"WHERE AND HOW ARE THE STUDENTS NOW?" - A CASE STUDY LOOKING AT STUDENTS THROUGH BELBIN TEAM ROLES TEST, PEER EVALUATION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

Effective student’s teamwork is becoming increasingly important in higher education. Some studies show that mixed teams can be more successful than teams comprised of individuals with similar personality traits.

Belbin test is one tool used to determine a participant team role best suiting that individual. It can be argued that those taking the Belbin test might portray a profile that they deem most favourable for the task at hand but even though there may be some obvious shortcomings associated with the Belbin test, it may still be a useful tool.

At Bifröst University the Belbin Team Role Model has been used to form teams in some courses where teamwork has been an important factor in the learning process. In some cases teams have been formed in such a way that each team has a similar set of team role profiles as do the other teams. There are of cause limits in doing this properly, especially when there are few students and therefore few teams. In other courses teams are built using other criteria or students can build their own teams in any way they like. Even though teams are not formed by using the Belbin Team Roles, the results of the Belbin test can be of a valuable use when working on team building. Looking at team members Belbin profile can be helpful both in raising awareness of skills valuable for successful teamwork and can help control expectations of team members.

At Bifröst University we have conducted a limited case study where we followed/observed some of the students through more than one course where they have taken the Belbin test and where students used the results in forming and working in teams. We have for example noted how the profile of some of the students have changed between the courses, although some not. We also compared the team role profiles with their peer evaluation of contribution to the teamwork and solving their task, as well as looking at how students evaluated their peers compared to their self-assessment by the same criteria. We followed up on this 4-5 years later by asking students how they rated this practice, the Belbin Team Role test and the peer evaluation and self-assessment. The results are still being analysed, but based on preliminary review we are expecting some interesting findings.