned with planning meetings, 115 with networking meetings, fifty-five with event management meetings, and forty with evaluation meetings.

Networking meetings included regional organisations' large group meetings. The main theme in these meetings concerned decisions on investments of time and money. The total duration of the four networking meetings was eight hours twenty-three minutes. There were four meetings and meetings' duration ranged from one hour fifty-two minutes to two hours nineteen minutes.

Event management meetings were held between the partners of the UAS and the City Theatre. They provided details about the event's production process. The four event management meetings were held in 2009 and their total duration was two hours seventeen minutes. Each meeting lasted between thirty-eight and fifty minutes. For analytical purposes I produced summaries of the meetings.

Interviews

Audio-recorded interviews were conducted with representatives of two working-life organisations, six students, two teachers, and representatives of the strategic partner organisations. A one-on-one interview was used with the working-life partners. The working-life partners' interviews were conducted individually with two partners whose interest in the MMR event was initially quite strong. In the interview working-life partners reflected on the planning and conducting of MMR, their role, their expectations of and commitment to it, and their collaboration with the UAS. The interviews' total duration was one hour twenty-three minutes. One lasted forty minutes; the other forty-three minutes. In total eighteen pages were transcribed.

Pair interviews were used in this study with the two teachers whose course and developmental assignments were connected with MMR. The pair interview has the potential to provide even deeper and wider perspectives on the subject than the one-on-one interview, because interviewees hear and complement each other's perspectives (Creswell 1998). The content of the interview concerned the combinations of contact lessons, guiding clinics, and developmental assignments in the case of the MMR cultural event and their learning experiences. The duration of the teachers' interview was forty-four minutes; thirteen pages were transcribed.

Group interviews were conducted with the representatives of the CME programme, the City Theatre, and the students. Three representatives from the CME programme, one from the City Theatre, and one student attended the former. Five students participated in the latter. The group interviews dealt with planning and producing the MMR cultural event, collaboration with other participants, and the students' learning. Students were interviewed in two groups, representing the two course assignments related to the cultural event. The duration of the group interview with the CME programme and the City Theatre was one hour twenty-one minutes. There were eighteen pages of transcribed data. The total duration of the group interviews with the students was one hour twenty-four minutes. The duration of the interview with the marketing plan group was forty-nine minutes; the interview with the briefing plan group lasted thirty-five minutes. Twenty-four pages were transcribed.

Interviews were semi-structured or open and *ad hoc*. Audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim (Creswell 1998).

6.2 Analysing the Development of the Strategic Partnership

The data for the analysis of the first research question, *How did the strategic partnership between the regional institution of the VHE (the University of Applied Sciences) and the cultural institution (the City Theatre) develop through the initiative of the cultural event?* were the memos of the meetings prior to the strategic partnership agreement, and the audio-recordings of the bilateral meetings during the cultural event. The empirical questions to analyse the phases of partnership were:

1. What is the critical event of the phase?
2. What is the object of collaboration?
3. What is the developmental contradiction?

The analysis process

In the first round of analysis I read through the meeting memos and reviewed the audio-recorded meetings with their transcriptions. My overall aim in the first round of analysis was to make sense of the data as a whole (Elo & Kyngäs 2008). In the second round of analysis I re-read the meeting memos and transcriptions, searching for the critical events of the strategic partnership. I analysed the episodes described by the meeting memos that revealed change in the approach towards the strategic partnership and/or the MMR cultural event. I used the Atlas.ti program for the audio-recorded data and coded (Hsieh & Shannon 2005) the expressions ‘strategic partnership’, ‘MMR’, and ‘contradictions’ based on linguistic cues (see sections below).

The outcome of the analysis of answers to Research Question 1 was the four development phases of the strategic partnership. For each of these phases I analysed the critical event, defining the phase, the main object of collaboration, and the developmental contradictions that explained the dynamics in moving from one phase to the next.

Critical event/phase

The development phases of the strategic partnership were identified and defined based on the critical events of each phase. Here I apply the method developed by Toiviainen (2003) in a study of a small company network's learning. Critical events are events that change the course of an activity related to a strategic partnership. Events are object-oriented: they are identified by following the changing object of activity and collaboration (Foot 2002; Toiviainen 2003). I therefore follow the changing object of collaboration to identify and analytically distinguish one phase from another. I analyse the development of the strategic partnership from its inception until the end of the MMR cultural event.

To trace the critical events and construct the storyline, I use my researcher-participant experience and observation, in addition to the main data described above. I discuss and evaluate my researcher position at the end of the dissertation.

The object of activity and the dimensions of expansion

Activity-theoretical studies of object formation show that object construction proceeds through a dialogue and negotiation between participants of the process, who have more or less articulated aims and goals (Edwards 2011, 2012; Foot 2002; Miettinen 2005). I used the linguistic cues 'strategic partnership' and 'MMR' to define the object of collaboration. In other words, I analysed what the partners discussed and how they saw the strategic partnership and the MMR cultural event. I developed the linguistic cues for the object by relating data-driven observations to the activity-theoretical framework: expressions of interest; expectations; actions; and outcomes related to the MMR cultural event.

Previous activity-theoretical research has distinguished dimensions of expansion (Engeström 2000, Kerosuo & Toiviainen 2011). Hasu (2000) has studied the implementation of a new artefact as an expansive possibility. Following CHAT, she sees implementation of a new artefact in the context of object-oriented, collective, and continuously transforming artefact-mediated activity systems. Hasu (2000) suggests that several communities and practitioner groups accomplish the expansion of the object. Typically, implementation involves steps in a temporally distributed chain of interconnected events (Hasu 2000). She identifies four dimensions of potential expansion: the socio-spatial; the anticipatory-temporal; the moral-ideological; and the systemic-developmental (see also Engeström 2000). The dimensions of potential expansion are described with the questions they can reveal.

First, the socio-spatial expansion concerns ‘who should be included?’, the kinds of participant needed for object construction. Second, the anticipatory-temporal can be identified through the question ‘what previous and forthcoming steps should be considered?’ Third, the moral-ideological question is ‘who is responsible and who decides?’. Fourth, the systemic-developmental concerns ‘how does this shape the future of the activity?’ I use the dimensions of expansion to analyse and assess the expansiveness of learning in the development of the strategic partnership.

The manifestations of developmental contradictions

In the theory of expansive learning finding the solutions for developmental contradictions is a key to the progress of learning (Chapter 4.2). Contradiction is a theoretical construction; it cannot be observed directly (Engeström 2016). The linguistic cues for the contradictions are based on the framework of the discursive manifestations of contradictions (Engeström & Sannino 2011): conflicts; dilemmas; double binds; and critical conflicts. I apply this method by tracing the linguistic cues of these words and expressions: ‘no’ (conflicts), ‘but’ (dilemmas); rhetorical questions (double binds); and the narrative structure and vivid metaphors of inner doubts and contradictory motives unresolvable by the subject alone (critical conflict). It is important to note that the use of these cues is culturally embedded, requiring the researcher’s interpretation. For example, the words ‘no’ and ‘but’ can refer to neutral or positive contexts. The structure of analysis of the development of the strategic partnership is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The structure of analysis of the development of the strategic partnership

Analytical questions	Data	Method
What is the critical event of the phase?	Meeting memos of MUAS/CME 2008. Audio-recorded and transcribed bilateral meetings (MUAS/CME and the City Theatre) in 2009-2010. Group interview with MUAS/CME and the City Theatre.	Analysing critical events as turning points towards WBP and/or MMR.
What is the object of collaboration?	Audio-recorded and transcribed bilateral meetings (MUAS/Theatre), in 2009-2010. Group interview with MUAS/CME and the City Theatre.	Discussion of MMR (interests, expectations, actions, and outcome). Discussion of strategic partnership.
What is the developmental contradiction?	Audio-recorded and transcribed bilateral meetings (MUAS/Theatre), in 2009-2010. Group interview with MUAS/CME and the City Theatre.	Analysing linguistic cues; 'but', 'no', rhetorical questions, narrative/metaphor.

6.3 Analysing Commitment in the Regional Network

The data for the analysis of the second research question, *How did the participants' commitment to the planning and implementation of the cultural event emerge in the larger regional network?* were the audio-recorded and transcribed networking meetings and interviews with working-life partners. The empirical questions were:

1. At what level of intensity did the members participate in the networking meetings planning the MMR event?
2. What concerns of collaboration emerging in the networking meetings were manifested in the participants' commitment?
3. What were the conflicts of interest among the regional actors and how were they resolved?

In formulating the empirical questions of this research question (RQ2) I use the term 'regional actor'. Otherwise, I avoid the term to guard against confusion with the

actor-network theory (Latour 1999) and prefer the terms ‘participants’, ‘members’, and ‘stakeholders’. Research questions, data, and methods are presented in Table 5.

The analysis process

The conceptual dimensions for studying commitment were discussed in Chapter 2.2. I showed that the commitment of the regional network can be scrutinised from multiple perspectives. The rich longitudinal data collected during the MMR project made this type of analysis possible. The first step was to establish which organisations participated in each meeting and how many turns they used. This provided me with information about the frequency of organisations’ participation in the event’s planning process. Activity in the meetings and participation in the process indicated the intensity of participation (Rondinelli & London 2003). Although we cannot directly claim that the more a person participates in meetings the more committed s/he is, this figure still tells us something about their commitment to the process. If a person has attended all the meetings as the representative of her/his organisation, their investment of time can probably be interpreted as an indication of interest. As commitment is always commitment to something, I analysed the concerns of collaboration (Sullivan 2010). I explored the topics and made transcripts of each meeting. This analysis revealed how these meetings proceeded and their main topics. Following content analysis (e.g. Graneheim, Lindgren & Lundman 2017), I formed six groups: 1) interest (why they were participating in the process); 2) ideating the content of MMR (creating the content or concept of MMR); 3) practical issues (organising MMR); 4) investment (the resources on which MMR would be conducted); 5) responsibilities (division of labour); and 6) threats (possible fears for MMR). Of these six collaboration concerns interest and investment are the clearest indicators of commitment (Andrésen et al. 2012) and were chosen for closer study.

Interest has been defined as the condition of being an independent, self-determined agency able to act independently, and it is often studied in the behaviours of individual persons (Mathiowetz 2008). Interest is also seen as a causal driver behind the use of discourse (Whittle & Mueller 2010). In this analysis interests are expressions in which the participants discuss what they want from the MMR event from the planning process to its conducting and how they see its future. The analysis of interest is also used here to discover participants’ perspective of MMR as the object of their activity. Typical expressions of interest were: ‘we are expecting from this project...’; ‘we should do...’; and ‘I see this event as...’. Otherwise, interests were recognised based on their content. Investment, on the other hand, was

represented by statements relating to what participants were prepared to invest in the event. I counted both money and work resources as investments.

Finally, I examined what conflicts of interest occurred during the project and how they were resolved. I used here the linguistic manifestations of critical conflicts (Engeström & Sannino 2011). I presented the method of Engeström and Sannino (2011) for analysing contradictions through linguistic cues in the previous section. I also applied this method to the research question concerning conflicts of interest.

Besides analysing networking meetings I used interviews with two working-life partners to provide a complementary perspective on their commitment. The perspectives of these two partners were interesting regarding commitment because during MMR’s planning phase their role was expected to be strong by other network participants. The result of this analysis allows me to present the levels of commitment.

Table 5. Sub-questions, data, and methods used to analyse commitment

Sub-questions	Data	Method
1. At what level of intensity did the members participate in the networking meetings planning the MMR event?	Audio-recorded and transcribed networking meetings	Analysing the frequency of participation and number of used turns
2. What concerns of collaboration emerging in the networking meetings were manifested in the participants' commitment?	Audio-recorded and transcribed networking meetings Audio-recorded and transcribed interviews with two working-life partners	Analysing all concerns of collaboration discussed. Choosing interest and investment as concerns of collaboration for closer analysis Analysing participants' expectations and potential investment in MMR
3. What were the conflicts of interest and how were they resolved?	Audio-recorded and transcribed networking meetings Audio-recorded and transcribed interviews with two working-life partners	Analysing critical conflicts by linguistic cues Analysing the solutions for critical conflicts

6.4 Analysing the WBP Model of the CME Degree Programme

The third research question, *How did the cultural event test and challenge the WBP model of VHE and enhance the participants' expansive learning?* examines the evolving challenges, development ideas, and learning potential in WBP. The data of this analysis include two students' group interviews, one teacher's pair interview, and two one-on-one working-life partners' interviews. The sub-questions are:

1. What are the challenges faced and development ideas created in the implementation of the pedagogical model of work-based learning?
2. In the light of students', teachers', and working-life partners' reflection, what is the expansive learning potential of the WBP model?

The analysis process

The three perspectives were explored based on the interviews of a small group of participants. Because of the size of the sample, individually analysed perspectives would not have been representative of the larger groups of the project. Instead, the researcher analysed the perspectives as one unit of data aiming to create a dialogue between the key learner groups, the students, the teachers, and the working-life representatives. Even this would have remained too a narrow approach to expansive learning and the implementation of WBP model, if not contextualised in the preceding analysis of partnership and commitment.

First, by using the coding system of the Atlas.ti program, I analysed statements about the challenges and development ideas regarding the WBP model. Concerning the challenges, the typical statements were *'It was a bit challenging...'* or *'For me it was difficult to...'* Development ideas were instead expressed typically as *'Next time...'* or *'In the future...'* I then examined the topics to which the challenges and development ideas were related, and which topics were shared with different interviewee groups (see Chapter 9).

Second, I analysed statements about learning experiences, which revealed the object of learning (Leont'ev 1978; Engeström 1987/2015; Miettinen 2005). Typically, the analysed answers included expressions such as *'I learned that...'* The analysis proceeded by categorising the topics to which the statements related. Analytical questions, data, and methods used are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Sub-questions, data, and methods used to analyse the functionality of the WBP model

Sub-questions	Data	Method
1. What are the challenges and development ideas created in the implementation of the pedagogical model of work-based learning?	1) Audio-recorded and transcribed group interviews with the students 2) Audio-recorded and transcribed pair interview with the teachers. 3) Audio-recorded and transcribed interviews with two working-life partners.	Coding statements about challenges and development ideas. Analysing the topics of challenges and development ideas referred to.
2. In the light of students', teachers', and working-life partners' reflection, what is the expansive learning potential of the work-based pedagogical model?	1) Audio-recorded and transcribed group interviews with the students. 2) Audio-recorded and transcribed pair interview with the teachers. 3) Audio-recorded and transcribed interviews with two working-life partners.	Analysing object of learning: what the interviewees say they had learned. Categorising the topics to which statements referred.

Table 7 summarises the research questions, data, key theoretical concepts, and titles of Chapters 7-9, in which the findings of the analysis of each research question are presented.

Table 7. Summary of the research

Research questions	Data	Key theoretical concepts	Chapter
1) How did the strategic partnership between the regional institution of the VHE (the University of Applied Sciences) and the cultural institution (the City Theatre) develop through the initiative of the cultural event?	Meeting memos of MUAS/CME 2008. Audio-recorded and transcribed bilateral meetings (MUAS/CME and the City Theatre) in 2009-2010 Group interview with MUAS/CME and the City Theatre	Critical events Dimensions of expansion Developmental contradictions Object construction	Chapter 7: The development of strategic partnership between the VHE and the cultural institution
2) How did the participants' commitment to the planning and implementation of the cultural event emerge in the larger regional network?	Audio-recorded and transcribed networking meetings Audio-recorded and transcribed interviews with two working-life partners	Intensity of participation Concerns of collaboration and commitment Conflicts of interest	Chapter 8: The commitment of the regional network in developing a process for a new cultural event
3) How did the cultural event test and challenge the work-based pedagogical model of VHE and enhance the participants' learning?	Audio-recorded and transcribed group interviews with the students Audio-recorded and transcribed pair interview with the teachers Audio-recorded and transcribed interviews with two working-life partners	Relationship between theory and practice Work-based pedagogy Critique of school learning Object of learning	Chapter 9: The regional cultural event as a platform for learning

7 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN VOCATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE CULTURAL INSTITUTION

7.1 Introduction

Collaboration and regional development with a focus on working life are one of the main tasks of the Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) in Finland and in most European Union countries, but achieving this goal is challenging. The degree programme in Cultural Management Education (CME) at the Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences (MUAS) has developed a work-based pedagogical (WBP) model based on extensive studies of collaboration with working life (see Chapter 3). This model places pressure on the CME programme to re-examine its working-life partners. The strategic partnership has evolved during this re-examination, and a long-term partner, the City Theatre, has been chosen as the strategic partner of the CME programme.

This chapter analyses the development of collaboration, especially the emergence of the strategic partnership, between vocational higher education (VHE) and working life. In this study ‘working-life organisations’ refers to enterprises, associations, and development organisations in the Mikkeli region, whereas ‘educational organisation’ refers to MUAS.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the strategic partnership as a mutual, usually signed, and longitudinal agreement is mainly used to support collaboration between business organisations. This study explores the much less addressed strategic partnership between education and work. The research question to which this chapter seeks answers is, *How did the strategic partnership between the regional institution of VHE (the University of Applied Sciences) and the cultural institution (the City Theatre) develop through the initiative of the cultural event?* The question contains three sub-questions:

1. What is the critical event of the phase?
2. What is the object of collaboration?
3. What is the developmental contradiction?

As a result of the analysis I found four developmental phases of strategic partnership. The four phases were: (1) *the need for collaboration*; (2) *the establishment of the strategic partnership*; (3) *constructing MMR by networking with local organisations*; and (4) *the consolidation of the strategic partnership*. I proceed with a presentation of the results of the analysis of these four phases by introducing the critical events behind the phases, the object of collaboration, and the developmental contradictions of each phase.

7.2 Phase 1 (2006-2008): The Need for Collaboration

Critical event of the phase

The Ministry of Education's document Education and research 2007-2012: Development Plan outlined the future goals for education. One goal was to effect strong collaboration between working-life organisations and the UASs. The statement was the significant driving force behind the first analysed phase. The Ministry of Education declared (translated by researcher):

Adding the connections between the Universities of Applied Sciences and working life and connecting work-related research and development work more strongly as part of teaching will develop the quality of teaching of the Universities of Applied Sciences. Studies of Universities of Applied Sciences emphasise the development of working life. A systematic deepening of the relationship between the student and working life during study is a focus for the development of teaching in the Universities of Applied Sciences (Education and research 2007-2012: Development Plan, 38).

These insights of the Ministry of Education initiated pedagogical development work towards WBP in the MUAS/CME degree programme between 2006 and 2008. There was thus a model for WBP and a concept of various collaborative relationships. The strategic partnership was seen as the most advanced form of collaboration. The City Theatre was seeking at the same time new ways to survive in Finland's tighter economic situation. MUAS and the City Theatre had collaborated for several years, mainly in practical training and thesis work. The development work by MUAS and the City Theatre culminated in a meeting on 21st January 2008. At this meeting participants from MUAS (the degree programmes of Cultural Management Education and Information Technology) and the City Theatre evaluated both organisations' future challenges and their potential shared resources. Based on this evaluation the participants identified possible goals for collaboration.

The background was the demands set by the economic situation and the Ministry of Education. This meeting was the critical event for the first analysed phase.

The object of collaboration

The phase's object of collaboration was a co-constructed idea of a long-term partnership, later called a strategic partnership. The concrete elements of the partnership included practical training placements for the students, research cases for theses, and the possibility for the City Theatre to use MUAS's media laboratory. The partners also wished to initiate a shared, externally funded research, development and innovation (RDI) project (memo of the meeting of the CME team and the City Theatre, 21.1.2008). At this meeting the participants agreed that both the MUAS/CME degree programme and the City Theatre should discuss their hopes of and needs for collaboration within their own organisations before their next meeting, which took place on 10th March 2008.

Although MUAS/CME saw education needs (learning environments and pedagogical collaboration) as a prerequisite of a strategic partnership, they did not view them as a sufficient goal in themselves. Learning environments, practical training, and thesis writing were already working well; there was not 'enough need to change', as the meeting memo recorded. Instead, various 'experiments' connected with the study modules were seen as a vehicle for deeper collaboration (memo of the CME meeting, 4.2.2008). In other words, MUAS's students were already using the City Theatre as a learning environment for their practical training and thesis work; what they needed for collaboration was new and innovative openings which sought to utilise both organisations.

Developmental contradiction

Based on the earlier discussions with the City Theatre the representatives of MUAS/CME named as shared interests for collaboration (translated by researcher):

- a willingness to develop something new and visible with the fewer resources available; and
- a need to find new partnerships, concepts, clients, and funding. Both institutions consistently defined what they were and why they existed (memo of the meeting of the CME team, 4.2.2008).

This need to develop something new (use-value) against the simultaneous reality of fewer resources can be interpreted as the developmental contradiction of this first phase. The economic situation placed pressure on both organisations to find new ways to survive. A strategic partnership was seen as one way to tackle these challenges. In this first phase of the development of the strategic partnership the object of collaboration was to seek new ways to resolve the economic challenges both organisations faced. Another solution, which was also the object of collaboration of the first phase, was to commence planning an RDI project to obtain funding for this developing work. These were the first efforts in what was to become MMR. The significant attempt to resolve the contradiction of the first phase was the strategic partnership. Table 8 summarises the critical event, the object of collaboration, and the developmental contradiction of the first phase of development of the strategic partnership.

Table 8. Phase 1: Need for collaboration. Critical event of the phase, the object of collaboration, and the developmental contradiction.

Phase	Critical event of the phase	The object of collaboration	Developmental contradiction
1) Need for collaboration	Strategic meeting of MUAS and the City Theatre, 21.1.2008	Sealing the collaboration for long-term partnership and RDI project	New products (use-value) against the simultaneous reality of fewer available resources

7.3 Phase 2 (2008): Establishment of the Strategic Partnership

Critical event of the phase

On 9th April 2008 the representatives of MUAS/CME and the City Theatre concretised their ideas for collaboration. The key persons involved in this work were the Theatre Manager, the Senior Lecturer of the CME programme, and the Senior Lecturer in Media Production at MUAS. They suggested a four-part collaboration. The content of collaboration was defined as (translated by researcher):

- a) a partnership agreement;
- b) a project plan;

- c) collaboration with St Petersburg's Academy X;
- d) increasing the City Theatre's visibility in the area.

A refresher course for the City Theatre's staff was also jointly planned (memo of the meeting of the CME team and the City Theatre, 9.4.08).

Based on these discussions the first draft of the strategic partnership agreement was presented by the Senior Lecturer of the MUAS/CME degree programme to the Head of Department and the City Theatre Manager. MUAS/CME constructed the initiative for the strategic partnership, tying the idea tightly to pedagogical renewal. The draft agreement was made for one to three years and defined the benefits, the participants' roles in the collaboration, and the long-term responsibilities and risks for both participants. The agreement defined the specific content of collaboration for each year. The decision to agree the strategic partnership by MUAS/CME and the City Theatre was interpreted as a critical event for the second phase, the establishment of the strategic partnership.

The object of collaboration

The basis of the strategic partnership was to concentrate on developing the chosen themes and establishing both quantitative and qualitative goals for the partnership. Shared publicity was also discussed at the strategic partnership meetings (meeting memo of INTO-pedagogy, 9.5.2008).

On 9th September 2008 the Department of Culture, Social and Youth Work at MUAS and the City Theatre signed the strategic partnership agreement. It gave MUAS/CME the right to use the City Theatre as a learning environment; it specified the number and content of education actions for three years; and guided responsibilities and learning goals. It also covered financial matters and insurance (strategic partnership agreement between MUAS/CME and the City Theatre, 9.9.2008).

The press release announced that the agreement created functional, juridical, and pedagogical frameworks for collaboration between MUAS and the City Theatre. Besides these, practical training, and study projects collaboration involved an exchange of expertise and, above all, concrete collaboration. The strategic partnership was also seen as a support for the development of cultural life in South Savo through its provision of cultural content and education. In the coming years the focus of the strategic partnership was defined as a shared collaboration with a

network of Russian partners (press release to local newspapers by MUAS and the City Theatre about the strategic partnership, 9.9.08).

The strategic partnership agreement and its content are seen as the object of collaboration for the second phase of development of the strategic partnership.

Developmental contradictions

The first major shared project, Mikkeli Meets Russia (MMR), was the first manifestation of the strategic partnership agreement. Its first mention was at the signing of the strategic partnership agreement (9.9.08), but the first effort to implement it appeared in the first phase of development of collaboration. The developmental contradiction of the first phase was to find new products with fewer resources. The strategic partnership and MMR as its embodiment were an attempt to resolve this contradiction. In the second phase, the establishment of the strategic partnership, the strategic partners quickly realised that their resources were insufficient to produce MMR. Although the strategic partnership was a significant opening to a more efficient use of both knowledge and finance-based resources, it was not enough to resolve the primary contradiction of the desire to create new products with fewer resources. More partners were needed for development work. This contradiction of socio-spatial expansion emerged between the object and its possible expansion and the community, and was a developmental contradiction of the second phase. The community of strategic partners was insufficient for the implementation of MMR.

In sum, the critical event of the second phase, the establishment of the strategic partnership, was the decision to make a strategic partnership agreement. The partnership agreement and ideas concerning MMR were seen as objects of collaboration. The emerging developmental contradiction evolved between the object and community. The community of strategic partners was too small for the expansion of the object (MMR) (Table 9).

Table 9. Phase 2: Establishment of strategic partnership. Critical event of the phase, the object, and the developmental contradictions

Phase	Critical event behind the phase	The object of collaboration	Developmental contradiction
1) Need for collaboration	Strategic meeting of MUAS and the City Theatre on 21.1.2008	Sealing collaboration for long-term partnership and RDI project	New products (use-value) against simultaneous reality of fewer resources
2) Establishment of strategic partnership	Decision to make strategic partnership agreement	Strategic partnership agreement and the first ideas about MMR	Between object and community. The community was too small for the object (contradiction of socio-spatial expansion)

7.4 Phase 3 (2009): Constructing Mikkeli Meets Russia by Networking with Local Organisations

Critical event of the phase

From this point the strategic partnership between MUAS and the City Theatre is followed and analysed through the MMR object, which was the first significant implementation of the strategic partnership and attempt to concretise the partnership.

MUAS/CME's connections with St Petersburg played an important role at the beginning of the planning process of the MMR event. In the autumn of 2008 the MUAS/CME staff and City Theatre visited St Petersburg. The trip was important, both for MMR and as the inception of an RDI project related to event management (named later 'Promoottori'). This trip was the third critical event leading to the constructing phase of MMR and the search for local collaboration partners (Table 6.3).

The contradiction of the previous phase was that the community (strategic partners) was too small for the object (MMR). This third phase was an attempt to resolve this contradiction by establishing a network to produce and expand the MMR object. Based on discussions during the St Petersburg trip the management of the City Theatre invited representatives of MUAS/CME (Head of Department, Senior CME Lecturers) for a Christmas get-together in December 2008. At this semi-formal meeting representatives of the City Theatre asked if MUAS/CME was seriously interested in starting planning for the new event (MMR). MUAS/CME was ready

for the process. The preliminary idea was that the City Theatre should be the organiser and provide the venue. It was planned that MUAS/CME would be involved through the work of the students and teachers. The participants decided that a larger planning group should meet again in January 2009 (memo of the meeting at the City Theatre, 19.12.2008).

At the first networking meeting in January 2009 the representatives of the City Theatre, accompanied by MUAS/CME, introduced the preliminary concept for the new event to gauge the interest of potential participants. This initiated a process of five networking meetings and several event production meetings. The outcomes of the process was the first MMR event over the New Year of 2010 and the RDI Promoottori project. The aim of the Promoottori project was to develop the field of CME in the South Savo region. MMR (in 2011 Mikkeli New Year Events) was to be developed as a pilot for the project.

The object of collaboration

The content and concept of the MMR event was presented by representatives of the City Theatre and MUAS/CME to the regional network at the first networking meeting. The earliest ideas for the event sought to concretise a shared vision. Another important theme in the networking meetings was organisations' expectations of MMR. MMR was constructed as the object of collaboration under the pressure of various expectations. The visions of MUAS/CME and the City Theatre of the event were very similar, but they also had their own expectations. MUAS/CME's expectations related to RDI and developing the field of CME in the wider South Savo region. Added value would come through the enrichment of teaching and regional development. The City Theatre's expectations related to their need to generate activity in what was usually a quiet season. The City Theatre's interest was in the concept itself. The concept of hybrid theatres sees theatres developing other products connected with their main service, for example, restaurant services and business packages (Jansson 2015). The content and concept of MMR in the area of multifold expectations are interpreted as the object of the third phase, constructing MMR by networking with local organisations.

Developmental contradictions

The evolving contradiction of this third phase was between old and new activities (tertiary contradiction). The analysis of developmental contradictions focused on the expressions 'but' (dilemma) and 'no' (conflict) as manifestations of contradictions

(Engeström & Sannino 2011). Most of the conflicts and dilemmas occurred during the second bilateral meeting, which took place during the third phase. This meeting was attended by the largest number of participants (five), and they focused on planning the RDI project around MMR. The participants actively discussed potential funders and their backing for funding applications. They also worked on a clearer concept for the project and discussed potential partners. It is noteworthy that at this meeting there was a relatively strong focus on what might impede funding.

Most dilemmas related to 1) planning the RDI project, 2) the practical issues of both MMR and the RDI project, and 3) local players. Conflicts largely occurred in discussions concerning local players. These discussions concerned potential partners and what their role and interest should be. Some statements related to the commitment and investment of local players in MMR. Strategic partners expressed some doubts and concerns relating to both. Table 10 presents a summary of the phases, their object, and developmental contradictions.

Table 10. Phase 3: Constructing Mikkeli Meets Russia (MMR) through networking with local organisations. Critical event of the phase, the object of collaboration, and the developmental contradictions.

Phase	Critical event of the phase	The object of collaboration	Developmental contradictions
1) Need for collaboration	Strategic meeting of MUAS and the City Theatre on 21.1.2008	Sealing collaboration for long-term partnership and RDI project	New products (use-value) against simultaneous reality of fewer resources
2) Establishment of strategic partnership	Decision to draft a strategic partnership contract	Partnership agreement and ideas for MMR	Between object and community. The community was too small for the object (contradiction of socio-spatial expansion)
3) Constructing Mikkeli Meets Russia (MMR) by networking with local organisations	Trip to St Petersburg and bringing a network together	Content and concept of MMR in the context of multifold expectations	Between the old and new course of action and between strategic partners and network

In sum, the trip to St Petersburg was seen as the critical event of the third phase, constructing Mikkeli Meets Russia (MMR) by networking with local organisations. The object of collaboration formed the content and concept of MMR, which was constructed in the context of multifold expectations. Developmental contradictions evolved between old and new courses of action and between strategic partners and the network.

7.5 Phase 4 (2010): Consolidation of the Strategic Partnership

Critical event of the phase

The bilateral (strategic partners) evaluation meeting in January 2010 evaluated the entire process of the MMR event and the strategic partnership. The meeting was conducted as a group interview for the present study. Initially, the strategic partnership agreement was made for a year. Both partners were satisfied with their collaboration and wished to develop it further. They admitted that there had been some initial uncertainty in seeking ways and roles of collaboration, but they still felt it was worth continuing with the strategic partnership. This evaluation meeting was the critical event leading to the fourth phase, consolidation of the strategic partnership.

We have followed the strategic partnership between MUAS and the City Theatre and the trajectory of the MMR event. In this section the focus remains on the strategic partnership to determine if consolidation and expansion of the object took place (Engeström 1987/2015). MMR played an essential role in the consolidation of the strategic partnership. I therefore now move from a consideration of the planning of the event to an evaluation of its results.

The analysis revealed that the strategic partnership was discussed at the final two bilateral meetings. The themes concerning the strategic partnership related to 1) expanding the partnership to encompass MUAS in its entirety, 2) a self-evaluation of both MMR and the partnership, and 3) mutual benefits.

Since 2010, in accordance with the MUAS administration's policy, strategic partnerships have needed to encompass MUAS in its entirety instead of one department. This was also in the interests of the City Theatre; they wished to expand their partnership with MUAS from the CME programme to Economic Studies, Environmental Technology, and Information Technology. Their justifications for these fields lay simply in their needs and interests. The following discussion exemplifies this.

Excerpt 7.1. Group interview with the strategic partners

Representative of MUAS/CME: We have Environmental Technology.

Representative of the City Theatre: We have a kind of 'green theatre' project, so it could work.

Representative of MUAS/CME: That would be great!

Representative of the City Theatre: We could get resources from them for that.

Besides the resource-based view, the knowledge-based view (Elmuti & Kathawala 2001; Koza & Lewin 1998; Lowensberg 2010) of the strategic partnership can be observed in the above excerpt. Environmental Technology was a good example: it was a new field for both partners and the City Theatre had already committed to developing it in its strategy. The new topic of sustainability was also in the interests of MUAS/CME. They had similar interests in further developing it with the aid of the MUAS Environmental Technology programme.

The object of collaboration

Because both strategic partners were happy with the result, they immediately began to plan the following year's event. MUAS/CME was interested in an RDI project (later called Promoottori) on event management especially targeting Russians. MMR belonged naturally to this. The future of MMR and the strategic partnership was the object of collaboration of the fourth phase, consolidation of the strategic partnership (see Table 6.4). The next level of MMR's development was to further develop the event's concept closely with regional development events. The contradiction of the phase concerned the consolidation of new practices at MUAS and the City Theatre. These new work methods challenged the organisations to transform traditional division of labour and work methods to address the expanded object of work (Jansson 2015; Lester & Costley 2010).

The MMR event was seen as a potential vehicle for local collaboration and the development of event services. The biggest challenge was the lack of investment. This is to be expected with such events, which are constructed by several networks and are therefore 'owned by nobody'. The economic situation at the time was poor. However, the potential of Promoottori was realised by European Social Funding (ESF) funders, and the broader future of MMR seemed secure. The first MMR in 2010 created a structure for the event. This basic idea and its structure were approved as they were, but it was hoped to develop them. The discussions relating to the future of MMR largely focused on practical matters relating to the event (for example, funding and content).

The object construction through negotiation (Miettinen 2005) had led to a shared view of the event among the strategic partners and consolidated their strategic partnership. These strategic partners realised that in the next event they should take charge, with others forming a guiding group. The new network-based work method and sharing of responsibilities was not entirely successful in this case. This led to the creation of a smaller community in which it was easier to share responsibilities.

Developmental contradictions

Both MUAS/CME and the City Theatre were very satisfied with their collaboration, but the contradiction between ‘we’ and ‘others’ was also seen in this final phase. The following excerpt exemplifies this.

Excerpt 7.2. Group interview with the strategic partners

Representative of the City Theatre: [...] We learned that this [MMR] was worth doing, and there was a clear demand for this. This was actually known, but that attitudinal atmosphere was still surprising. How long it could last was the biggest objection of those who volunteered. [...]

The ‘attitudinal atmosphere’ referred to networking meetings, which had had difficulties in finding committed partners and resources for the event.

The analysis of the contradictions proves that there were considerably fewer critical conflicts than other conflicts and dilemmas and most of them related to this final phase. I interpreted two themes as critical conflicts: 1) strategic partners’ vs. local players’ commitment and attitude to MMR; and 2) MUAS/CME’s strong interest in cooperation partly because of the pressure of educational politics. The following excerpt exemplifies the strategic partners’ discussions about local organisations’ commitment and attitude to MMR.

Excerpt 7.3. Event management meeting

Representative of the City Theatre: (interrupts) [...] They [referring to one local organisation] have a hell of a marketing budget, but what are they marketing if there is no event?! This is exactly what’s so ridiculous! It’s like they have engineers there but no machine to build. Now there’s [the object], and this is absolutely one possible direction [...]

Such outbursts occurred several times. I interpret it as critical conflict because it reflects a situation where a representative of the City Theatre had strong inner doubts concerning company X. The lack of intelligibility and the emotionally charged account are typical of critical conflicts. The critical conflict in this example suggests the strategic partners needed the services of company X to conduct MMR. However, company X was not as interested in participating in the event’s productions as the organisers wanted them to be. This indicates a clear contradiction between company X’s interest, investment, and expectations and the expectations of the strategic partners. To resolve the situation, the City Theatre needed MUAS. As they said themselves, ‘they couldn’t have done it without MUAS’. There was a contradiction

between the expanded object and the traditional division of labour, which made these new, network-based ways of acting difficult (see also Jansson 2015).

Besides the commitment and attitude of local players MUAS/CME's strong interest in collaboration was another theme in which critical conflicts were identified. These included critical conflicts between the demands of education policy and the everyday actions of MUAS/CME. These critical conflicts reflected strong concern about the situation at the time: MUAS/CME needed partners and new work methods to survive. The contradiction was thus between the expanded object and the tools. In the cultural education field especially there had been serious threats of education cuts for several years. This meant that everyone sought to justify their existence by trying to respond, as well as they could, to the demands and requirements education policy set for profitable education. There was also a strong desire to produce high-quality education.

In the fourth phase, consolidation of the strategic partnership, evaluating the strategic partnership through the object of collaboration (MMR) was seen as a critical event. The object of collaboration was planning the future of the strategic partnership and MMR. The emerging developmental contradiction to be resolved was how to consolidate new practices in both strategic partner organisations (Table 11).

Table 11. Phase 4: Consolidation of the strategic partnership. Critical event of the phase, the object of collaboration, and the developmental contradictions.

Phase	Critical event of the phase	The object of collaboration	Developmental contradictions
1) Need for collaboration	Strategic meeting of MUAS and the City Theatre on 21.1.2008	Sealing collaboration for long-term partnership and RDI project	New products (use-value) against simultaneous reality of fewer resources
2) Establishment of strategic partnership	Decision to draft a strategic partnership agreement	Partnership agreement and ideas for MMR	Between object and community. The community was too small for the object (contradiction of socio-spatial expansion)
3) Constructing Mikkeli Meets Russia (MMR) by networking with local organisations	Trip to St Petersburg and bringing a network together	Content and concept of MMR in the context of multifold expectations	Between the old and new course of action and between strategic partners and network
4) Consolidation of the strategic partnership	Evaluating the strategic partnership through the object of collaboration	Future of strategic partnership and Mikkeli Meets Russia	How to consolidate new practices at MUAS and the City Theatre

7.6 Summary

This chapter has examined answers to the research question: How did the strategic partnership between the regional institution of VHE (the UAS) and the cultural institution (the City Theatre) develop through the initiative of the cultural event? I found four phases of development of the strategic partnership: 1) the need state for collaboration; 2) the establishment of the strategic partnership; 3) constructing the MMR event by networking with local organisations; and 4) the consolidation of the strategic partnership. By analysing the transformation of the object (MMR), developmental contradictions, and critical events of the phases I sought to establish if expansive learning and expansion of the object had taken place (Engeström 1987/2015, 2000; Hasu 2000; Kerosuo & Toiviainen 2011).

Hasu (2000), following Engeström (2000), has identified four dimensions of potential expansion in implementation: the social-spatial ('who else should be included?'); the anticipatory-temporal ('what previous and forthcoming issues should be considered?'); the moral-ideological ('who is responsible and who decides?'); and the systemic-developmental ('how does this shape the future of activity?').

The social-spatial dimension ('who else should be included?') was seen especially in the early stages of the MMR process and in the second phase, the establishment of the strategic partnership. The strategic partners established the network to plan and produce MMR. These discussions included much consideration of who should be included in the process. The contradiction of socio-spatial expansion was that the community of the strategic partners was too small for MMR's object.

The anticipatory-temporal expansion ('what previous and forthcoming issues should be considered?') was found in the first and third phases, the need for collaboration and constructing the MMR event. These phases' expansions only had different objects. In the first phase MUAS/CME especially analysed the need for collaboration. In this phase the object of collaboration was to seal the collaboration for long-term partnership and an RDI project. In the third phase this dimension of expansion occurred in discussions about scaling the previous and future programme services for Russian tourists. This was seen in the objects of collaboration – the content and concept of MMR and organisations' expectations of it. In short, in the first phase the anticipatory-temporal dimension focused on collaboration (strategic partnership), and in the third phase on MMR.

The third dimension, the moral-ideological ('who is responsible and who decides?'), also occurred in the third phase and related to the MMR process. In this phase participants tried to find organisations willing to take responsibility for the

event. The fourth and last dimension, the systemic-developmental (‘how does this shape the future of the activity?’), can be found in the fourth phase, the consolidation of the strategic partnership. In this phase both the future of MMR and the strategic partnership were under evaluation and the object of collaboration was the future of MMR and the strategic partnership (see Table 12).

Table 12. Phase of development of strategic partnership, critical event of the phase, object of collaboration of the phase, the object, and developmental contradictions and dimensions of potential expansion.

Phase	Critical event of the phase	Object of collaboration	Developmental contradictions	Dimensions of potential expansion
1) Need for collaboration	Strategic meeting of MUAS and the City Theatre on 21.1.2008	Sealing collaboration for long-term partnership and RDI project	New products (use-value) against simultaneous reality of fewer resources	Anticipatory-temporal
2) Establishment of strategic partnership	Decision to make a strategic partnership contract	Partnership agreement and ideas for MMR	Between object and community. The community was too small for the object (contradiction of socio-spatial expansion)	Social-spatial Instrumental expansion
3) Constructing the Mikkelin Meets Russia event by networking with local organisations	Trip to St Petersburg and bringing a network together	Content and concept of MMR in the context of multifold expectations	Between the old and new course of action and between the strategic partners and network	Anticipatory-temporal Moral-ideological
4) Consolidation of the strategic partnership	Evaluating the strategic partnership through the object of collaboration	Future of the strategic partnership and MMR	How to consolidate new practices at MUAS and the City Theatre	Systemic-developmental

A crucial component of expansive learning is an ability to resolve the contradictions of the process (Engeström 2016). The primary contradiction of the process was finding new products for MUAS and the City Theatre in the context of fewer resources being available. I use the term ‘product’ here, although in the context of education this is somewhat complex. In this context I mostly mean new ways of conducting courses (learning environments, assignments, RDI). The strategic partnership agreement and MMR as its first embodiment were an attempt to resolve this contradiction.

The secondary contradiction was between the object and community: the community was too small for the object. This socio-spatial expansion (Hasu 2000; Kerosuo & Toivainen 2011) was an attempt to find a solution by establishing a network for MMR. The resulting tertiary contradiction was between old and new

courses of action and between strategic partners and networks. The 'we' feeling of the strategic partners strengthened as they became more familiar with the object of activity. The stronger the 'we' feeling, the more distant other partners grew. The participants were unable to resolve this contradiction, and thus most potential partners were not committed to the process (see Chapter 8). The quaternary contradiction of the process concerned how to consolidate new practices at MUAS and the City Theatre. The resolution of this contradiction would only be seen in the following years, but the partners were willing to seek solutions.

An analysis of the MMR process and the strategic partnership in relation to expansive learning and dimensions of expansion suggests that the expansion was limited. A complete expansion would also have needed the stronger commitment of local actors as well as strategic partners. Although the expansion was incomplete in MMR, it promoted the expansion of the strategic partnership. In the process the strategic partnership strengthened and expanded.

The sustainable learning partnership model of work-integrated learning suggests that both university and working-life partners co-produce curricula and co-design pedagogies (Choy & Delahaye 2009). According to this model learning happens at two levels: organisation to organisation (industry and university); and individual (worker-learners and academics). The significant difference with traditional models of work-integrated learning is the emphasis on shared responsibility for learning and capacity building (Choy & Delahaye 2009).

The strategic partnership between MUAS/CME and the City Theatre seems a good start for a sustainable learning partnership. The curriculum and pedagogies were structured by listening to working-life organisations as well as the City Theatre and other significant organisations in the area. In MMR's case learning took place at the organisation level. The strategic partners stated that they had learned much about collaboration in relation to other local organisations. Chapter 9 examines personal learning.

After 2010 the MMR event (recently the Mikkeli New Year Events) was produced twice as part of the Promoottori RDI project. A challenge to the event came in 2013, because Promoottori ended in February 2012. In March 2012 the Ministry of Culture and Education's decision to cut cultural education presented an even greater threat: the result was that the degree programme in Cultural Management Education was terminated. These decisions were fatal to the MMR event in this form. However, the New Year event has been conducted annually by local event production enterprises.

8 COMMITMENT OF THE REGIONAL NETWORK TO THE DEVELOPING PROCESS OF THE NEW CULTURAL EVENT

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter I shift the focus from the bilateral strategic partnership to the regional network. In what follows are the results of the analysis of the second research question: *How did the participants' commitment to the planning and implementation of the cultural event emerge in the larger regional network?* This question is analysed with three sub-questions:

1. At what level of intensity did the members participate in the networking meetings planning the Mikkeli Meets Russia (MMR) event?
2. What concerns about collaboration emerging in the networking meetings were manifested in the participants' commitment?
3. What were the conflicts of interest and how were they resolved?

8.2 Intensity of Participation

The frequency of organisations' participation in networking meetings and the number of used turns are seen here as intensity of participation (Rondinelli & London 2003). The main goal of the networking meetings was to construct the event's concept and, more importantly, to find committed organisations to conduct the event. The preliminary expectation concerning commitment is that the more actively an organisation participates, the more committed it is.

Based on their number of used turns there were clearly three levels of intensity of participation, which I termed key players, potential players, and listeners. Key players were organisations that used more than a hundred turns in the networking meetings. Potential players used between ten and a hundred turns. Listeners used fewer than ten turns (see Table 13). Table 13 presents the categories, organisations,

and development of the number of used turns per organisation at the networking meetings.

This indicates that the City Theatre's role diminished systematically during the meetings. They used most of their turns at the first meeting, which was about representing or selling the preliminary idea of the event to the other participants. The local enterprise's input also diminished dramatically during the process. The reasons are presented in the analysis. However, the travel agency's input increased somewhat during the process. The role of MUAS/CME at the meetings had also decreased dramatically by the last meeting. The reason was the absence at the final meeting of a teacher who had played a significant role. In the next paragraphs I examine these categories in more detail. The organisations are listed in the table by their number of used turns, with the largest numbers first. Next, I explore each category in more detail.

Table 13. Intensity of participation, number of used turns per organisation and per networking meeting (NM).

Intensity of participation		Networking meetings (NM)				
		NM 1	NM2	NM3	NM4	Total
Key players	The City Theatre	211	150	137	121	619
	Travel agency	54	35	55	63	207
	MUAS/CME	49	68	61	12	190
Potential players	Local enterprise	28	25	8	0	61
	The city			43	8	51
	Restaurant	26	12		11	49
	Production company	3	33			36
	Regional Council	7	14		7	28
	Chamber of Commerce	9			4	13
	Small Business Centre	8				8
Listeners	Tourist attraction	6				6
	Development organisation			5		5
	MUAS/IT	5				5
	Association of entrepreneurs	2			3	5
	Total	408	337	309	229	1283

Key players

Four organisations participated in all the networking meetings. These organisations were the City Theatre, the travel agency, the local enterprise, and the Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences' Cultural Management Education degree programme (MUAS/CME). Unsurprisingly, the number of used turns was also largest for these organisations. The City Theatre's number of used turns was considerably higher than the others'. This can be explained by the fact that they were voluntarily leading the process, which may also be seen as a sign of their strong commitment to MMR. They saw MMR as an important new product for an otherwise quiet season (see Chapter 7). Three of these four organisations' (the City Theatre, the travel agency, and MUAS/CME) activeness (number of used turns) at the meetings can be understood to reflect their strong commitment to the MMR event. They were therefore categorised as key players.

The City Theatre's role throughout the process was very strong, reflecting their commitment to the event's implementation. They participated in each networking meeting and the City Theatre's representative chaired the meetings. The role of MUAS/CME was also quite stable and strong. They attended all the meetings, but their representatives were not as active as the representatives of the City Theatre. However, MUAS/CME was heavily involved in producing the event. In this sense the division of labour between MUAS/CME and the City Theatre was that the latter led the planning process and networking and MUAS/CME took more operational responsibility. Both organisations also applied for funding for the event, and MUAS/CME succeeded in obtaining a grant from the Ministry of Education. This grant was essential, enabling MMR to hire an event manager.

Whereas the number of used turns of these strategic partners diminished during the process, the travel agency increased theirs. When interviewed, the representative of the travel agency reflected on their role in and commitment to the process. She stated that their role was ultimately to tell entrepreneurs about MMR and gather information about their plans for the New Year to avoid overlapping. The representative underlined that other stakeholders had offered to do more than they had been able. The interviewee saw lack of resources as the biggest reason for their lack of commitment. They had done what they could with the resources available.

The analysis of the development of the strategic partnership between MUAS and the City Theatre (in Chapter 7) showed that MMR as the object of activity changed little during the process. From the perspective of commitment this was essential: the object or goal of activity was clear for these partners from the beginning. The

strategic partners had developed the idea of the event together, so they had the clearest vision of it. The City Theatre saw the event as a new product for an otherwise quiet season; MUAS/CME saw it as a learning environment and vehicle for regional and education development. Both organisations therefore saw MMR as important to their core activity. The travel agency saw MMR largely as a service package for Russian tourists. This was also relevant to their core activity.

Potential players

Perhaps more interesting than key players from the perspective of commitment was the middle group of five organisations (the local enterprise, the city, the restaurant, the production company, and the Regional Council). Clearly, these organisations came from very different areas of economic life, but they all showed preliminary interest in the event. Representatives of these organisations were quite active in the meetings but did not ultimately commit to the process, meaning they were not involved in the actual event production. I therefore named this group ‘potential players’.

The analysis reveals that representatives of the local enterprise participated in all four meetings and initially expressed strong commitment to the process. Their number of used turns diminished consistently during the meetings, but the third meeting represented a turning point: they were present at the fourth meeting but did not use a single turn. At this meeting the representative of the local enterprise brought greetings from a meeting of travel operators which were not especially encouraging. The economic depression had had a marked impact on Russian tourism, and it was feared the number of Russian tourists would be dramatically smaller in 2010. Nevertheless, their attitude towards MMR was positive. The following excerpt includes the last used turn of the local enterprise. All excerpts were translated from Finnish by the researcher.

Excerpt 8.1 Networking meeting

Representative of the city: We should now have some funding method for real: when this is discussed there is plenty of money here and there – if only there were good projects to spend it on.

Representative of the local enterprise: Can I have one sentence before I need to go? Now I have the impression that this would be something theatrical and cultural. The development organisation can add something else to this. There is a skilled man who can find the money from somewhere. And as for co-marketing, the travel agency can pull together everything that’s been offered. So I think we can get quite far with these ideas.

Here the local enterprise was listing what everyone else was doing but made no mention of their own input. There seem to be two reasons for this: the economic situation had resulted in some caution concerning the event; and they no longer saw a role for themselves in it. Their diminished activeness at the meetings and this last used turn especially demonstrate this. They now saw the focus of the event as 'theatrical and cultural' rather than reflecting their own areas of interest. At the beginning of the process they had made strong statements about their role in offering restaurant and accommodation services and marketing networks for the event. In activity-theory terms the object was no longer shared, resulting in a lack of commitment to the process.

Representatives of the city also had problems with the object. There were clearly two factors in their lack of commitment. First, they could not see the core of the event. Both representatives of the city used several turns on this matter. The following excerpt exemplifies this.

Excerpt 8.2 Networking meeting

Representative of the city: We have agreed all this now. If it's somehow possible that it be concretised, what will it cost for real? And what will it mean for the different partners involved? There is so much sensitivity now that nobody can say anything. I give ten points to the representative of the development organisation for their excellent result [they had been promised €1,000 for the event]. He is the only one who has had the courage to say anything bold so far.

Representative of the City Theatre: Yes, yes.

Representative of the city: He's announcing that money is coming. Nobody has the courage to say anything because we don't have anything concrete here. Next time there should be enough concrete plans to make everything totally clear: that this will cost this much, and when you put this amount of money in, this is what will happen. Of course, if we could get something from the Ministry of Education, it would have a huge impact.

Representative of City Theatre: Of course.

Representative of the city: We don't know if there is going to be some money. There is plenty of money. This should be getting more concrete, because people don't have the courage to get involved.

As this discussion reveals, the city needed a more concrete and costed plan. Another problem was that they felt there was no organisation taking responsibility. It is striking that they were unwilling to do so themselves. The city thought that the object of activity was insufficiently concrete for them to commit to it. This is a fundamental question of collaboration and commitment: how well do partners manage to

construct the shared object? The representatives of the city saw the importance of such an event, but they did not see it as their role to put it together. They had already said at the first meeting they attended that they could not see what their role in the project would be. The process helped to clarify this, but ultimately this was not enough.

The restaurant had similar problems with the clarity of the object and the issue of responsibility. Their main interest was in offering restaurant services to Russian tourists during the event at the City Theatre. At the beginning of the process especially they had seen the entire event as very much the 'theatre's event', suggesting that the City Theatre should therefore also take the biggest economic risk. They saw themselves as 'becoming a partner'. The event's focus did not become sufficiently clear for them during the process. They also emphasised the need for one person to take charge, suggesting that this could be a practical trainee. This can be interpreted as a strong expression of confidence in MUAS, but also as problematic from the point of view of commitment: students were seen as free workers.

The production company's interest was in finding synergies with their own previously unsuccessful event plans. They had considerable knowledge of Russian tourists, so to some extent they also played the role of consultant at the meeting. Concerning the MMR event, they were also looking for more concrete plans to sell to entrepreneurs and for an event manager to take responsibility for production. In their own event planning some years ago they had experienced difficulty in concretising their planning, and they raised this in this process. They presented an idea about establishing a joint enterprise to sell both their event and MMR.

The production company's last used comment concerned their own experience of the problems arising from the lack of concrete plans. They attended no further meetings after this. They offered to collaborate and probably waited for a response, but the other stakeholders did not take the bait. Like the other organisations, the production company had difficulties with clarifying the object and who would take responsibility for organisation.

The Regional Council participated in every meeting except the third. They were responsible for project money, and this was the basis of their contribution to the discussion, as the following excerpt shows.

Excerpt 8.3 Networking meeting

Representative of Regional Council: Yes, tourism is included. The role of the Regional Council is a little different. Previous turns have brought a concrete, practical perspective to this issue. [...] We have been involved in this idea and we have been

listening. And most likely what concerns us now is project activity and [RDI] project money: these are our areas. [...]

She continued by presenting possibilities for Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) project funding. Their role was quite clear, but there were somewhat heated discussions about how the general development of these projects should be funded. They listened to the plans and gave advice about possible funding instruments. Their main message was that project money could not be used for a single event, and entrepreneurs should take responsibility for the MMR process. Their commitment to the event was manifested later in their funding of the RDI Promoottori project, of which MMR was to be a part. The Chamber of Commerce noted that Russia was strategically very important for them and they were ‘in, but let’s see how’; they were committed to the idea.

The organisations that attended once to hear about the idea formed the third category. Most stated that they were ‘just listening’. I therefore call this group the ‘listeners’.

Listeners

The most passive participants in the MMR networking meetings were the development organisation, the Department of Information Technology at MUAS (MUAS/IT), the tourist attraction, and the Small Business Centre. Representatives of the production company participated in only two meetings but used many turns, because they had been planning a major event for Russian tourists for several years. At the beginning of the process the connections between MMR and their event were explored. In this context the development organisation is probably the most interesting: the other organisations had expected them to be strongly involved, and they made it very clear they would be ready to invest in MMR and expected others to do the same. The following excerpt demonstrates this willingness. The context of the excerpt was a discussion in which participants were agonising about finding an event manager to produce the event.

Excerpt 8.4 Networking meeting

Representative of a development organisation: And I will also mention event manager resources here. Put some money on the table and there will be an event manager who will make these plans.

Representative of the City Theatre, also chairing the meeting: Yes, all right.

Representative of the development organisation: We'll put a thousand on the table. Who else will pay? A thousand and that's it. Just €1,000, no more.

Representative of the City Theatre: Yes, exactly.

Representative of the development organisation: I need to go on a trip now, but we'll put in a thousand.

Representative of the City Theatre: OK, we'll write that down. [...]

Although this strong expression of intention to invest and challenge to the others was presented, nobody else was prepared to do the same. The episode provoked positive comments afterwards, but there was still neither the ability nor the willingness to 'put a thousand on the table'. The reasons will be established later in this analysis. The basic motivation of most organisations in this category was that they wanted to hear what was happening. Even at the beginning they had no serious intention of getting more involved.

8.3 Concerns of collaboration

In the previous sub-chapter I analysed the level of the intensity of participation as one manifestation of commitment. To get a deeper perspective of that commitment, we also need to explore the content of the process. In this sub-chapter I present an analysis of the concerns of collaboration.

To establish the concerns of commitment, a content analysis (e.g. Graneheim, Lindgren & Lundman 2017) of the themes was required. The analysis is divided into two parts: first, an analysis of the concerns of collaboration in the networking meetings; second, taking up the concerns manifesting the commitment. The analysis was conducted based on the transcriptions and scripts of the networking meetings and interviews with working-life partners. Concerns were marked in the scripts. I found six different concerns in the construction process of MMR. I categorised these as: 1) investment; 2) practical issues; 3) responsibility; 4) interest; 5) ideating; and 6) threats. Two of the presented six themes can be interpreted as an embodiment of commitment. They are interest and investment (Andrésen et al. 2012).

Interest

The interest of the participants bore a heavy burden of history. Each organisation expressed its interest through its historically constructed core activity and experience

of collaboration. Besides the historical perspective expressions of interest naturally also had strong expectations of the future: expressions of interest were combinations of historical layers of collaboration in the area and expectations of future business success. The analysis indicated that when participants presented their interest in and preliminary ideas for the event they were also constructing the object from their own perspective. The representatives of the various organisations brought their previous experiences with Russian tourists and collaboration into the discussion. These experiences had taught them that it was much more efficient to collaborate with other service producers in the area. Commitment required that participants felt their wishes were heard and that the extended object was beneficial for them.

Based on the analysis of interest the network participants saw MMR as a new product or service, or a synergy benefit for their activity. As a new product, MMR was intended to be a directly served new product or service for them to supply. However, some organisations saw the synergy benefits between MMR and their core activity, for example, selling accommodation or food services to the customers of MMR. There were also participants who thought the new event would attract more Russian tourists to the area. MUAS/CME saw MMR as one way of conducting a strategic partnership with the City Theatre as a learning environment. Added value for the University of Applied Sciences (UAS) would come through the enriching of teaching and regional development (see Chapter 7).

Investment

Investment was the most problematic concern for the networking meetings and it provoked strong feelings. Most conflicts of interest related to investment. Everyone liked the idea of MMR, but only some were ready to invest in it. Potential players were an especially interesting group in this respect: there was much potential willingness to invest in MMR, but only one ultimately invested in MMR by loosely offering their own products to MMR's event palette. The biggest disincentive to investing in the process appeared to be insecurity about whether others would do the same. This can be interpreted as a lack of confidence in the network.

Placing the results of the analysis of investment in the context of levels of intensity of participation gives us a perspective of the relationship between participation and investment. Interestingly, all participants expressed at some level that they could invest some work resources, money, and/or networks in MMR. Key players and potential players were also ready to offer a venue for the event. However, there was a large difference between these preliminary expressions of intention to

invest and what was actually invested. As a result of the networking meetings the travel agency, one of the key players, approached the area's entrepreneurs to secure some investment in MMR and also ensured that there was as little timetable overlap between programme services in the area as possible. They invested work resources. The City Theatre and MUAS/CME, also key players, produced the MMR event on a smaller scale than first planned, and also initiated an RDI project-planning process for the coming years. The Ministry's grant obtained by MUAS made it possible to hire an event manager, which would have been otherwise impossible. As previously mentioned, this was the crucial investment in MMR by the Ministry of Education and by MUAS/CME.

Ultimately, MUAS/CME and the City Theatre, in collaboration with the development organisation and travel agency, produced the MMR event. These organisations invested most in the planning and production of MMR. The city's services were included in the programme. Only the development organisation was not a key player based on the level of intensity of participation. It was an interesting exception, investing in the event despite its level of participation being that of listener. To explain this, I next present the views of two working-life partners, the travel agency and the development organisation.

Interviews with two working-life partners

As the analysis of collaboration is the researcher's interpretation, interviews allow the voices of the working-life partners as participants in the MMR process to be heard. These interviews deepen the analysis of the networking meetings. The other participants expected the interviewed organisations to play a strong role in MMR. These expectations were based on the interviewed organisations' core societal tasks. Both organisations' interest in participating in the process was clear and there was a convergence of expectations: they saw Russians as important customers for their organisations, requiring the development of new products and services. However, differences emerged concerning investment. The development organisation, which was categorised as a listener based on its intensity of participation, did not participate in MMR at all. They produced their own event, which they would have conducted in any case. However, when the producer of MMR asked if they wanted to market their event as part of MMR, they agreed.

The interviewee felt there were some misunderstandings concerning division of labour and collaboration. He felt these were practical matters related to shared marketing. As reasons for the non-commitment they expressed at the networking

meetings, he mentioned that there was insufficient clarity about which organisation was in charge and the budget, and they therefore had given nothing for the event. The interviewee recalled that at some point in the process they had realised the event would happen and was going to be a success. This was why they had wanted to be involved.

The travel agency was a key player based on its level of intensity of participation and it invested more in the event. It saw its contacts with tourism entrepreneurs as its investment in the MMR event. They described their role in MMR as presenting it to entrepreneurs and gathering information about their plans for the New Near to avoid overlap. They clearly felt the other stakeholders expected more from them than they were able to offer. On reflection, the interviewee mentioned the lack of resources as the biggest reason for their weak commitment to MMR. The representative of the travel agency felt that the other stakeholders expected to get 'the event on a plate', without investing in it themselves. The interviewee suggested that there should have been more collaborative planning to ensure more committed partners from the network participated in conducting the event.

8.4 Conflicts of Interest

Thus far I have presented categories of intensity of participation and concerns of collaboration as manifestations of commitment. An analysis of the conflicts of interest follows. As previously mentioned, most conflicts of interest related to investment. One of the most discussed themes of investment was the 'hammering guarantee' (in Finnish '*tappiotakuu*'), which may be interpreted as the biggest conflict of interest. The hammering guarantee meant that one party would bear any financial loss. The representatives of the City Theatre felt strongly that such a guarantee was needed: the problem was who could give it. The network participants strongly associated the MMR event with the City Theatre, despite the fact that it was only one venue where activities might happen. The likeliest reason for this misunderstanding was the City Theatre's strong role in leading the process and strong willingness to accomplish the event. Others therefore felt that funding was 'the City Theatre's problem'. The City Theatre was somewhat irritated that it was thought that it should organise programme services, thereby taking the risk while others benefited. This area of the discussion of investment aroused the strongest emotions.

The second conflict of interest was that although there were many RDI projects in the area, funding was so regulated that it could not be used for MMR, despite the fact that it was a perfect fit for the goals of these projects. The following discussion (Excerpt 8.5) exemplifies this. The participants were discussing an ongoing regional project, the aim of which was to market the region to Russian tourists.

Excerpt 8.5 Networking meeting

Representative of the City Theatre: Tell us. You said that it was, what was the budget? A million and a half?

Representative of the travel agency: 1.9 million.

Representative of the City Theatre: 1.9 – and of that how much is loose money?

Representative of the travel agency: Loose money?!

Representative of the City Theatre: I mean after fixed expenses.

Representative of the travel agency: I will yelp immediately – there is no loose money.

Representative of the City Theatre: So what kind of invoice do we expect? Or does the region share it and how much is for MMR?

The third conflict of interest concerned the expectations participants had of each other's investment. The City Theatre expected entrepreneurs to play a stronger role in funding the event because they were strongly seen as its beneficiaries. However, the association of entrepreneurs did not commit to the process. The entrepreneurs supported the idea but waited to see what would happen. Project funders also used turns to ask why so many activities in the area needed project money when the organisations could be funding them. The question of RDI project and private sector funding seemed critical in such a shared networking project. The participants expected project money because MMR seemed beneficial for everyone, not only certain organisations. They therefore thought it should be financed from these 'general projects', as they called them. From the perspective of the RDI projects this was difficult, however, because the organisations needed to take some financial responsibility for their own development activity. The fundamental problem was that the entrepreneurs needed a commitment to concrete incentivised packages. The strategic partners' approach was the opposite: they wanted to know who would be involved and whose money they would use.

The fourth conflict of interest occurred in discussions of the basic concept of MMR. Some participants saw MMR as an effort to attract new Russian tourists to

Mikkeli, while the strategic partners' idea was to offer a new tourist product for those who were already in the region for New Year.

An analysis of these conflicts of interest in the context of the intensity of participation revealed that participants' expectations of key players exceeded the resources they could use. Potential players had conflicts of interest with the strategic partners concerning the event's basic concept. The strategic partners' initial idea had been to offer programme services to Russian tourists already in the region. The potential players instead discussed an event which would attract more tourists to the area.

The key players resolved the conflict of interest between expectations and resources by seeking resources for the event from RDI funders and by allocating their own resources. They thus responded to the expectations of the other participants, and in resolving the conflict brought the event to fruition. The potential players and listeners were unable to find solutions to the conflicts of interest that occurred. Only one organisation from the potential players and listeners eventually loosely participated in the event by offering their own product for promotion under the MMR umbrella. They would have conducted their own event with or without MMR. Table 14 presents the result of this analysis in more detail.

Table 14. Intensity of participation, interest, investment, conflicts of interest, and solutions during the planning process of MMR.

Intensity of participation	Interest	Investment	Conflicts of interest	Solutions
Key players	<p>Cost-effective, diversified new event for quiet season</p> <p>Economic benefits through collaboration</p> <p>More systematised programme services for Russian tourists, Russian tourists a regionally important group</p>	<p>Work resources</p> <p>Venue</p> <p>Some financial resources</p> <p>Marketing channels</p> <p>Networks</p>	<p>Between key players and other participants</p> <p>Others' expectations vs resources</p>	<p>Key players succeed in obtaining resources and conducting the event. New concept with new tools</p>
Potential players	<p>Russians as important customers. Benefits through collaboration</p> <p>Larger event and wider collaboration, MMR 2010 as a starting point</p> <p>Collaboration to sell events and obtain funding. Economic benefits for the region's entrepreneurs</p>	<p>Work resources and networks, marketing channels</p> <p>Some financial investment</p> <p>Venues and additional services</p> <p>Synergy with former planned event</p> <p>Possible RDI project funding</p> <p>Lobbying entrepreneurs with the idea</p>	<p>Between strategic partners and potential players</p> <p>New event for Russian tourists in the region vs new event to attract new tourists to the region</p>	<p>Most potential players left out</p> <p>Only one organisation loosely involved in the actual event</p>
Listeners	<p>Russians as important customers – revenue for entrepreneurs</p>	<p>Courses about Russian culture and language for realisers of MMR</p> <p>Work, funding, and technical resources</p> <p>Willingness to adjust their programme for MMR, no financial resources</p>	<p>Between listeners and strategic partners:</p> <p>Lack of clarity concerning organisation in charge and budget</p>	<p>Most listeners left out. Only one organisation loosely involved in the actual event</p>

Thus far I have presented the results of the analyses of the intensity of participation, concerns of commitment, interest, and investment as expressions of commitment. I have also analysed the conflicts of interest in the planning process of the MMR event. I now set the results of previous analyses alongside each other and explore the

categories of commitment that afford a perspective on the depth of commitment of this regional network. This combination of analyses leads us to three types of commitment, which conclude the analysis and are discussed next.

8.5 Summary

In this chapter I have sought answers to the research question How did the participants' commitment to the planning and implementation of the cultural event emerge in the larger regional network? From the perspective of activity theory the commitment is realised in action and the object is the true motivator of action (Engeström 1999; Miettinen 2005). It follows that the organisations that actually produced the event can be seen as the most committed. These organisations found solutions to conflicts and invested in the event. Both are essential actions for commitment. The analysis I presented in the previous sub-sections scrutinised the commitment of regional network participants by using different manifestations of commitment. In this sub-section I summarise the results for the types of commitment, which I name developers, realisers, and leavers.

Developers

The developers were the organisations which expressed the strongest commitment to the MMR event by attending to its planning and conduct. Based on the analysis of the intensity of participation developers were the key players actively attending the networking meetings. The analysis revealed that MMR was a new product or service for them, and their vision of the network's advantages was clear. They had also worked most on the object, having been strategic partners from the idea's initiation to the event's production. They thus had the clearest image of the object. If we return to the dynamic nature of the subject and object (Edwards 2005; Stetsenko 2005), it seems that the more developers worked on MMR, the more committed they became and the more they learned.

For developers the benefit of the network was that it focused mainly on resources and the stakeholders took advantage of the diversity of interest and perspectives to generate the new event. The developers saw the importance of the network to their object of activity and committed not only to MMR but also to networking. An analysis of the intensity of participation revealed that the developers were the same

organisations as the key players, attending all the networking meetings and using most turns at the meetings.

The education organisation differed slightly from other developers: their expressions of interest especially emphasised collaboration with the strategic partner. The other partners were seen as important, but the strategic partner was seen as the most important in this process. MMR was clearly the embodiment of the strategic partnership for them, and they were strongly committed to it. This accords with Toiviainen's study (2003), where the partnership level seemed to represent a high level of commitment to collective networking activities, whereas many other levels seemed to be oriented to an individual company's interest.

The developers saw that they could not achieve the object of activity alone, and that other partners were needed. They attempted to develop the concept in their interaction, exchanging knowledge and resources to expand the object (see Edwards 2011; Sol et al. 2013). The problem was that the levels and depth of the network's commitment varied, which meant that not every participant embarked on interaction and knowledge exchange. By finding solutions to the process's conflicts of interest the developers eventually succeeded in conducting the MMR event.

Realisers

The organisations which did not attend the planning process as actively as the developers but participated in conducting the event are called here realisers. This type of commitment was seen in only two organisations. These organisations' intensity of participation varied between that of potential players and listeners. Only one organisation of listeners was involved in the production at all. This organisation was so committed to the idea of MMR that they participated in its production despite the fact that their participation in the networking meetings had been minimal.

The realisers saw MMR as a new product for them to supply. They also understood the synergy benefits of collaboration, although they were not fully committed to it. The realisers' interest was more at the organisation's level than at the network's. Their biggest problems in commitment seemed to be their unclear role in the process and the object of activity's lack of clarity. As Miettinen (2005) underlines, the object of activity is a complex and contradictory assembly of heterogeneous materials and relations. It requires division of labour and the utilisation of a variety of specialised expertise. Instead, the successful object construction process increases commitment.

Both these organisations of realisers participated in MMR with events they would have conducted anyway. They took advantage of MMR mainly for marketing purposes but put little effort into its actual planning process. The realisers were committed to the idea of MMR, but neither their own role nor the object of activity was sufficiently clear. They were thus committed to the image of the object but not to its independent existence (see Leont'ev 1978). In the present case I see the existence of the object as a planning and conducting process of the MMR event. They were therefore unready to put any effort into the process, which would have led them into a dynamic process between subject and object. This in turn would have helped them to influence the object of activity and probably increase their commitment to it. According to activity theory the object, its construction, and division of labour were unsuccessful. In contrast, this caused a lack of commitment among realisers and especially among leavers.

Leavers

The third group was the organisations which eventually did not commit to MMR. I call this group leavers. Most of the organisations that participated in the process of MMR eventually joined this category. The leavers' interest was clearly organisational and their commitment both to the idea and the process was loose from the outset. Sol et al. (2013) have observed in their research on social learning in regional networks that government representatives struggle with commitment and participate in processes with a 'wait-and-see' attitude. This resembled the listeners' attitude. Most of the listeners' organisations were also, in a sense, representatives of government: they represented the public sector rather than private enterprises.

The listeners had even more difficulty in seeing their role in the process than the realisers. Concerning their commitment, the negotiation process of object construction was unsuccessful. The object and division of labour was too vague for them to make a commitment. They were unable to utilise the network's resources. In Table 15 I present the results of these different analyses of commitment alongside examples of typical expressions of interest and investment.

Table 15. Categories of commitment, concerns of collaboration, typical expressions of interest and investment, and intensity of participation.

Categories of commitment	Concerns of collaboration: interest and investment	Intensity of participation
Developers	'[...] We have all the facilities ready for this. All we need is to produce the content. Another thing is that January is the worst month to do traditional theatre, because nobody goes anywhere, [...] but this doesn't concern those coming from the East' (networking meeting 1).	Key players
Realisers	'We'll put a thousand on the table. Who else will? A thousand and that's it. Just €1,000, no more' (networking meeting 3).	Potential players
	'We were extremely committed to the idea. And that interest was important for New Year and the Russians being taken care of with a long-term commitment of about ten to twenty years [...]' (interview with working-life partner).	Listeners
Leavers	'And, of course, we hope to get something out of it. Our expectations are mainly that it can somehow be packaged, productised. So, we'll offer accommodation and other services (networking meeting 1).	Potential players
	'I have a single question. We are talking and talking, but everybody would find it much easier to take this if we knew what kind of sums we are talking about. [...] This affects a lot of decision-making' (networking meeting 1).	Listeners

The table reveals a connection between commitment, essential concerns of collaboration, and the intensity of participation. Every developer was also a key player, meaning they were most active at the networking meetings. Most listeners and realisers ultimately did not commit to MMR. Only two were involved by offering their own products for the MMR palette. The analysis proved that the object of collaboration and its constructing were crucial for commitment. Furthermore, in her studies of relational agency Edwards (2011) emphasises the importance of negotiations in object construction. She suggests that meetings which devote time to revealing the 'whys' of practices are a prerequisite of relational work across boundaries within and between organisations. In the case of MMR it seems there was time for these 'why' discussions, but the problem was that they took too much time. The participants needed concrete actions and guidelines quickly if they were to make a commitment.

The most committed organisations also used their time and work resources in attending to the event's planning and conducting. The organisations which did not commit to MMR or collaboration with it saw the object as unclear or felt that it did not concern them. However, input in object construction may have increased their commitment to the event.

This study proves that in promoting the commitment of actors it is important to focus on constructing the object in collaboration. It is also important to understand the dynamic relationship between subject and object. Working on the object also affects the subject's perspective of the object (Leont'ev 1978; Stetsenko 2005). This in turn affects commitment. If the image of the object and its independent existence accord with a subject's interest, the subject becomes committed to the activity's object. Successful negotiations of object construction are therefore essential for commitment (Edwards 2011; Miettinen 2005). In my opinion in a heterogeneous network the object of activity cannot be exactly the same for all participants. However, what is crucial is that it is sufficiently shared for a commitment to be made.

Besides the object of activity's clarity the division of labour also needs to be clear if participants are to make a commitment. Only through genuine negotiation can the object find it possible to construct benefits for the participants. An essential factor for commitment and for social learning is organisations' ability to see the advantage of collaboration (Huxam 1993; Sol et al. 2013). If an organisation sees the object as a shared project that needs others, it becomes committed to networking and learning becomes possible. The most committed organisations are committed at the networking as well as the organisation level (see Provan et al. 2007).

Genuine collaboration and the concretisation of the object seem crucial in shaping the perspective of commitment and for obtaining funding. The more beneficial the object is to the organisation's core task, the more likely it is that there will also be commitment to it. Moreover, the better the object is concretised, the easier it is to sell to funders.

In the case of MMR the division of labour and the object of activity were ambiguous. This seemed quite complex. The main goal of MUAS/CME and the City Theatre was to open the MMR planning process to all potential partners with the intention of sharing the event's planning and responsibilities. However, most participants lost interest because of a lack of clarity about the object and the division of labour. This reveals the complex and critical nature of commitment. The purpose and occasion for shared object construction is insufficient. It requires every participant's active role and a well-timed planning process that allows sufficient time for negotiations.

Thus far I have analysed the phases of the strategic partnership between MUAS/CME and the City Theatre (Chapter 7), which was the basis of MMR. In this chapter I expanded the analysis to the regional network and their commitment to MMR. An analysis of the pedagogical model of the MUAS/CME degree programme and MMR as an example of it follows.

9 MODELLING WORK-BASED PEDAGOGY FOR EXPANSIVE LEARNING – THREE PERSPECTIVES

9.1 Introduction

The third research question, *How did the cultural event test and challenge the work-based pedagogical model of Vocational Higher Education (VHE) and enhance the participants' expansive learning?* scrutinises the functionality of the work-based pedagogical (WBP) model of the Cultural Management Education (CME) programme in the context of the Mikkeli Meets Russia (MMR) cultural event. The sub-questions are:

- 1) What are the challenges faced and development ideas created in the implementation of the work-based pedagogical model?
- 2) In the light of students', teachers', and working-life partners' reflection, what is the expansive learning potential of the work-based pedagogical model implemented?

Close collaboration with working life is a demand of secondary vocational education and higher education. In working at the University of Applied Sciences (UAS) I observed that students appreciated collaboration and learning with working life, whereas teachers were often concerned about academic competences and their integration into practical work periods. Thus, this is the education challenge of overcoming dichotomy and combining theoretical thinking and practical action (Gibbs & Armsby 2010; Stenström & Tynjälä 2009). In contemporary society new perspectives on the relationship between theory and practice are needed in VHE (see Chapter 1).

This chapter is based on the interviews with students, teachers, and working-life partners. The analysis centres on the three basic elements, the challenges, development ideas and object of learning, of the WBP model of MUAS/CME, which is presented in Chapter 3. The analysis also distinguishes the two course assignments, the marketing plan of the course on marketing and the briefing plan of the speech communication course. They are described in Chapter 3. The two

assignments are materialisations of the otherwise abstract WBP model. They are distinguished in order to embed the pedagogical activity in concrete actions of learning and teaching, but their evaluation or systematic comparison is outside the focus of the analysis.

9.2 The Challenges and Development Ideas of the Work-Based Pedagogy Model

In this section I analyse the challenges faced and the development ideas created when implementing the WBP model during the MMR event. The following analysis is structured according to the two developmental assignments, the marketing plan and the briefing plan and the perspectives of students, teachers, and working-life partners.

Challenges and development ideas of the briefing plan/Speech Communication course

Students

The students raised three challenges concerning the pedagogical model of the CME programme in the case of MMR. First, they felt that the connection between contact lessons and the developmental assignment was confusing. Second, a lack of information affected the big picture of MMR and the division of labour. Third, they were concerned about the assessment of the assignments in the pedagogical model. I now explore each of these in more details.

The first challenge identified by the students in the briefing plan group concerned the relationship between the content of contact lessons and the developmental assignment. Students claimed the content of the contact lessons did not support their developmental assignment, which was to design a briefing plan for MMR. The content of the contact lessons did not directly cover the making of a briefing plan, which the students found quite challenging (Excerpt 9.1).

Excerpt 9.1 Group interview, students of briefing plan group

Student A: Actually, we didn't talk about these kinds of briefing in lessons. I hadn't heard about them before...

Student B: Yes, these things seemed to be quite separate. In contact lessons there was nothing at all about them [briefings], and then in the developmental assignment there was something totally different, so it was a bit...

Although the theoretical background of the briefing as such was not covered in the class, the guiding clinics were planned as a tool to support the relationship between developmental assignments and the theoretical knowledge presented in contact lessons. The students also had an opportunity to book extra times for group guidance. However, it seems that the guiding clinic as a mediator between the theoretical contact lessons and practical developmental assignment had not yet stabilised its position in the WBP model.

The second challenge the students raised concerned the lack of information. They felt there was ambiguity concerning the event and a lack of clarity concerning the division of labour. The students had no clear view of the relationship of the children's event at the City Theatre, which was part of the MMR event, and MMR as a whole. The students felt they did not have enough information about the whole process of the MMR event and their part in it. They said they did not know if their plan was conducted or not. A lack of feedback was mentioned as a challenge in the case of the MMR event. The following excerpt exemplifies the lack of information and clarity in the division of labour.

Excerpt 9.2 Group interview, students of briefing plan group

Student A: Well, maybe the present project, relating to the MMR event. There was very little information about the Russian tourists or customers. It needed to be applied quite a lot, and then we weren't quite sure if it was going into the woods [Finnish expression for going wrong]. It certainly wasn't the easiest case. They could have picked a much easier topic, where there would have been some information. And then just a detail, when you looked at the pricelists of Russian magazines or radio advertisements – when you don't understand the language, it's really hard to understand.

Interviewer: So, you had language problems?

Student A: Yes.

Interviewer: How did you cope with them? Were you able to use something or did you have a Finnish version?

Student A: We had those too, but then another difficulty was that you didn't know which publications were beneficial for this topic, because there was no connection with your own life. So it was difficult to know which of the materials was worth looking for or translating, and what was worth ignoring from the start.

Interviewer: Was there no initiator, event manager, or teacher who could have helped you? Did you ask for any advice on this?

Student A: Well, apparently, a development company could have helped us, but the contact person there was a production assistant [also a student]. And we felt that they didn't want to. Or [we] could have offered ourselves more to do things. But what we agreed then was that the production assistant contacted the development company.

This seemed quite typical of how the students thought: they realised their potential to change things but then accepted the situation. This also arose in discussions about conducting their developmental assignments and obtaining more information about the event. In these situations they also mentioned that if they had been more active, they would probably have had an opportunity to influence outcomes. We can see how students struggled with similar challenges of commitment as the regional actors did (Chapter 8). They experienced the lack of information and the lack of clarity concerning the division of labour from their point of view. The course assignment was their object, but as a functional part of the whole network, the students shared its challenges.

The final challenge the students mentioned was assessment and its overall quality in the WBP model. The students had given quite a little thought to the division of labour and the extent of the developmental assignments and their assessment. Developmental assignments were assessed by self and peer-evaluation. The event manager, as a representative of working life, gave feedback through the evaluation passport (see Chapter 3). According to the students this could have been more thorough. There was no evaluation feedback meeting between the students, working-life partners, and teachers, which students saw as an inadequacy.

As development ideas the students felt it would be important in future to bring out the unclear things and expectations for the students' developmental assignment. They felt it would have been better if teachers and working-life partners had clearly introduced ideas they had yet to encounter or that they found challenging. The students suggested that it would also be good to get some feedback concerning the drafts of developmental assignments. This would have helped them to understand the extent of the assignment, what was good, and what still needed further work. Sharing knowledge with other students was also seen as good for learning. For example, the students suggested sharing their work on virtual platforms or in contact

lessons. The close connection between the content of the contact lessons and developmental assignments was considered important, as was real contact with working life, as the next excerpt demonstrates. The WBP model obviously lacked these types of interactive and communicative forums which, according to the students, were needed for high-quality assessment of the learning products.

Excerpt 9.3 Group interview, students of briefing plan group

Student A: Well, at least for the future I wish that these developmental assignments and the contents of the contact lessons in courses would link to each other more. It would give good contact with labour markets from these studies.

Student B: There should be some suggestions at school of what kind of places there are to go and ask. Not that there should be some assignment ready, but there should be places that could take on this kind of task.

Student A: So you don't need to start from the very beginning.

Developmental assignments and their connection with working life were viewed positively. The students also mentioned that the cases might be bigger in future, so one student could do several different developmental assignments for one project. This was exactly the point of the pedagogical model of MUAS/CME, but because it was then in its early stages it had been little used at this stage.

Teacher

How did the teacher of the speech communication course view this combination of contact lessons, developmental assignments, and guiding clinics, and what kind of development ideas did she have regarding the WBP model? The teacher highlighted the same issues as the students, in other words, the connection between theoretical knowledge and the developmental assignment and the clarity of the objectives of the course. Concerning the former, the teacher said the developmental assignment related to working life promoted deeper learning, but in the case of the MMR event the theme of the developmental assignment should have been covered more in the contact lessons. The teacher felt that the MMR assignment was probably too remote from the course's theoretical content. However, this was the 'first round' and had also been a learning experience for her (Excerpt 9.4).

Excerpt 9.4 Pair interview, teachers

Teacher of speech communication: I don't think it [the developmental assignment of the MMR] was artificial – it made learning deeper. But, on my behalf, I could have worked more on this briefing. Maybe it was a little remote from the content of speech communication. It related significantly to the tasks of the event manager, communication tasks, but maybe it wasn't dealt with enough in contact lessons. And it wasn't. But on the other hand in the first round there were eight different developmental assignments. It would have been quite a mix if we had handled all those themes in contact lessons.

The teacher's reflection concerning the eight assignments as too much to handle in contact lessons is illuminating in that it contrasts lecturing and assignments. It demonstrates that a new pedagogical model does not immediately change lecturing practices and instruct teachers how to combine the theoretical and practical elements throughout the course. The MMR process was only the first step towards this mode of action.

The second challenge the teacher raised was the clarity of the speech communication course's learning objectives, which appeared to be somewhat fragmented and difficult to apply to the real-life assignment. In this respect, teachers saw marketing as a clearer case. This suggests that if the goals fail to capture the 'real-life' object, it hinders the teacher's ability to create the necessary link between the theoretical content of the contact lessons and the practice-based developmental assignment.

Excerpt 9.5 Pair interview, teachers

Teacher of speech communication: And somehow that marketing plan is such a clear case that you can apply it to nearly anything.

Teacher of marketing: Yes. And still it's so wide here that it's good.

Teacher of speech communication: In speech communication there is a problem, or challenge, that there are so many possibilities and fragments you can attach this to [the developmental assignment of MMR].

The teacher mentioned the collaboration between the different courses and developmental assignments and the compulsory guiding clinics as development ideas. By the time of the interview the teacher of speech communication had already developed the model with colleagues and they were arranging the shared guiding clinic with other courses. In these shared guiding clinics students presented their developmental assignments to other students. She suggested that students should be

guided to see the collaboration possibilities across the courses. This was a way to strengthen the clinics as the mediating element between theory and practice – the need pointed out by students.

Challenges and development ideas of the marketing plan/marketing course

Students

First, the students of the marketing course also argued the event's ambiguity was caused by a lack of information about MMR as a whole. They did not know if their marketing plans had been utilised. In addition, there was little information available about Russian tourists. They also mentioned the problematic nature of collaboration with working life: here again the information chain was mentioned. The students were not in direct contact with the working-life partners; the event manager and the production assistant were the contact persons mediating between the students and the working-life partners (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1.3). This was considered too inflexible, and actually prevented students from constructing their learning object by using the knowledge working-life partners had of Russian tourists.

Second, the students of the marketing plan assignment saw that the components of the pedagogical model promoted their learning. The contact lessons gave support to the developmental assignment. The assignments were discussed in the lessons and students were able to search for extra knowledge. The guiding clinics were optional but highly recommended. The teacher had recommended that students should send some working papers for the teacher's comments during the process. The students felt that the content of contact lessons, the developmental assignment, and the guiding clinics supported each other and they struggled to utilise the books for the assignment, even though it was challenging, as the following excerpt shows. One student reported that she had found connections with the developmental assignment from the exam literature of another course taught by the same teacher.

Excerpt 9.6 Group interview, students in the marketing plan group

Interviewer: When you are reading and you have the developmental assignment, do you connect the reading with the assignment? In other words, do you think 'Hey, I can use this in my assignment'?

Student A: It's like you can't take it from the book. It's easy to see this could be a good thing, but then you forget. And when you are doing the assignment, you think what was that about?

[...]

Student B: If something leaps out at you, hey it could be like this... I thought that in the marketing course when we had that developmental assignment. And then we had that book for the exam. So I looked for something from the book which could be useful for the developmental assignment. But we did the assignment in a group, and not everyone agreed that they [the material from the book] belonged to it [developmental assignment].

The third challenge students discussed was the heavy workload of the assignment. They had had another course following the same pedagogical model, which they thought increased the workload. In the following excerpt students reflect on their workload.

Excerpt 9.7 Group interview, students in the marketing plan group

Student A: I find it difficult to separate marketing from cultural entrepreneurship because we had them at the same time and they were taught by the same teacher. So they merge in my mind and it's difficult to remember which is which. But on the whole I feel I have learned something.

Student B: Yes, considering that there were these two wide courses during a short period. Considering that, it was quite well structured. We got everything we needed from the lessons. Of course, we needed to find out things by ourselves too. There were a lot of things to do.

Student A: Yes, there were. It was quite tough with two similar courses.

The marketing plan students' development idea was that big projects like this could cover several courses. Another development idea related to sharing knowledge and learning by presenting the developmental assignments to other students. Both ideas had actually been implemented by the time of the interview.

Teacher

Like his colleague, the teacher of marketing emphasised the close connections between the components of the pedagogical model. In the speech communication course these did not form a unified whole in the case of MMR: instead, in the marketing course, the components seemed to support each other from both the students' and teacher's perspectives. The teacher of marketing mentioned the ambiguity of MMR as a challenge. There had been some disturbances of the information chain between the teacher of marketing and the event manager. The teacher had a part-time position, which meant he came to the university only to teach

and therefore did not participate in informal discussions or team meetings, whereas the teacher of speech communication worked full-time and shared an office with the event manager. In Excerpt 9.8 the teachers discuss the information chain.

Excerpt 9.8 Pair interview, teachers

Teacher of marketing: [...]Then the collaboration with the event manager and production assistant was a bit challenging. Or it was...

Interviewer: Why was it challenging?

Teacher of marketing: Well of course... Well, as a matter of fact I didn't actually coordinate the collaboration. I participated in one meeting at the start. And then I think the plan of the event wasn't quite clear yet. It was more like ideating.

The marketing teacher felt that collaboration with the event manager and production assistant was somewhat challenging. However, he also realised that he had done nothing to coordinate it. It is noteworthy that this is exactly the way the students enacted their commitment: realising their own potential to change the situation but not grasping the opportunities to do so.

In the marketing plan developmental assignment the students felt the pedagogical models supported each other. This was also the experience of the teacher. He mentioned that the developmental assignment of MMR was an essential part of the course. He felt the themes taught in contact lessons were also covered in the developmental assignment (Excerpt 9.9). The feedback students gave the teacher concerned the workload. They felt the assignment was difficult, but they had appreciated it.

The teacher stated that this pedagogical method was especially suited to marketing because of its clear structure. This accorded with the objectives of the course in the curriculum, which were well defined. The teachers reported that the pedagogical model enabled the teacher to observe quickly what students had learned and where they still needed guidance. The following excerpt also reveals how these teachers saw the relationship between theory and practice. Paradoxically, though, the WBP model optimally supported marketing that, at the outset, was based on a clear theory-practice connection; the model was less supportive to speech communication that, with a more open-ended connection with vocational practices, would have benefited from pedagogical structure.

Excerpt 9.9 Pair interview, teachers

Teacher of marketing: Well, some students complained that there was so much work to do and other assignments too – but I think it's good. And the teacher saw how many

things taught in theory lessons go in one ear and out the other, and they don't assimilate it. It feels like learning happens when they're writing it [the assignment]. That's when you really need to think about things.

[...]

Teacher of marketing: Yes, it's important in working life to have these kinds of projects, teamwork. That's pretty much the point.

These teachers see theoretical knowledge as a tool to gain and utilise knowledge in the working-life context. This is precisely the point of WBP. The marketing teacher shared his development ideas about collaboration between courses and compulsory guiding clinics with his colleague. He also underlined the importance of working-life partners' participation in presenting events. As a part-time teacher, he also emphasised the significance of colleagues in this kind of pedagogical model. When part-time teachers taught a course using the WBP model, in which processes were longer, the support of colleagues was crucial.

Working-life partners' perspective on the work-based pedagogy model

Because the working-life partners did not know the pedagogical model as such, the interview questions related to the UAS's activity and the students who were supposed to contact them during the MMR project. The working-life partners' reflections focused on the lack of information, the development ideas regarding co-planning with the students, and the connection between theory and practice.

Like the students and teachers, working-life partners also felt they did not have enough information about the big picture of MMR. The responsibilities, process, and division of labour remained vague to them. In the case of MMR the working-life partners who were interviewed had no contact with the students concerning developmental assignments with one exception (Excerpt 9.10).

Excerpt 9.10 Interview with working-life partners

Representative of travel agency: There was no contact [with the students], except when the event had already been planned. Then we got some mail from the students giving us more information about the event, and we put it on our website and informed our member companies.

Further questioning revealed that this information had come from one student, who was the production assistant. This confirmed what the students had said about the

production assistant being the contact person with the working-life partners. However, when the students were undertaking their developmental assignments they had not contacted the working-life partners at all. The other interviewee was approached by the event manager. This interviewee felt they did not even know if MMR was going to happen before the event manager approached them with a request for shared marketing. This interviewee also mentioned some problems in the information chain as the following excerpt 9.11 shows.

Excerpt 9.11 Interview with working-life partners

Representative of development organisation: I think there were some benefits [of shared marketing], but there were also disadvantages. False information came from somewhere concerning our event. Someone gave false information to the public – I mean schedules, addresses, and that kind of stuff.

Interviewer: Did you discover where it came from?

Representative of development organisation: I think it came somehow from the MMR publicists. It wasn't just that we were confused about the division of labour and collaboration. On the other hand, we didn't need or expect this. We didn't know that someone was doing some informing on our behalf. And on the other hand, and this should be part of the picture, I think these kinds of thing should be discussed together beforehand, so we do it correctly and also give the correct information.

[...]

Representative of development organisation: Yes, in a sense. We realised that we were responsible – something like that. I guess this MMR should do something with its own processes and inform people about the events. I didn't expect that kind of help. But as I said, I always tried to give logical information in that direction. We like collaboration. It's not such a big problem, but we try to see to our own responsibility.

Thus, the interaction between the students and the working-life partners was indirect and 'virtual', for the time being. For students, the working-life contact was the MMR event manager who was their teacher, and for the working-life partner, there was only one student acting as a contact person, who worked as a production assistant for the event. The event manager and production assistant were in contact with the students and evaluated their performance according to the competence passport. All participants, however, felt that direct contact between the students and working life should have been better and in accordance with the idea of the WBP model.

One of the interviewed working-life partners took up co-planning with the students. In general, the working-life partners felt the students should be more involved in planning and development with local organisations. They saw it is as

positive that teachers bore the main responsibility for guiding but stated that working-life partners were willing to help where they could. Another development idea, particularly interesting from the perspective of the WBP model, is the connection between theory and practice. This interviewee emphasised the connection between the courses and working-life cases. She underlined that it was important that these components formed a whole with the precise goals of the pedagogical model under study (Excerpt 9.12).

Excerpt 9.12 Interview with working-life partners

Interviewer: [...] So, the students would be involved in planning and marketing and would in this way be more closely involved. Do you think this kind of collaboration would be good?

Representative of the travel agency: Yes, absolutely it would be good. However, it would need to be done through teaching or collaboration meetings, or something like that. In any case, so the perspective of tourism would also come very clearly to the students in event management, that it would be notified in the course, so they are not two separate things. And we should target group thinking even more. [...] It also requires that the UAS gets the annual planning cycle. The events need to be planned and marketed ahead of time.

The representatives of the interviewed organisations saw the students' role as developers and coordinators, but also more traditionally as offering help in busy seasons. However, as the previous excerpt showed, working-life partners were interested in more collaborative developing.

9.3 The Participants' Reflections on Learning

In this section I explore the reflections of students, teachers, and working-life partners on their learning. I analyse and interpret, in the light of reflection, the expansive-learning potential of the implemented pedagogical model.

Research into inter-company networks has distinguished two types of learning, 'learning through networks' and 'learning to network'. This means that the network partners simultaneously learn something new related to their business and they learn new collaborative practices (Powell 1990; Toivainen 2003). The interview question, *What did you learn in the process of MMR?* invited the participants (students, teachers, and working-life partners) to reflect on these two objects of learning, which I have named 'content-related learning' and 'collaboration-related learning'.

Content-related learning

Students

The students undertaking the briefing plan developmental assignment said they had learned how to produce a briefing plan, what its content should be, and how to make it interesting. They also mentioned that there were some excellent and useful books on learning materials (Excerpt 9.13). They were learning the goals of the developmental assignment and theoretical knowledge of the course's reference book. However, as the students were not informed if their plan had been implemented, their conception of the different elements of the pedagogical model, the whole picture of the course, and the MMR event itself remained incomplete.

Excerpt 9.13 Group interview, students of briefing plan group

Student A: Well, at least the references relating to our assignment were useful. What was it [the book]?

Student B: Yes, I was thinking about that too [many people talking at once].

Student A: Yes, it was a communication handbook for cultural managers, that became familiar. Wow, this was good. And maybe we hadn't bumped into it anywhere else.

Student B: There were only a couple of pages about the actual topic [briefing plan] in a way [many people talking at once].

Student C: Yes, attached to it, but when you think about everything else there was, that book was a very useful find.

The students involved in the marketing plan emphasised similar elements. One felt he had learned everything essential concerning marketing. In short, they had learned how to produce a marketing plan (Excerpt 9.14).

Excerpt 9.14 Group interview, students of marketing plan group

Student A: That's how to do a marketing plan. And all the details that need to be considered. Even if I didn't proceed any further in this project (MMR), I still learned something.

[...]

Student B: [...] I think the biggest thing I learned was that if in the future I have to do a marketing plan, I know I have those field notes in a file. And I have a version from when we tried to do it. I guess at that stage things will come back to me relating to this. The kind of things that need to be considered when you do a marketing plan.

Both groups seemed to achieve the goals of the developmental assignments, but did they achieve the goals of the course? The interview focused on the goals of the developmental assignments but indicates that they did not cover all the course's goals. For example, it is difficult to see the goals of generic skills (Jääskelä et al. 2018) such as 'outline the basic concepts and developmental lines of marketing' or 'evaluate realistically the student's own speech communication skills' achieved in developmental assignments. Developmental assignments are more likely to see success with vocation-specific goals such as 'analyse factors affecting quality and produce a marketing plan' or 'learn to communicate purposefully and effectively in meetings, negotiations, interviews, and in the media context'.

Teachers

The teachers' learning discourse was divided into reflections on students' learning and their own learning. The former concerned what they thought the students learned from MMR and more generally from the pedagogical model of the CME programme. Because teaching and students' learning are the core of the teachers' work, I categorise these objects of learning as content-related learning.

The teachers felt the pedagogical model of the CME programme was a good way to teach. They highlighted deep learning, the relevance of studies based on authentic cases, the application of knowledge, and the promotion of generic competences required in working life (for example, teamwork and creating and knowledge application) as benefits. They also mentioned that the teacher could immediately see students' ability to apply knowledge in practice and the learning process could be given timely support. The teachers had learned about the importance of guiding students' work. Guidance was also important in students' learning experiences. In the marketing plan developmental assignment the students felt they had received enough support. The briefing plan students needed more guidance to understand the relationship between theoretical knowledge and the working-life assignment. The most likely explanation for this concerns the differences in the contact lessons; the teachers reported that students in the marketing plan group seemed to participate more actively.

In discussing their own learning the teachers underlined that the entire process was itself a learning experience. This object of learning was articulated by the speech communication teacher as follows (Excerpt 9.15):

Excerpt 9.15 Pair interview, teachers

Teacher of speech communication: This process has been the biggest lesson. It's a way of testing if it works. And if it's worth it? How much does it require my own resources? And I must say I've learned to rationalise this and to cut out the extras. If you think about it with that class we have had eight different developmental assignments. Now [after MMR] we have three.

Interviewer: And now you are discussing this work-based pedagogy as a process?

Teacher of speech communication: Yes, and how contact lessons and developmental assignments should relate to each other.

Interviewer: Rationalising?

Teacher of speech communication: Yes, and then maybe students will learn by themselves to cut out the extras. And to rationalise in the sense that resources have diminished, so it is essential to observe critically. And to be a sort of fly on the wall to see how I am actually acting here. And how do I use the time? And planning the developmental assignments has become easier.

The object of learning for the teacher was clearly the pedagogical model itself. The experience of MMR had taught her to teach more efficiently, responding to the needs students presented. This entailed relating theoretical knowledge and working-life assignments more closely. Besides the pedagogical model the teacher of speech communication also reflected on the learning experiences concerning her topics (Excerpt 9.16).

Excerpt 9.16 Pair interview, teachers

Teacher of speech communication: Maybe for me I've learned that communication is in the first place interaction. So here we've placed the other foot on the plot of community communication and I've learned quite a lot of new things, so in a sense it has expanded it.

The other teacher said he had learned that the pedagogical model and teaching could be developed. She instead emphasised the significance of the visibility of students' learning processes and its guidance. Like the students, teachers had also extended their own content-related competences, which resulted in studying new aspects of their subject. It had also been an important learning experience to realise how significant students' own responsibility and attitude towards learning was.

Working-life partners

The representative of the travel agency saw that the best lesson was that planning often started with big ideas, while the concrete work to realise ideas was forgotten. She felt that this had happened in this case. She articulated that there needed to be critical mass and a big picture, but that a smaller working group should quickly be formed to begin to concretise plans.

Excerpt 9.17 Interview with working-life partner

Representative of travel agency: Actually, I've also had very similar thoughts in other similar cases where [people] start to invent and develop something new. This comes of course from my background – I do this kind of operative, practical work. And I think very often we stumble into things, that we don't remember that steps need to be taken one at a time, that too often people start with plans that are too big. And the perspective is sort of up there, there is already the thought and the idea that we'll have that kind of event. But we don't remember what it requires if we're actually to get there. We can't jump those stairs, but it's about basic work. And who is going to do it? And where does the money come from? Practical things like that. And what is extremely good is that it's good that there are a lot of partners, but it's better to do the basic work with a smaller team. Because if twenty people get together to plan, as in this case, one event or a series of events, it's way too much. And then there are people around the table who aren't doing the work. It's the basic work and operations that people stumble on way too often.

In sum, the students' content-related learning was oriented to the course's assignments and how theory can be useful in practice, but they had not achieved a holistic picture of the course, the pedagogical model, or the MMR event. The teachers' content-related learning produced a comprehensive view of the new pedagogical model, especially related to improving teaching and their students' learning. In contrast the working-life partner's comment suggests that their learning involved ideas of how to improve the process – how the development and implementation of new ideas in the collaboration network should be carried out. We can see that the students' and teachers' content learning outcomes were closely embedded in their basic activities, studying, and teaching. For the working-life representative learning was 'beyond' every-day business, embedded in a new kind of collaborative process.

Bringing this all together, each partner approached content-related learning from a different perspective. The analysis opens up two possible interpretations: 1) the students and teachers kept to their separate activities, as in conventional school learning, whereas the working-life informant had expanded her/his view during the

project; 2) the different views already demonstrate expansive learning that would have been impossible without a shared orientation towards the innovative and shared object of the MMR event.

Collaboration-related learning

Students

Besides content-related learning interviewees reflected on collaboration-related learning. The briefing plan students emphasised the experience of producing the briefing with other students and the event manager. They felt they got ‘the wheel rolling’ together (Excerpt 9.18). This group emphasised collaboration even more than content. They had been given responsibility to manage the process by themselves, which may explain their emphasising aspects of collaboration.

Excerpt 9.18 Group interview, students of briefing plan group

Student A: Maybe it was just that we needed to gather the information. To focus on what we were actually doing. So you got yourself into it – somehow you got it.

Student B: Maybe the learning from collaboration, when it was the production assistant and event manager and us. Together we got the wheel rolling, and we learned to collaborate.

Student C: Well, the experience of planning this kind of briefing, of course that too.

The marketing plan students referred to some problems with group dynamics. Of the group of four only two participated in the interview. They reported that they had learned ‘how to get the best out of everyone’. They felt their planning should have been more organised, and teamwork was not always necessarily the best solution. They also mentioned responsibility as a learning outcome. In the following excerpt the students reflect on this.

Excerpt 9.19 Group interview, marketing plan students

Student A: Well, mostly that [learning experience] teamwork is not always the best possible option. Of course, when the work is as wide as this it’s good that there are several people doing it. But the teacher emphasised group dynamics many times, which was quite lost on us. So I learned about work again.

Interviewer: What did you learn about it?

Student A: Well, maybe work planning should be more organised, so it wouldn't go that way. Some of the group don't show up, and don't feel it's important.

[...]

Student B: I need to say something about that teamwork. I recognised quite early on that it was going to be quite demanding. And there are people in the class you don't necessarily want to start teamwork with. And I was really pleased that I was with Student A. I think it was us two who did this. And it was a nice experience to take turns writing a text with someone. And then with someone else it doesn't work at all. And then there is someone who doesn't necessarily bother to show up. I think it was nice to be in a different group than usual.

We may conclude that these students had learned cooperation and achieved working-life competences in accordance with the goals of WBP: how to work with different people; and why teamwork is not a standard solution. This needs to be considered in models of work-based learning (WBL): is teamwork accepted as an ideal form of work at the expense of some other useful methods that fit better, for example, networking across organisations (Engeström 2008)?

Teachers

The teachers' reflections also emphasised the collaborative nature of learning. They saw students learning from each other's work as a strength of WBP. In Excerpt 9.20 the teachers reflect on collaboration with working life in the context of the pedagogical model. They realise the expansive potential (Engeström, 1987/2015) of the model, claiming that although working-life collaboration 'hasn't been strong yet, it's still there'. The next steps in developing the model would be utilising the collaboration between both the working-life partners and the students and courses.

Excerpt 9.20 Pair interview, teachers

Teacher of speech communication: This [the WBP model] is more sensible. Although the relationship with working life hasn't been strong yet, it's still there. The ideal thing would be that we could take the thing being done to a real work community and discuss it with them. We're not at that level yet. [...] And it has become clearer to me as a teacher that the student has the responsibility for his or her learning. This [model] gives a real opportunity to the student to be in the hub of the process. And then this makes students', teachers', and working-life partners' learning possible. But most of all I underline the connection between the student and learning.

This teacher's underlining of the students' learning suggests that although the WBP model has evolved around the idea of equality and each participant's learning, the idea of the student as the most important learner is still embedded in their thinking. This is naturally in line with their teacher's work assignment but demonstrates how challenging it is to cross boundaries and see all parties' learning as mutually nurturing.

In the interview the marketing teacher realised the potential for collaboration between the different courses. He was even a little annoyed that he had not noticed the possibilities earlier and that the students had not noticed it themselves (Excerpt 9.21).

Excerpt 9.21 Pair interview, teachers

Teacher of marketing: I am wondering why students didn't notice that hey, we could do this together [people talking at the same time].

Teacher of speech communication: Now, for example, when we do this in marketing, we clearly could attach here the communication plan for internal communication with the production team.

Interviewer: So that they [students] start to see it by themselves?

Teacher of speech communication: Yes, they start to see it by themselves. And when our interests are sort of media-based, I'm already in contact [with working life], what about if we do this? Would it be OK? And they could come and negotiate. But with very little effort we could get it, we could arrange a shared opening event for the developmental assignments of the courses.

Teacher of marketing: Yes, exactly.

In sum, the teachers' object of learning was clearly the pedagogical model of the CME programme. In the process they seemed to realise the importance of collaboration in learning new modes of VHE activity; they presented concrete development ideas about promoting collaboration – collaboration with working life, between courses, etc. In seeing that they were not 'there' yet, but being convinced of the potential of the WBP model to bring them forward, they expanded their object of learning.

Working-life partners

The working-life partners' learning experiences in the MMR process were mainly focused on collaboration to the extent that the content-related and the collaboration-related learning merged in their interview accounts. They did not present their ideas

as broadly as did the students and teachers. While people are accustomed to analysing and describing their learning in the education context, such analysing is probably less common in working life. The representative of the development organisation emphasised realising different interests and responsibilities as a learning experience (Excerpt 9.22). He summarised this as follows:

Excerpt 9.22 Interview with working-life partners

Representative of development organisation: [...] The learning has probably also in my case happened through stumbling and failing. Just learning to understand what the other partner wants from this collaboration. [...] In these collaboration projects there has been a kind of contradictory lesson. Collaboration is of no use to anyone if not everyone takes their own responsibility. If the basis of collaboration is trying in a way to get benefit from others, it can't continue for long. And it doesn't lead to anything good. It's a bit like letting others do your work, and that can't be collaboration. That is something I have learned from this. This may sound quite noble, but for real that's how it is.

The above excerpt captures two crucial aspects of learning in network collaboration also proved by research: learning to understand what other partners want from collaboration can be extended to the notion of relational expertise, 'knowing what others know', etc. (Edwards 2005). In addition, the conditions of learning in networks fail if participants are expecting egotistical benefits from collaboration with others (Sol et al. 2013). The working-life partners called for commitment and concrete action.

9.4 Summary

This chapter examines answers to the research question, *How did the cultural event test and challenge the WBP model of VHE and enhance the participants' expansive learning?* Pursuing the ideal of WBP enhancing all participants' learning (Chapter 1), the evaluations of the WBP model and the participants' learning are studied from the students', teachers', and working-life partners' perspectives.

The analysis was conducted by scrutinising the students' developmental assignments connected to the MMR event, the briefing plan, and the marketing plan. The assignments were analysed because they materialised the implementation of the conceptual and abstract WBP model. Students across these study groups largely agreed about the challenges and development ideas, but there were also differences

concerning implementation. This will be discussed in the next chapter, where the implementation of two course assignments enable an examination of the relationship of the WBP model to the dilemma of school learning (Chapter 4.4).

A challenge for the students was to deal with the confusing relationship between the content of contact lessons and the developmental assignment. Another challenge was the ambiguity and lack of information concerning the MMR event. Students also raised the assessment of the course's outcome. The marketing plan students also mentioned the lack of feedback concerning working life and the workload entailed in having another course based on the WBP model running simultaneously (Table 16).

The challenges for the teachers were the loose connection between the theory content of contact lessons and the practical application of the developmental assignment, the unclear objectives of the course, and the ambiguity of the MMR event. Again, the relationship between theory and practice is a classic dilemma the WBP model was intended to resolve. As Miettinen and Peisa (2002) point out, WBP is a promising way to solve the epistemological problems of work simulations in schools, as well as sensitising school studies to changes in working life.

From the working-life perspective the challenges were the lack of information concerning MMR and the lack of direct contact with the students. These challenges were related to the organisational structure of MMR (Figure 1), where contact between students and working life was mediated by the event manager and the production assistant. This arrangement left the students' involvement in the working-life project 'virtual' and impeded collaborative planning.

The students' development idea was that the teachers and working-life partners should openly raise what was unclear to them and reveal what they did not know. The briefing plan students also wanted more feedback concerning their developmental assignment drafts during the process. Students were also interested in knowledge sharing through virtual platforms, increasing direct contacts with working life, working on the same developmental assignments in several courses, and undertaking bigger projects. All these ideas demonstrate the students' readiness to expand the object of learning in the spirit of the new WBP model to couple academic studies with working life.

Teachers also expected to see more collaboration between different courses and developmental assignments in future. They suggested guiding should be compulsory and working-life partners should be involved in the seminars at which students presented the results of their developmental assignments. They felt this would improve the WBP model's usability and help to stabilise it.

Working-life partners encouraged co-planning with students, highlighted the connection between theory and practice, the content of contact lessons and working-life projects, and direct contact between students and working life. Their challenges and development ideas corresponded with the views of students and teachers (Table 16).

In Chapter 10 I return to the two developmental assignments and discuss their implications for the implementation of the WBP model.

Table 16. Students', teachers', and working-life partners' challenges and development ideas concerning the WBP model

	Briefing plan		Marketing plan	
Perspective	Challenges	Development ideas	Challenges	Development ideas
Students	<p>1) Connection between contact lessons and the developmental assignment was confusing</p> <p>2) Lack of information affected the big picture of MMR and the division of labour</p> <p>3) Concern about assessment of the quality of assignments in the pedagogical model</p>	<p>1) To reveal what was unclear and the expectations of the students' developmental assignment</p> <p>2) Feedback concerning the drafts of developmental assignments</p> <p>3) Sharing their work on virtual platforms or in contact lessons</p> <p>4) Direct contact with working life</p> <p>5) The close connection between the content of the contact lessons and developmental assignments</p> <p>6) The cases might be bigger in future so one student could do several different developmental assignments for one project</p>	<p>1) Event's ambiguity was caused by a lack of information about MMR as a whole</p> <p>2) Lack of feedback from working life</p> <p>3) The heavy workload of the assignment</p>	<p>1) Bigger projects, meaning the combination of different courses for the same projects</p> <p>2) Sharing knowledge and learning with each other by presenting the developmental assignments to other students</p>
Teachers	<p>1) Loose connection between theoretical knowledge of contact lessons and the developmental assignment</p> <p>2) Unclear objectives of the course</p> <p>3) Ambiguity of MMR</p>	<p>1) Collaboration between the different courses and developmental assignments</p> <p>2) Compulsory guiding clinics</p>	<p>1) Ambiguity of MMR</p> <p>2) Disturbances in the information chain</p>	<p>1) Collaboration between courses</p> <p>2) Compulsory guiding clinics</p> <p>3) Importance of working-life partners' participation in presenting results</p> <p>4) Significance of colleagues in this kind of pedagogical model</p>

	Challenges	Development ideas
Working-life partners	1) Lack of information about the big picture of MMR (responsibilities, process, and division of labour) 2) No contact with the students concerning developmental assignments	1) Co-planning with the students 2) Connection between theory and practice 3) Direct contact between the students and working life

The second part of the analysis explored the expansive learning potential of content-related and collaboration-related learning. The students reported that they had learned how to conduct the briefing and marketing plans, which was the intended content-related learning outcome of the courses. Some students said they had learned to apply the theoretical knowledge of the reference book to the practical assignment (Table 17). Students' collaboration-related learning took place when they learned how to conduct the developmental assignment with other students and event managers. They felt they had learned 'how to get the best out of everyone'. Students also mentioned that the more responsibility they were given in developmental assignments, the more they felt they gained self-confidence and learned for their future work.

The teachers' learning discourse was divided into reflections on students' learning and their own learning. This division has also been observed in studies of teachers' learning, where the literature has typically identified two categories: *content-oriented*, where focus is on knowledge transmission; and *learning/student-oriented*, focusing on ensuring learning (Töytäri et al. 2016). Teachers' content-related learning was clearly oriented to the WBP model. They reflected on the benefits of WBP for promoting students' deep learning and working-life skills, the importance of guidance, learning concerning their subjects, and the importance of students' own responsibility for and attitude to learning. The teachers saw the entire process as a learning process. They thus learned above all how to further develop the WBP model. For example, they seemed to realise the potential of collaboration between different courses.

Working-life partners' content-related learning was related to the collaborative planning process. They observed that planning often started with great visions, whereas the concrete implementation work was forgotten. One suggested the solution would be to organise a smaller working group from the outset. Working-life partners' collaboration-related learning focused on realising network participants'

different interests and responsibilities in the process. They had also learned the importance of network participants' commitment and the meaning of concrete actions.

Table 17. Participants' reflections on objects of learning and typical statements about learning in the case of MMR.

	Content-related learning	Collaboration-related learning	Typical statements about learning experiences
Students	<p>1) How to produce a briefing plan or marketing plan for a real-life need and event</p> <p>2) Theoretical knowledge of the course material applied to the assignment</p>	<p>1) Experience of producing the briefing with other students and the event manager</p> <p>2) Ability to utilise people's competences for the object (relational agency)</p> <p>3) How to make planning more organised; teamwork is not automatically the best solution</p> <p>4) The more students are given responsibility in their developmental assignments, the more they learn</p>	<p>Well, maybe it was exactly that we needed to assemble it. Focus on what we're actually doing here. So you got yourself into that...'</p> <p>Maybe we learned about collaboration when there was the event manager and the production assistant and us. Together we got that big wheel going round and so learned to collaborate</p> <p>Well, experience of planning this kind of briefing, which is of course involved too</p>
Teachers	<p>1) WBP model: promotes deep learning, the relevance of studies based on authentic cases, the application of knowledge, and the promotion of generic competences required in working life (for example, teamwork and creating and knowledge application)</p> <p>2) In the WBP model the teacher can immediately see students' ability to apply knowledge in practice and the learning process can be given timely support</p> <p>3) The importance of guiding students' work</p> <p>4) The entire process was itself a learning experience – how to develop WBP model further, rationalising teacher's work</p> <p>5) Learning experiences concerning topics and pedagogical model</p> <p>6) To realise the significance of students' own responsibility and attitude towards learning</p>	<p>1) Collaborative nature of learning: students learning from each other's work as a strength of the WBP model</p> <p>2) Realising the potential for collaboration between the different courses</p> <p>3) Seeing that they were not 'there' yet, but being convinced of the potential of the WBP model to bring them forward (expansive learning)</p>	<p>The biggest lesson has come from the whole process. Sort of testing if this is working and is it worth doing? [...]</p> <p>Well, what I learned best here was that I saw the aspects of the theories which the students found most difficult to understand – and that way found the things needing more emphasis in theory lessons.</p>

<p>Working-life partners</p>	<p>1) Planning often starts with big ideas, while the concrete work is forgotten</p> <p>2) First, there is a need for several people and a big picture, but there should quickly be a smaller working group to begin to concretise plans</p>	<p>1) Realising different interests and responsibilities (relational agency)</p> <p>2) Called for commitment and concrete actions in networking (interactive relationship between subject and object)</p> <p>3) Each participant's responsibility for collaboration</p>	<p>And I think that very often people stumble because they forget that they need to take those stairs step by step, and they start with plans that are sort of too big [...]</p> <p>In these collaboration projects we have learned that it is a little contradictory. Collaboration is of no use to anybody if all the participants don't emphasise their own responsibility [...]</p>
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10 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Because of the structural change of working life and the major reforms of vocational education of the 2010s, new pedagogical approaches to conducting vocational education and training in collaboration with working life are perhaps more needed than ever in education (Europe 2020 strategy; Ministry of Education 2017; Sonmark et al. 2017). The present dissertation contributes to this discussion by analysing the innovative project between Vocational Higher Education (VHE) and working life in the particular context of collaboration between a Finnish University of Applied Sciences (UAS) and a network of regional culture and service providers. To understand this complex combination of different activities and interests, I chose to approach it from three essential conceptual perspectives: strategic partnership; commitment; and the model of work-based pedagogy (WBP). The research questions were examined in the context of the new cultural event Mikkeli Meets Russia (MMR), which was an outcome of the strategic partnership between Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences' (MUAS) Cultural Management Education degree programme (CME) and the City Theatre. The planning and production process broadened to regional networking and this was connected with the WBP model of MUAS/CME. In this chapter I summarise the findings and present my contribution to the CHAT approach as applied to the analysis of network collaboration and learning.

10.1 The Expansive Development of the Strategic Partnership

I analysed the development of the strategic partnership between MUAS/CME and the City Theatre during the MMR process (Chapter 7). The development of the strategic partnership was analysed as a learning process (Toivainen 2003), especially focusing on tracing the potential of expansive learning (Engeström 1987/2015) for a new kind of partnership between an education institution and work.

Research question 1: How did the strategic partnership between the regional institution of VHE (the University of Applied Sciences) and the cultural

institution (the City Theatre) develop through the initiative of the cultural event?

The strategic partnership between MUAS/CME and the City Theatre developed in four phases. These phases were: (1) *the need for collaboration*; (2) *the establishment of the strategic partnership*; (3) *constructing MMR by networking with local organisations*; and (4) *the consolidation of the strategic partnership*. Each phase was analysed based on its critical event identifying the phase, the object of collaboration constructed on the phase, and developmental contradictions. As a result, I presented the dimensions of the partnership's potential expansion (Hasu 2000). The findings indicated that the process of the MMR cultural event expanded the strategic partnership between MUAS and the City Theatre to the next level of intensity. Their partnership developed through an expansive cycle of learning starting from the need state and proceeding to the phase of consolidation. The developmental contradictions that explain the dynamics of the partnership process related mostly to the commitment of local players and to the object of collaboration (Engeström 1987/2015).

A trigger for the strategic partnership was the economic and political pressures both partners were facing. These pressures drove these two organisations to seek new ways to act, or 'to survive', as they put it. The partners sought both instrumental financial profit and developmental content-related benefits from the collaboration (Toiviainen 2003). The critical event for the first developmental phase, titled, *The need for collaboration*, was the meeting to which the representative of the City Theatre invited the representatives of MUAS/CME to propose a strategic partnership agreement to take collaboration to the next level. The object of collaboration of the first phase was a co-constructed idea of a long-term partnership, later called a strategic partnership. The proposal materialised in the planning of a joint Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) project. The strategic partnership was established as a solution to the developmental primary contradiction (Engeström 1987/2015) of creating new products with fewer resources. The participants considered and elaborated on their previous and forthcoming ideas in order to resolve the contradiction. The dimension of the potential expansion of the first developmental phase was anticipatory-temporal (Hasu 2000).

The second phase of the development of collaboration was *The establishment of the strategic partnership*. A critical event characterising this phase was the decision to draw up a strategic partnership agreement. The strategic partnership was used as a tool to strengthen both institutions' positions at a time of political and economic pressure

(Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven 1996; Min et al. 2005). The object of activity of the second developmental phase was the partnership agreement and the initial ideas for MMR. The phase's developmental contradiction occurred on the secondary level (Engeström 1987/2015) between the emerging object and the community. The community of strategic partners was too small concerning the object, the evolving idea of the MMR event. The partners' work led to the social-spatial expansion (Hasu 2000) entailing a consideration of who else should be included in the object construction process (Edwards 2011; Engeström 1999; Miettinen 2005; Stetsenko 2005).

As a result of the social-spatial expansion, the strategic partners established a regional network, which was the third development phase of collaboration, named *Constructing MMR by networking with local organisations*. A critical event for this third developmental phase of collaboration was the regional organisations' trip to St Petersburg, including, among others, MUAS and the City Theatre. There the original interest in enhancing collaboration materialised in the idea of developing a new product for Russian tourists at New Year. The object of this third phase was the concept of MMR moulded by multifold expectations. Two developmental contradictions occurred during this phase. The first was the tertiary contradiction that occurred between old and new courses of action (Engeström 1987/2015). The participants were attempting to create a new event through networking, which presented a new way of working in the communities of education and working life. This created tension in the division of labour and funding – who was in charge of what and how the costs were shared. The second developmental contradiction emerged between the strategic partners and the network. This can be interpreted as the quaternary contradiction between the united strategic partners and the newcomers of the regional network. The object was more familiar to the strategic partners than it was to the other participants.

The potential expansions of the third phase were anticipatory-temporal and moral-ideological (Hasu 2000). The participants in the networking meeting sought answers concerning which previous and forthcoming ideas should be considered in the object construction (anticipatory-temporal) and especially who was responsible for and who decided (moral-ideological) on the activities. The latter expansion was especially emphasised. While the learners were the strategic partners in the first two phases, the network in this third phase was set as the role of the learner.

Because of the strategic partners' strong commitment to each other and to MMR, others saw MMR as 'their' event. This had the unintentional effect of pushing others to the outer circle (Freeman 2011; Íñigo-Mora 2004; Pälli 2004). Consequently, the

networking meeting discussions also dealt much with questions concerning the socio-spatial dimension: in other words, who would be potential partners and what their role and interest would be.

The fourth and final phase of the development of collaboration was the *Consolidation of the strategic partnership*. The critical event of this phase was the evaluation of the strategic partnership through the critical consideration of the object of collaboration that was the MMR process embedded in the future of the strategic partnership. The result was that the strategic partnership was expanded from one degree programme to encompass MUAS as a whole. The developmental, quaternary contradiction concerned how to consolidate new practice at MUAS and the City Theatre. The potential expansion of the object was systemic-developmental (Hasu 2000), relating to how the future activity of the strategic partners would be shaped. In this fourth phase the partners evaluated and redesigned their strategic partnership towards an even more expansive and beneficial collaboration.

I conclude that my research brought new knowledge and understanding of the learning dynamics of a strategic partnership and expanded the analytical potential of the CHAT concepts previously used (Engeström 1987/2015; Hasu 2000; Toiviainen 2003). The study revealed expansive learning as the process of object formation, starting from the vague ideas of partnership, then engaging a growing number of members, and, finally, re-focusing on the new expanded object of the strategic partnership's activity. The strategic partnership was expanded to other degree programmes at MUAS, increasing the potential of the competences for the City Theatre and creating new learning opportunities for students from a wider range of study fields. The strategic partnership itself proved a powerful collaborative tool for committed partners. However, it also had the unintentional effect of creating an inner group of strategic partners, making the commitment of other partners more challenging. Therefore, I found it important to carry out a separate analysis, focusing on the commitment of the participants in the wider regional network.

10.2 The Commitment of the Regional Networking Participants

The second research question expanded the perspective from bilateral collaboration to the regional network and its commitment to new activity (Andrésen et al. 2012; Gundlach, Achrol & Mentzer 1995).

Research question 2: How did the participants' commitment to the planning and implementation of the cultural event emerge in the larger regional network?

In order to answer this question, I developed a multi-conceptual approach to the analysis of commitment in regional networks. The approach synthesised concepts of existing organisational studies, employing three analytical perspectives of commitment: level of intensity (Rondinelli & London 2003); concerns of collaboration (Sullivan 2010); and conflicts of interest (Andrésen et al. 2012). Correspondingly, my method proceeded through three phases of analysis. The first step was simply to establish which organisations participated in each meeting and how many times they addressed the meeting. Second, I carried out a content analysis (e.g. Graneheim, Lindgren & Lundman 2017) of the topics of each meeting, categorising them in six types of *concerns of collaboration*. Of the six concerns, 'interest' and 'investment' were related to commitment (Andrésen et al. 2012) and were chosen for closer study. The third step was to examine what conflicts of interest occurred during the project and how they were resolved. Conflicts of interest were analysed by the linguistic manifestations of critical conflicts (Engeström & Sannino 2011).

My analysis produced three categories of commitment in a regional network. I named the different types *developers*, *realisers*, and *leavers*. The *developers* actively constructed the object of activity at the networking meetings. The object of activity was visible and meaningful to them and they invested time and work resources in the MMR cultural event. The developers were actively involved in the event's planning and production. They saw the event as a long-term undertaking. The developers saw the importance of the network and invested effort in making it work. There was a clear connection between the intensity of participation and commitment: the most committed organisations used their time and work resources by attending the event's planning and conducting process.

The *realisers*, on the other hand, played a role in conducting the event, although they were not actively involved in the planning phase. They were local entrepreneurs who conducted their normal business, this time as part of MMR, mainly utilising shared marketing. The *realisers'* participation in the actual event production remained relatively narrow. Their commitment to MMR was not strong but by participating they had some input in the event.

The organisations that did not eventually commit to MMR at all were the *leavers*. Most of the organisations belonged to this group. At the outset the leavers' attitude towards MMR was 'wait and see'. They wanted to know what was going on, but their own input was non-existent from the beginning of the process to its end.

What were the factors of network activity that contributed to different types of commitment? First, commitment seemed essentially to relate to the dynamic nature between the subject and object of activity (Edwards 2005; Leont'ev 1987; Stetsenko 2005) and to object construction (Miettinen 2000). In the dynamic relationship between the subject and the object the subject works on the object, but the object itself works back on the subject (Stetsenko 2005) and, in changing the subject, in this case, the way (s)he is committed to the production of the object. The strategic partners had a special relationship with the object because they were the initiators of the idea and had worked to bring it forth. The affective component in commitment was strong, as is generally the case in long-term and lasting relationships (Roxenhall 2011). The activity-theoretical perspective highlights the emotional aspect of work, motivation, and the object (Roth 2007). This seems to accord with this study's findings. The strategic partners clearly felt a bond with each other and with MMR. In sum, affective commitment evolves through long-term inter-personal relationships (Roxenhall 2011) and in relationship with the meaningful object of activity (Roth 2007).

Second, I recognised that participants from a third organisation also developed a commitment to MMR. Commitment arose from the nature of the object of MMR, which was close to their core task. The organisation saw the network's benefit to their own activity; they simply could not afford to stay out. The network partners pressurised them to play a strong role in the process. The lack of programme services for Russian tourists at the New Year, Finland's quiet tourist season, was a contradiction they tried to solve by expanding their basic activity (Miettinen 2000). The MMR event appeared as the 'second stimulus': in other words, the tool for solving the acute contradiction in their activity (Haapasaari & Kerosuo 2015; Vygotsky 1978).

The leavers, on the other hand, exhibited neither of these forms of commitment. They approached the object with a 'wait-and-see' attitude (Sol et al. 2013), which prevented them from participating in the dynamic process between the subject and object (Edwards 2005; Stetsenko 2005). Their preliminary orientation towards the object of the regional network in this way predicted their lack of commitment. This is a vicious circle of non-commitment. The weak motivation of the subject to the collaborative object construction process actually prevents them from throwing

themselves into a creative process in which the subject and object modify each other and generate expansive learning.

Third, commitment can manifest itself at the inter-organisational and organisational levels (Provan, Fish & Sydow 2007; Toiviainen 2003). Commitment to networking requires commitment at inter-organisational level, entailing commitment to the network's object construction and not merely to the profit for one's own organisation. Such commitment to the network represents a higher level of commitment (Toiviainen 2003). In the present case only the Developers achieved this level by actively seeking solutions in terms of the elements of commitment – intensity of participation, concerns of collaboration, and conflicts of interest.

10.3 The Work-Based Pedagogical Model as a Platform for Learning

In the third and final analysis I shifted the perspective from regional collaboration to the WBP model and its potential to enhance expansive learning in two respects discussed in this dissertation: the possibility to overcome the dilemma of school learning by combining theoretical and practical knowledge, building in collaboration with working life; and the means of expanding the object of learning of students, teachers, and working-life partners.

Research question 3: How did the cultural event test and challenge the work-based pedagogical model of Vocational Higher Education (VHE) and enhance the participants' expansive learning?

The analysis was twofold. The first part studied the challenges and development ideas that the students, teachers, and working-life representatives presented concerning the WBP model after the process of the MMR event. The second analysis focused on the participants' reflections on (potentially expansive) learning. In this summary I synthesise the findings to assess the WBP model and its implementation from two theoretical perspectives: 1) the WBP model as solving the dilemma of school learning (Sub-Chapter 4.4); and 2) the WBP model as enhancing the expansive learning of students, teachers, and working-life partners (Sub-Chapter 4.3).

The work-based pedagogical model and the dilemma of school learning

The two development assignments, the marketing plan and the briefing plan, and the differences observed in their implementation during the MMR project provide a lens to assess the WBP model. While the marketing plan students and teacher assessed that the contact lessons and the guiding clinics of the WBP model supported the assignment and linked theory to practice, the briefing plan students and teacher found that the connections between the elements of the WBP model remained loose. In the latter case the contact lessons and the guiding clinics were not powerful in creating the links between theoretical studies and the practical assignment. One explanation for this difference can be found in the theoretical orientation bases of these two courses. I suggest that marketing is a more established field of academic knowledge than is speech communication in the context of MUAS's Cultural Management studies. The practical details (see Chapter 9) of carrying out these courses support this interpretation. Here, I discuss the theoretical interpretation.

The findings are depicted in Figures 6 and 7, where the classical dilemma of school learning and the elements of the new WBP model form the framework. Figure 6 illustrates that the students' learning actions are directed at both marketing and the marketing plan. The theoretical basis of the studies, marketing, is linked to the marketing plan supported by guiding clinics.

In contrast, Figure 6 shows that the students' orientation to the developmental assignment, the briefing plan, was strong, but that they struggled to see a connection between the theoretical contents of speech communication and the assignment. The guiding clinics supported the process, but the students still experienced the gap between theoretical content and practical application.

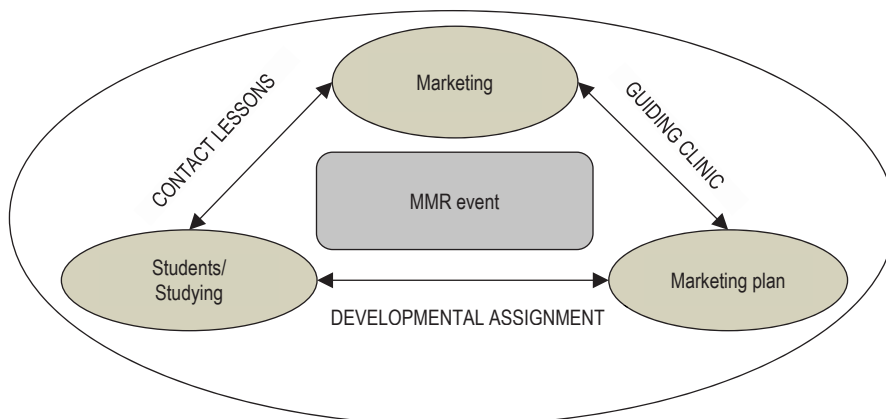


Figure 6. Marketing course and the learning actions of the WBP model

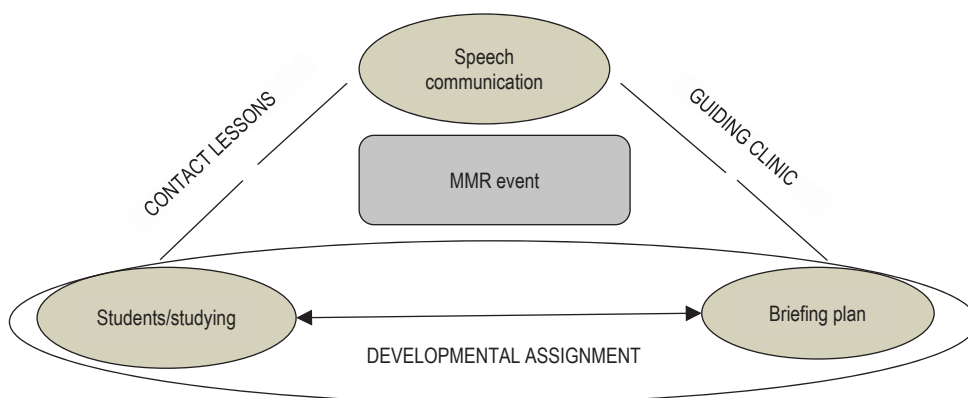


Figure 7. Speech communication course and the learning actions of the WBP model

From this brief comparison I conclude that even if a new and innovative model of WBP is designed to tie the different objects of knowledge and learning into an organic whole, its implementation cannot be but partial if the working-life assignment lacks a solid knowledge orientation basis. In the analysed model the guiding clinics were the mediating element that, in order to be productive, needed both strong theoretical support from the contact lessons and a meaningful assignment from authentic working life. These were the conditions that made the learning actions of the students, teachers, and working-life partners possible and dynamic in a complex network project.

The work-based pedagogical model for expansive learning?

The **students** of both courses felt that they had learned ‘everything’ they needed to know about the briefing and marketing plans. The WBP model provided them with a framework to assess the connection between the practical assignment and the theoretical knowledge of the course domain. The model also helped them evaluate their assignment in the context of the working-life project and cooperation. In this sense they expanded with the assessment of their learning when compared with traditional school learning.

Both student groups reported that they did not know how their marketing and briefing plans were utilised in the MMR event. MMR remained somewhat unclear in terms of its goals, division of labour, etc. The interaction with the cultural event and the working-life parties was largely mediated by the event manager and production assistant. These circumstances were obstacles to learning by expanding the object of

the subject matter – marketing and speech communication – in the context of the cultural event. As the construction of the novel object of activity is a process of expansive learning itself, this partly impeded the students' learning (Engeström 1987/2015; Foot 2002; Miettinen 2005). On the other hand, my findings suggest that the VHE students' involvement in authentic work during studies is an idealistic principle which in reality requires pedagogical mediation mechanisms and the pedagogical awareness of all parties. Pedagogical mediation is modelled in a way that will not isolate but integrate students in work activity.

Students suggested that the developmental assignments could be extended to serve across several study courses and thus expand the dialogue and feedback among the student groups. This would make the developmental assignments boundary objects, bridging different knowledge communities and serving students' diverse learning needs (Akkerman & Bakker 2011; Star 2010; Star & Griesemer 1989). Boundary objects have expansive learning potential (Kerosuo & Engeström 2003).

Concerning collaboration-related learning, students underlined the importance of working with people with different interests and orientations. This brings us back to one of the pillars of WBP, namely developing skills such as problem solving and projects and social skills (Jääskelä et al. 2018). The MMR event seemed a good platform for these competences. Such collaboration-related learning is categorised as the acquisition of generic skills in work-based learning (WBL) (Jääskelä et al. 2018, Tynjälä et al. 2003). Students also seemed to question teamwork's suitability for every kind of working-life cooperation. They had possibly learned an expanded view of teamwork that has led working-life research to conclude that teams are not the best solution when work is networked across organisational boundaries and occurs in frequently changing groups of cooperation (Engeström 2008).

The **teachers'** learning was related to the pedagogical model tested and developed during the implementation of the MMR project. Teachers saw the potential of the WBP model, although its implementation during MMR remained incomplete. Realising the potential of and distance from ideally functioning pedagogy, teachers' being 'not yet there' corresponds to the idea of expansive learning (Engeström 1987/2015). The teachers saw various possibilities of collaboration between the student groups, different courses, and working life. This was an expansion from individual and intersubjective learning towards multidisciplinary. The implementation of the WBP model had strengthened their conception of collaboration as crucial when learning new VHE pedagogical practices.

The **working-life partners** reported they had learned how to understand the variety of interests and knowledge that the partners brought to the project. This professional capability refers to relational expertise (Edwards 2011), which means the expansion of the object of activity largely beyond one's own field of specialisation. Deepening understanding and a capacity to recognise other professionals' capabilities and resources in shared object construction demonstrates the learners' relational agency. Such agency is achieved through the creative encounters of participants who meet and recognise the expertise and resources for the creation of a new artefact or solution (Miettinen 2013). A dynamic interactive relationship between the subject and object promotes learning on a collective plane of activity (Stetsenko 2005).

Working-life partners also mentioned they had learned a 'contradictory lesson' about each participant's responsibility in the process. They underlined that collaboration was possible only if everyone took responsibility for their own actions and did not seek to benefit from other partners without contributing their own input. The working-life partners called for commitment and concrete actions in networking. All these points can be interpreted as a willingness to expand network collaboration for the benefit of the region, and similar views and expectations have been found in other research into regional multi-organisational networks (Andrésen et al. 2012; Sol et al. 2012). In the context of VHE WBP and learning VHE teachers will need to gain an understanding of the dynamics of the interrelationships among working-life actors.

Finally, the analysis (Chapter 9) revealed that the working-life partners, like the students and teachers, were interested in the implementation of VHE pedagogy and its improvement by developing the interaction of the parties during working-life projects. It is an interesting idea that the deliberate implementation of the WBP model in an extensive working-life project succeeded in bridging the traditional school-work-life gap, and the interests of the key parties – even if they failed to unite – did not compete with each other or remain isolated. Comparison of two development assignments demonstrated that even a sophisticated implementation of a WBP model cannot be but partial, if the working-life assignment lacks a solid knowledge orientation basis that connects between the theory and practice to solve the dilemma of school learning. In addition, collective implementation of the WBP model during the MMR event formed a “zone of expansion” that beyond the participant-specific features of expansive learning demonstrated the need for the expansion of pedagogical vision, pedagogical mediation, relational expertise and

crossdisciplinarity (Figure 8). The concept zone of expansion is further discussed in Chapter 11.

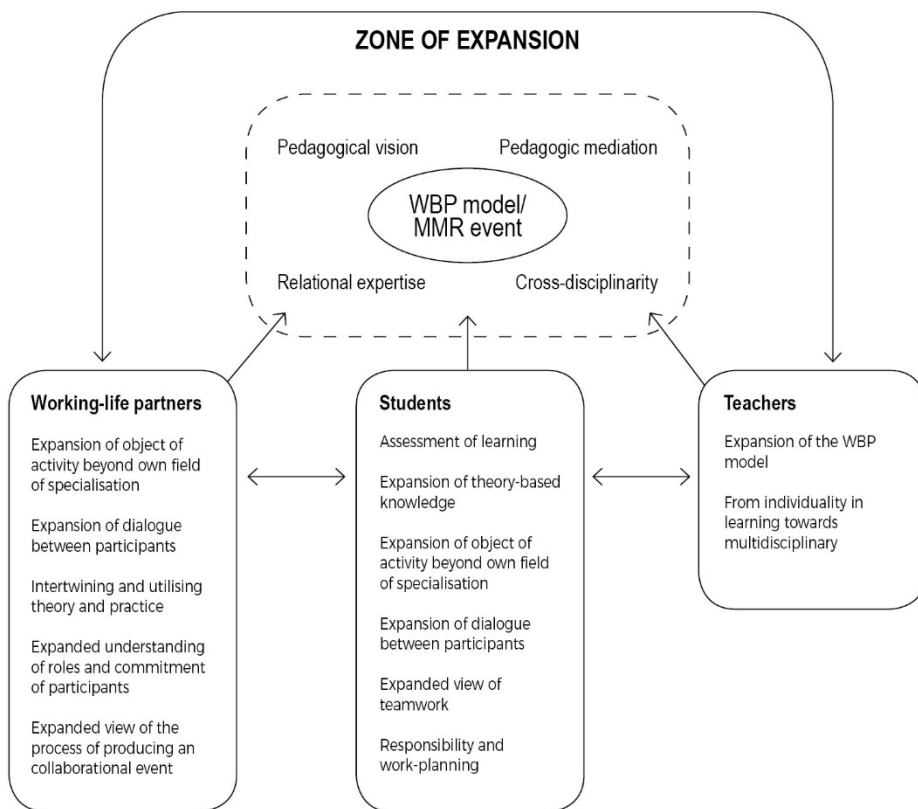


Figure 8. Participants' expansions of learning

11 DISCUSSION AND EVALUATION

In this chapter I discuss the findings of this dissertation at three levels of the research and development of Vocational Higher Education (VHE) and work-based learning (WBL): the level of strategic partnership; the level of regional networks; and the level of the work-based pedagogical (WBP) modelling of the VHE institution. In the second section I evaluate the validity, trustworthiness, and ethics of this research.

11.1 Implications of the Study for VHE Work-Based Pedagogy

The strategic partnership – conditions of expansive development

The research revealed that the strategic partnership of a VHE institution and a working-life cultural organisation developed through the phases of expanding the object of activity aimed at producing an innovative cultural event. The findings of the analysis suggest that different dimensions of expansion (Hasu 2000) are activated in evolving phases. Thus, at the beginning of a partnership, the anticipatory-temporal dimension prevails, when the members consider their actions and options in the continuum of past, present, and future. Next, they direct their efforts towards the socio-spatial expansion to involve a wider network innovative object construction. The growing complexity, in turn, creates questions of the moral-ideological expansion of the object. The systemic-developmental dimension of expansion is the way to stabilise and even expand and benefit collaboration, as I discussed above.

In the same vein, I could trace the emergence and solving of the developmental contradictions from the primary to quaternary contradictions, which, according to the learning theory established by Yrjö Engeström (1987/2015), demonstrates expansive and relatively sustainable learning activity (Figure 2). According to Miettinen (2005) the expansive creation process of the object of activity happens through negotiation between participants. Negotiations deal with the nature and specifications of a complex object, the compatibility of sub-systems, and ways of combining the work and capacities of activities, sub-groups, and individuals. The personal motives of individuals and organisations are also included in negotiations.

They therefore regulate the degree of involvement of individual workers and the contributions of the partners to the joint creation of the object.

Based on the analysis it seems that a strategic partnership can also draw a dividing line between the strategic partners and other local actors of the network. In the present case this occurred, for example, when the strategic partners had higher expectations of the other participants' commitment to and investment in the event than they were prepared to deliver. The 'inner group' (Pälli 2003) of strategic partners had already worked on the object of collaboration (the cultural event) before the networking really started. They felt they had ownership of the idea of the event. This seemed to cause some caution concerning commitment and investment among the other participants.

Nevertheless, the findings suggest that the strategic partnership is an efficient tool to develop both organisations' innovative activities and persistent learning. It offers a platform for Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) work as well as for pedagogical development, and the learning of all the participants. In the case under review the RDI project was developed alongside the development process of the cultural event at the levels of the strategic partnership and the regional network.

The basic idea of a strategic partnership is that partners can achieve goals that they cannot achieve when operating alone (Eddy 2010; Min et al. 2005). In the context of VHE this entails that the development of new pedagogical models calls for collaboration with the working life actors outside the field of education. The strategic partnership has an ideal of equality and mutual benefit. Partners are seen in collaboration as equals with a willingness to work together: to share ideas, information, and resources; and to develop and achieve collective goals (Ellinger, Daugherty, & Keller 2000). This study maintains that the innovative object construction that expands beyond the existing regional activities is essential for achieving this equality.

The strategic partnership's contribution to developing the WBP model of the Cultural Management Education (CME) programme was condensed to the significance of the event and ideas for further pedagogical collaboration. The former meant that without a strategic partner neither organisation would have been able to conduct the event. The latter refers to the further ideas presented by the strategic partners when evaluating their collaboration in the group interview. One example of these pedagogical development ideas was the City Theatre's idea concerning an opportunity for previous years' students to manage the theatre for a week. This contains hints of a sustainable learning partnership (Choy & Delahaye 2009), suggesting that both the university and the working-life partner co-produce the

curriculum and co-design pedagogies. Choy and Delahaye (2009) claim that learning takes place at two levels: organisation to organisation (industry and university) and individual (worker-learners and academics). The difference with traditional WBP models is the emphasis on shared responsibility for learning and capacity building (Choy & Delahaye 2009). Although a functional strategic partnership is beneficial for the partners in many ways, there can be a risk that such a tight collaboration relationship may impede other partners from joining. This was seen in the present case throughout the analysis of contradictions (Engeström 1987/2015).

The present study's theoretical contribution is based on the cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) particularly concerning the research of strategic partnership as an expansive learning process (Foot 2005; Toivainen 2003). Toivainen (2003) has posited that learning in a small industrial company network happens in dialectical movement across different levels of collaboration that produce multiple objects and outcomes of network activity. This study confirms that learning happens as a movement between the different levels of collaboration of the VHE and working-life partnership. The CHAT concepts have proved useful for analysing the processes of collaboration and learning in a complex network and grasping the new elements of the strategic partnership such as the object of collaboration, expansive learning, and developmental contradictions. Through these concepts we are able to better understand the critical aspects of strategic partnerships and plan collaboration processes in the context of WBP.

The regional network – conditions of expansive commitment building

The main findings of the second level of the research, the regional network, were the methodological development and the identification of categories of commitment, named developers, realisers, and leavers. The multi-method approach to commitment combined the studies of the level of intensity (Rondinelli & London 2003), concerns of collaboration (Sullivan 2010), and conflicts of interest (Andrésen et al. 2012). These conceptual sources were utilised to move from an analysis of individuals and separate companies to an analysis of inter-organisational collaboration with increasingly complex objects and interests of collaboration. I argue that this approach captures the expansion of commitment in a regional network understood as sustained volitional actions for collaboration with VHE.

Of the three groups of participants the developers were the most committed. Through their activity they expanded the object of partnership and invested time and work resources in the planning and implementation of the cultural event. The

realisers represented the second highest level of commitment. They were not active in the planning phase but played a role in conducting the event. Through participation they expanded the object of their basic business. Leavers put no effort into the event's planning or its production phase, showing non-commitment concerning the process.

The most frequently discussed conflicts of interest concerned the division of labour and the object of activity. There was ambiguity about the organisation in charge, which was clearly reflected in the participants' readiness to invest in the event. This notion is essential for networking. My findings support a kind of 'lead organisation' model, in which one of the organisations will take charge and create a smaller working group responsible for concrete plans and calculations of the costs for each organisation (Provan et al. 2007).

Another conflict of interest was related to object construction. Based on what I have discussed I underline the importance of a generally shared object construction process in which the participants listen to each other's expectations and are genuinely interested in learning what matters to their partners (Edwards 2009). Collaboration should be based on a sufficiently shared vision of the object, agreement on the organisation in charge, and on the division of labour: 'sufficiently shared' for the development of commitment because organisations' core tasks and interests can vary greatly. The object can never be completely shared in a multi-organisational network (Toiviainen & Vetoshkina, in press). Object construction is the process of commitment building when carried out through genuine negotiation (Miettinen 2000b) and in dynamic interaction between the collective subject and the object, which mutually transform each other (Edwards 2005; Leont'ev 1987; Stetsenko 2005).

Vocational Higher Education (VHE) – conditions of expansive work-based pedagogy

An implication for the WBP model is dealt with in my positing that instead of dichotomy-thinking about theory and practice (Costley 2007; Garnett 2016; Lester & Costley 2010; Tynjälä et al. 2003) we should move to a more hybrid model, where the object of learning is formed by a dynamic combination of theoretical, experiential, and practical knowledge. The object is constructed in constant interaction between the students, teachers, and working-life partners. If this is to happen, models that mediate collaborative planning between teachers, students, and working-life partners will be required. This approaches the idea of the Model of Networked Culture of Jääskelä et al. (2018), in which the relationship between

education and working life and the development of students' working-life skills are seen as involving the internal and external networks of the entire education institution. In the Model of Networked Culture workplace aspects are an integral part of education structures, management systems, and curricula.

As a result, I presented four concepts relating to the participants' learning in WBP, forming the zone of expansion (Figure 8). The concepts were *cross-disciplinarity*, *relational expertise*, *pedagogical mediation*, and *pedagogical vision*. All these aspects of learning related to all participants, but the emphasis varied between participants. *Cross-disciplinarity* was especially emphasised in students' and teachers' reflections on their learning. Both these respondent groups suggested that there could be a bigger project unifying different study courses in future. Working-life partners' reflections about cross-disciplinarity was related to the idea of the size and focus of the planning group. They articulated that there needed to be critical mass and a big picture, but that a smaller working group should quickly be formed to begin to concretise plans. This planning needed different kinds of competence.

Relational expertise (Edwards 2011) is instead especially emphasised in working-life partners' reflections expanding their ability to collaborate in networking and understanding other participants' interests. However, relational expertise was also observed in students' discussion. It seems the students had learned to utilise co-students' competences to achieve the shared goal. Teachers' reflections about relational agency were related to collaborative learning both among the students and between students and working life.

All participants experienced a lack of and possibilities for *pedagogical mediation*. WBP models should therefore mediate not only the relationship between theory and practice (Tynjälä...), but also the continuity of partnerships (XX), participants' commitment, working-life skills, and multidisciplinary.

Pedagogical vision also featured in all participants' experiences, partly through its lack. It seems the pedagogical vision in shared WBP projects should be integrated into working-life partners' vision of collaboration. However, this should be done so neither is lost: instead, they should complement and support each other.

The promotion of students' generic working-life skills is one of the current themes of pedagogical discussion (Binkely et al. 2012; Jääskelä et al. 2018; Pylväs 2018; Salonen et al. 2017). This dissertation has confirmed that the WBP model promotes content-related learning as well as working-life competences, especially in relation to the ability to collaborate. It was noteworthy that collaboration-related objects of learning were reflected on not only by the students but also by the teachers and working-life partners. The findings of the study prove that the WBP model is

not only about the learning of students but also about the learning of teachers and working-life partners.

The Triadic (Dalrymple et al. 2012) and Triple Helix (Ezkowitz 2013, 2017; Mandrup & Jensen 2017) Models also underline the relationships between the three stakeholders and the ideal of equality, though this equality of collaboration is not problem-free. In the case under review the role of the strategic partners was clearly strongest, and of these partners the role of the University of Applied Sciences (UAS) was even stronger. In line with this in the Triple Helix Model the university is seen as the facilitator of collaboration. Furthermore, the Triadic Model emphasises the university-based idea of the student as a learner orienting him/herself to the learning goals of the curriculum. What does this equality in the WBP model eventually mean, and how can it be achieved? It seems it is still the case that education structures and goals direct collaboration with working life. However, although studies of the WBP model emphasise the significance of equality between the actors, the idea of the role of the university as facilitator is at least to an extent still to be found. This prompts us to ask if the equality of the organisations, and the participants as their representatives, is a realistic goal, or if we should define the roles with profiles, as the studies of the Triple Helix (Ezkowitz 2013, 2017; Mandrup & Jensen 2017) and Triadic Models (Dalrymple et al. 2012) have already done. Either way, the VHE institution should re-examine its role in regional collaboration and its education activities and structures more from the perspective of promoting all the participants' learning.

As a theoretical contribution to the VHE level, the present study expands research on the WBP model using CHAT concepts, revealing the object of learning and expansion of the WBP model under study. The levels of research and development, main findings, the research's implications for the WBP model, and the theoretical contributions are presented in Table 18.

Table 18. Levels of research and development, main findings, implications for the WBP model, and theoretical contributions.

Levels of research and development	Main findings	Implications for the WBP model	Theoretical contributions
Strategic partnership	<p>Expansion of strategic partnership through developmental phases</p> <p>Contradictions of the process related mostly to the commitment of local players and to object of collaboration, not to strategic partnership as such</p>	<p>Strategic partnership was an efficient tool for longitudinal developing of activities and all participants' learning</p> <p>Risks of forming inner group and impeding other partners' full commitment to collaboration</p>	<p>Learning and development of collaboration in strategic partnership through CHAT concepts</p>
Regional network	<p>Categories of commitment</p> <p>The object of collaboration and division of labour were the most crucial elements forming commitment to collaboration</p>	<p>Education organisations' focus on shared object construction process and clear division of labour</p>	<p>Expanding the theoretical approaches of affective and calculative commitment with concepts of levels of intensity and concerns of collaboration</p>
Vocational Higher Education institution	<p>The close connection between theory and practice helped students to understand unities</p> <p>The interaction with working life was crucial, especially for the students and working-life partners</p> <p>Object of learning related to content and collaboration</p> <p>Expansion of WBP model</p>	<p>The object is a combination of theory and practice</p> <p>Re-examining roles of VHE in regional collaboration and structures of education's activities</p>	<p>Expanding the theoretical approaches of the WBP model with the CHAT concepts of object of learning and expansive learning.</p>

11.2 Evaluation of the Study

In this Chapter I evaluate the validity and trustworthiness of the study, and the researcher's position and the ethical considerations of the research process. The research was a qualitative study involving participants as collaborators. Close collaboration with participants adds to the credibility of qualitative research, but presumes describing the settings, the participants, and data in rich detail (Creswell & Miller 2000). This type of research process produces results that promote culturally mediated transfer and naturalistic generalisation rather than statistical inference or the identification of lawful regularities (Yanchar 2011, 186). The study does not provide objective 'truths' about collaboration and WBP. Nor is its purpose to criticise the organisations' activities. On the contrary, I assess that the organisations participating in this research collaboration demonstrated an exceptional open-mindedness and innovative ability to develop activities in the South Savo region.

The aim of this research was to contribute to the discussion in the education field about collaboration and learning in the working-life context. I especially see the input of this study from the perspective of working life, which has been largely neglected in recent studies of WBP. Although the research was conducted through one case study, its essential findings can be generalised when the VHE strives for new insights into the critical points of collaboration and learning and development ideas to promote learning in collaboration with working life.

Validity and trustworthiness

The validity of the study refers to the inferences drawn from the data. It is therefore especially important to assess the data and selected methods pointing to the strengths and limitations of the research approach. In evaluating this research I apply the eight criteria proposed by Tracy (2010). According to Tracy the eight criteria are common markers of good quality (the 'Big Tent') without tying these markers to specific paradigmatic practices or crafts. They therefore need to be complemented, in my case, through the application of the CHAT approach. Tracy's (2010) criteria for good qualitative research are: (a) worthy topic; (b) rich rigour; (c) sincerity; (d) credibility; (e) resonance; (f) significant contribution; (g) ethics; and (h) meaningful coherence. I will next apply these criteria to the present study.

Worthy topic. Good qualitative research is deemed relevant, timely, significant, interesting, or evocative on a theoretical, societal, or personal level (Tracy 2010, 840).

The topicality of this research was discussed in the introductory section. I raised the following needs for WBP research in VHE: new knowledge about the development of the strategic partnership between the VHE and working life; and the commitment of the regional network to collaboration and exploring solutions to the gap between the knowledge and skills needed at work and those produced in formal school education. I argue that these points are still highly valid in the present discussion of the ongoing transformation of VHE. Collaboration between vocational education and working life has become increasingly topical, highlighted by education research (e.g. Mandrup & Jensen 2017; Mikkonen et al. 2017) and required by education policies (European Commission 2017; Ministry of Education and Culture 2017).

Rich rigour is generated through a variety of theoretical constructions, data collection, and analytical processes (Tracy 2010). As a theoretical framework I used cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) (Ilyenkov 1977/2008; Leont'ev 1978; Vygotsky 1978), which I presented in Chapter 4. CHAT provides a conceptual means to apply a dynamic learning-network approach to complex working-life projects. Its goal is to grasp the changes, disturbance, and potential expansive learning of activities (Engeström 1987/2015). The CHAT perspective was widened with studies of regional networks and commitment (Andrésen et al. 2012; Rondinelli & London 2003).

The first research question (Chapter 7) about the development of the strategic partnership between the CME programme and the City Theatre was analysed from meeting memos and audio-recorded and transcribed bilateral meetings between MUAS/CME and the City Theatre. The historical overview of the collaboration was conducted by analysing the critical events of WBP from meeting memos of 2008, before the inception of MMR. The empirical analysis was conducted from transcribed bilateral meetings by analysing developmental contradictions, collaboration (discussion of the strategic partnership), and the object of collaboration (discussion of MMR).

The second research question (Chapter 8) concerned the commitment of local actors to the process of developing the new MMR cultural event. The data consisted of audio-recorded and transcribed memos of the networking meetings. As complementary data, I used interviews with two working-life partners whose role was expected to be quite strong by the other participants. The analysis proceeded through four steps: 1) the intensity of participation; 2) the concerns of collaboration; 3) the conflicts of interest; and 4) the types of commitment.

The third research question illuminated the learning and challenges involved in the implementation of the WBP model (Chapter 9). The data used were audio-recorded and transcribed interviews with the students, teachers, and working-life partners. The interview data on the working-life partners were the same as in research question 2, but in this context, I focused on their statements about learning and the collaboration with the UAS. I chose to explore their reflections on the learning experiences. Learning experiences are not identical with the learning actions taking place during the process (Engeström 2016), but the reflections on learning experiences is what a researcher typically can achieve through follow-up interviews.

The **sincerity** of the research is characterised by self-reflexivity about the researcher's subjective values and interests (Tracy 2010). In the following, concerning the *researcher's position and ethics*, I will analyse my role and the **ethnicality** of the research following the principles of reflexivity (Bergen 2015). Because I was closely involved in the meetings and processes under analysis as an employee of MUAS/CME, I also had good links with the data. My personal experiences of the critical events for WBP were useful in interpreting the development phases of collaboration. As Creswell and Miller (2000, 128) put it, 'credible data also come from close collaboration with participants throughout the process of research [...]'. My role at that time as a lecturer and coordinator of the CME degree programme meant that I had good connections with the students, teachers, and working-life partners. In the interviews this was manifested in a positive and trusting atmosphere in which the participants felt they could speak honestly. However, there is always a question of power relations (Kosunen & Kauko 2016), and potential limitations are discussed in the further parts of this chapter.

The **credibility** of the research is generated through the concrete details, crystallisation, multivocality, and member reflections (Tracy 2010). To ensure the credibility of the analysis I described the steps of the analysis and essential parts of the data in as much detail as possible. I presented several excerpts to enable the reader to see what the raw data looked like. Creswell (1998) advises that if the case presents a chronology of events, multiple sources of data should be analysed to determine evidence for each step or phase in its evolution. This was topical, especially for the first research question, concerning the development of the strategic partnership (Chapter 7). For credibility, I checked the transcriptions and coding several times and attempted to make the analysis as transparent as possible. To ensure correctness, a draft of Chapter 7 was sent to the manager and board member of the City Theatre for their comments (Cho & Trent 2006; Tracy 2010). Chapter 8 was also sent to a representative of the interviewed working-life partner organisation

for member checking, and Chapter 9 for the teachers' comments (Cho & Trend 2006).

However, it is true that in research the voice is given selectively to some actors (Toiviainen 2003). Nevertheless, the selection was based not on my personal preferences but followed the emerging themes of collaboration. For example, the intensity of participation was analysed by the number of attendances and activeness in the meetings.

Resonance refers to the researcher's ability to influence particular readers (Tracy 2010). According to Tracy resonance can be achieved in two ways: aesthetic merit; and generalisability/transferability. Aesthetic merit means that the text is presented artistically. I feel this is somewhat demanding for the researcher to evaluate. Generalisability relates to the research's potential to be valuable across contexts or situations. Good research provides readers with a vicarious experience (Tracy 2010, 845). I believe that the worthiness of the present study's topic partly resonates not only with vocational education teachers but also with working-life partners and policymakers.

Tracy (2010) uses **significant contribution** to describe research that makes a significant contribution conceptually/theoretically, practically, morally, methodologically, and/or heuristically. I believe the contribution of the present study is mainly conceptual/theoretical in applying the CHAT concepts to the field of WBL and the practical analysis of a concrete WBP case and learning.

Meaningful coherence is the last of the eight criteria for good quality research (Tracy 2010). Meaningful coherence is achieved when the study achieves what it purports to be about through purposeful literature and methods. I believe that the theoretical and methodological framework of CHAT was an apt choice to analyse such a complex and heterogenous phenomenon as WBP in regional networks.

The researcher's position and research ethics

To assess my position in the research process, I relied on the concept of reflexivity, which is a major strategy of quality control in qualitative research (Berger 2015; Guillemin & Gillan 2004). Reflexivity entails a process of continual self-evaluation about the effects of the researcher's position on the study participants and research results (Berger 2015). It has also been seen as a process leading to ethical research practice (Guillemin & Gillan 2004).

Between 1999 and 2011 I worked at the Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences (MUAS) as a Senior Lecturer in the CME degree programme. The field of cultural

education had been in turbulence for several years. The sector was facing many cuts all over Finland. This was also felt at MUAS. The ‘survival competition’ was intense and it forced education to evaluate and further develop courses even more strongly. In the 2006-2007 curriculum renewal, the pedagogical model of MUAS/CME was developed. My role as a coordinator of the degree programme at that time was to lead the process with the principal lecturer. That process was one of the most powerful professional experiences of my career. It exemplified courage, willingness, and seamless collaboration. With a group of eight teachers we exposed the basis of our teaching and sought new ways to conduct studies in close collaboration with working life. However, in relation to my research, this role placed me in a position where as a researcher I shared the experience of the study participants (Berger 2015). Following Berger (2015), the role of the researcher may affect study participants in three ways. First, it may affect access to the field, because participants may be more willing to share their experiences with a person they like. Second, it may shape the nature of the researcher–researched relationship. This in turn affects the information participants are willing to share. Again, if the respondent shares understandings or experiences with the interviewer, (s)he may be more willing to share information. Finally, the worldview and background of the researcher affects the way in which he or she constructs the world and chooses the lens for filtering and interpreting the information gathered from participants, and thus may shape the study’s findings and conclusions.

I tried to avoid these impacts because I was aware of my role’s possible influence on respondents. During the interviews and data analysis I was careful to avoid leading respondents in a certain direction and driving my own agenda (Berger 2015).

As soon as I decided to use the case in my studies, I changed my own role to largely that of an observer. I took a step back from the research subject (Guillemin & Gillan 2004). Clearly, my work position did not make this entirely possible, and in the background I was trying to promote MMR issues. This was challenging for my position as a researcher, and also as a representative of the CME degree programme. I now feel that although I was one of the participants, this did not decrease the study’s validity. On the contrary, I had a perspective on and deeper understanding of the history, relations, and motives of the participants, which helped me to interpret the data (Berger 2015).

Thinking ethically about our roles, values, and methodological and theoretical choices, whom we choose for the research and whom we leave out are all constitutive of reflexive research (Guillemin & Gillan 2004). Being reflexive is also being alert to ethical questions (Guillemin & Gillan 2004).

Because of my role in the process, I had the advantages already described concerning the research, but there were also limitations. Although I have given a voice to only three working-life partners (including the strategic partner), I have tried to make the selection as justified and transparent as possible. Furthermore, I could not avoid influencing the process because of my professional role, although I tried to do this as little as possible.

The study's research case was an early testing of the functionality of the pedagogical model. Looking back, I realise that there were several other cases where the relationships between theoretical knowledge, the developmental assignments, and collaboration with working life were more seamless. However, the MMR case revealed the challenges concerning WBP well. It was also conducted in an exceptionally wide network, which created certain challenges. From the perspective of learning it was good that things did not go 'by the book', and the case provided very useful information for the further development of the model.

The first ideas of the MMR event emerged at the end of 2008. It seemed an interesting and suitable research case from several perspectives: it was born of the strategic partnership between an education organisation and a working-life organisation; it was planned within an exceptionally wide network of local actors; and it was a learning environment for the students. The MMR planning process began in January 2009, and from the outset I succeeded in audio-recording the meetings to obtain data for my research. Following the guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2009, 2012), participation in the research was voluntary and research permits were collected from all participants. At the beginning of meetings and interviews I briefly presented the research case and the purpose for which the data was being collected. The data was handled confidentially and will be deleted after the research (GDPR 2016). The organisations mentioned by name in the research gave their permission. Other participants were put forward by their general organisational sectors and professions. The empirical chapters were also checked by representatives of the City Theatre, working-life partners, and teachers. Students' comments were not included because reaching them years later proved very difficult.

Although feedback on the pedagogical changes was encouraging, in 2012 the Ministry of Education decided to axe the CME degree programme. This research is also in some sense a testimony to MUAS/CME. In 2017 MUAS and the Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences merged to become XAMK – the South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences. To some extent the legacy of

the CME pedagogical model lives on in the expanded UAS, which emphasises WBL in its competence-based curricula.

12 CONCLUSION

Collaboration between education and working-life organisations is essential for learning and development (Dalrymple et al. 2012; Mandrup & Jensen 2017; Pylväs 2018). However, as the present study has proved, this is not problem-free. Work-based pedagogy's (WBP) strength lies in its ability to promote both students' working-life competences (Jääskelä et al. 2018) and teachers' and working-life partners' continuous learning (Mandrup & Jensen 2017). As the recent study of vocational education by Pylväs (2018) has proved, individuals with fluent cognitive skills (for example, problem-solving skills) combined with advanced social skills, self-awareness, and self-regulation are perceived as vocational experts. This research has placed even heavier emphasis on students' relationship with the object of learning embedded in a complex production of a real-life cultural event. Both generic and object-oriented capability building direct attention to the need for and meaning of new WBP solutions.

In the context of vocational higher education (VHE) the WBP model is at risk of being narrowed down to interaction with working life and workplaces. Based on the tasks of VHE we must not neglect the role of theoretical knowledge in learning. Through theoretical knowledge we are able to develop issues relating to working life rather than simply repeating traditional habits and actions. This is also a question of the values which should be found behind the pedagogical solutions (Stetsenko, in press). If as educators we follow the needs of working life too blindly, we will probably lose the ability to develop something genuine and new. Rather, higher education should understand the value of theoretical knowledge and apply it in collaborative development with working life. We should also be aware of the illusions of where 'the latest knowledge' is located. Based on my experience working in the University of Applied Sciences (UAS) in education we quite often think that the latest knowledge of working life is to be found in working life. However, the working-life partners appear to think that we have it in education. The only solution to this is to actually create the latest knowledge in constant collaboration in, and developing of, education and working life. This collaboration should utilise and create not only new practices but also theoretical knowledge and learning.

Collaboration is always coloured by participants' different interests, goals, history, and social dynamics. These different orientations create tensions and challenges for networking (e.g. Sol et al. 2013). However, contradictions should not be feared but should be seen as an essential element of the process of learning. Only through finding solutions for contradictions can the expansion of the object and expansive learning become possible (Engeström 1987/2015).

Using multidimensional perspectives and data on the strategic partnership, the commitment of the regional network, and learning experiences, this study has contributed to ongoing academic and pedagogical discussions about work-based learning (WBL). This study provides new knowledge for the UAS about the pedagogical solutions, benefits, and challenges of organising learning activities in collaboration with working life. This may serve to increase education organisations' understanding of the different planning cycles and orientations of collaboration projects, and the demands working life makes on education organisations. The study is clearly needed and beneficial both for VHE and for working life. Its results offer working life more knowledge of the dynamics of VHE and the potential roles of all the participants in collaborative processes.

Given the strong education-political pressures on vocational education to collaborate more strongly with working life, new pedagogical solutions must be developed and their functionality tested. In presenting the genuine meaning of the strategic partnership between education and working life, this study offers an efficient tool for the promotion of organisations' activities and the creation of new ideas. Close dialectical collaboration promotes the mutual understanding of each other's activities and creates potential new objects. In successful partnership both participants are as equal as possible and the interests in collaboration of both are considered.

Students' direct relationships with working-life partners are crucial in WBP. Ideally, teachers, students, and working-life partners all work on the case, unifying theoretical and practical knowledge. Such a constellation challenges the traditional roles of teachers and students. These challenges often culminate in questions about assessment. How can the teacher evaluate something in which (s)he has been intensively involved her/himself? I see clear goals for learning and assessment criteria as crucial. Both are useful for all participants in directing their activities and learning towards the learning goals, although it seems quite obvious that in such learning constellations goals transform, and learners also learn much more than competences and the knowledge under assessment. Versatile assessment methods that are sensitive to dynamic transformation are also needed.

Combining the analysis of collaborative learning with the analysis of individual study paths strongly supported currently in Finnish vocational education would be an interesting topic for further research. When a student can conduct his/her studies in multiple ways and under a range of timeframes, how and where do communities of learning form? What possibilities do digital solutions offer to the WBP model, given that it enables working-life partners and cases to come from all over the world? In this study I have focused on participants' reflections on their learning. By using the methods I have developed in this research it would be interesting to explore the actual learning outcomes in such network-based collaboration.

How did the story of the Mikkeli Meets Russia continue? As often happens with pioneering projects and local innovations, it lived for a while in its original format, then faded away when its creators were no longer there carrying on the activity. Although the event did not survive, it opened the door to the intriguing world of collaboration between education and working life and pushed forward innovative networking activity in the region of Mikkeli.

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