



Comfort
Zone

Challenge

Capstone course info

Perttu Kähäri

20 September, 2023

Agenda

15.00 – 16.15

What is Capstone about?

Course practicalities

Support material

Introduction of faculty facilitators

Q & A

16.15 – 16.30

Break

16.30 – 18.15

Case company presentations

Faculty

Teacher-in-charge: **Perttu Kähäri**

- Email: perttu.kahari@aalto.fi
- Phone: 040 774 8794
- Room Y210

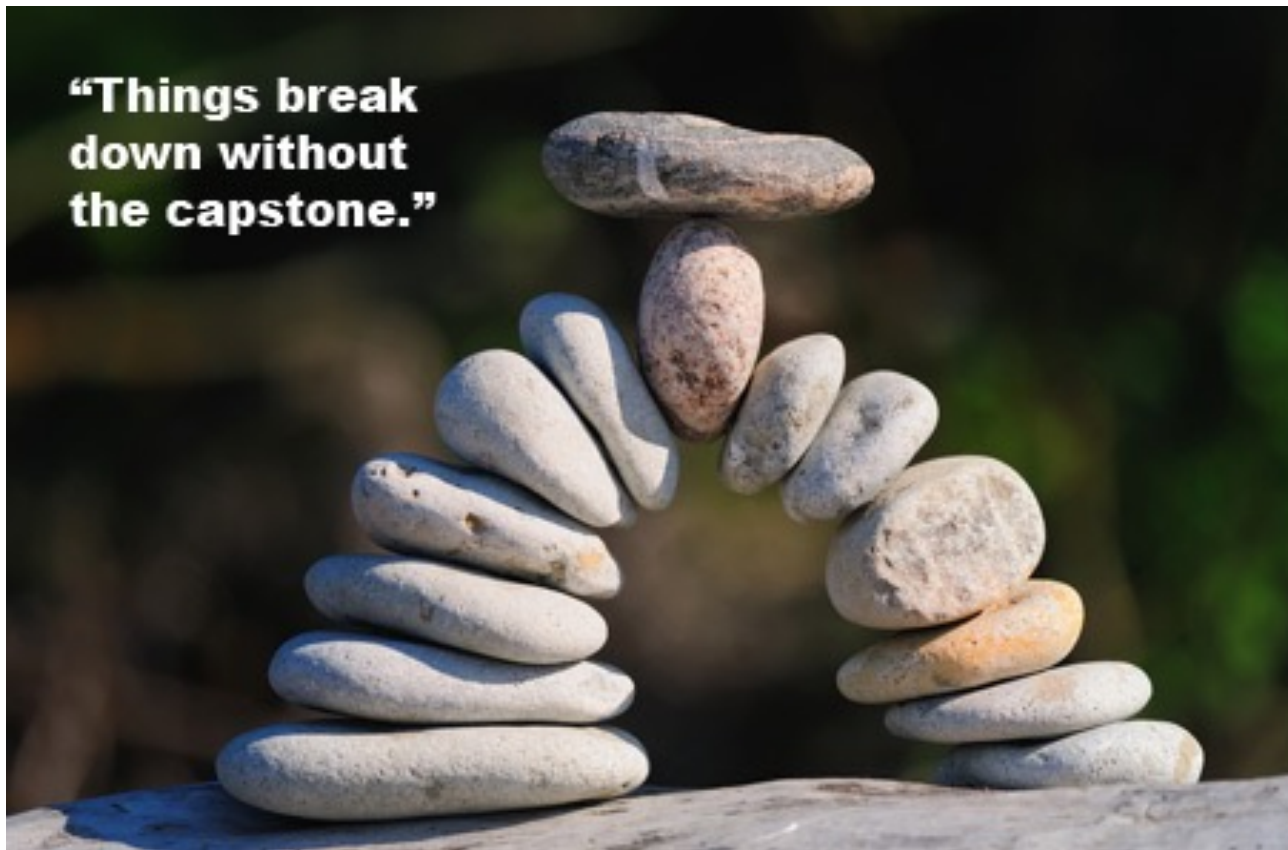


Teaching assistant: **Otso Lammi**

- Email: otso.lammi@aalto.fi



Capstone?



Capstone = extensive team project

Each team works with one case organization on a current, multidisciplinary business problem / task:

- **Business Finland**
- **Carbonlink**
- **DNA**
- **Fetch**
- **Finnfund**
- **Frendy**
- **Luhta**
- **MUJI**
- **Neova**
- **Nordic Science Investments**
- **Vaisala**
- **Vallila Help Center**

Skills gained during the Master's Degree

- **Problem solving skills:** Ability to identify and analyze complex and unfamiliar business problems and provide strategically appropriate solutions
- **Ability to communicate and collaborate in diverse professional contexts**
- **Business knowledge:** Ability to demonstrate an integrated understanding of relevant business knowledge and to apply it in diverse contexts

What does that mean in practice?

problem solving

data analysis

giving feedback

scope definition

communication

critical thinking

writing skills

teamwork skills

project
management

interviewing

holistic understanding

subject specific knowledge

presentation skills

conflict management

Aspects of the project

Together with your team, you will be independently responsible for all aspects of the project

1. Identifying a critical task/problem in the case company
2. Defining an appropriate approach/concept to work on the task/problem
3. Providing a detailed and informative analysis of the situation
4. Delivering conceptual and hands-on recommendations for the company
5. Planning and managing a project
6. Presenting your recommendations both orally and in writing to the case company and fellow students.

“It would be best to have companies that have clear cases they want to be solved. In my case, the ambiguity of the case was most annoying, and it seemed like the case company did not know how they wanted the project to be solved.”

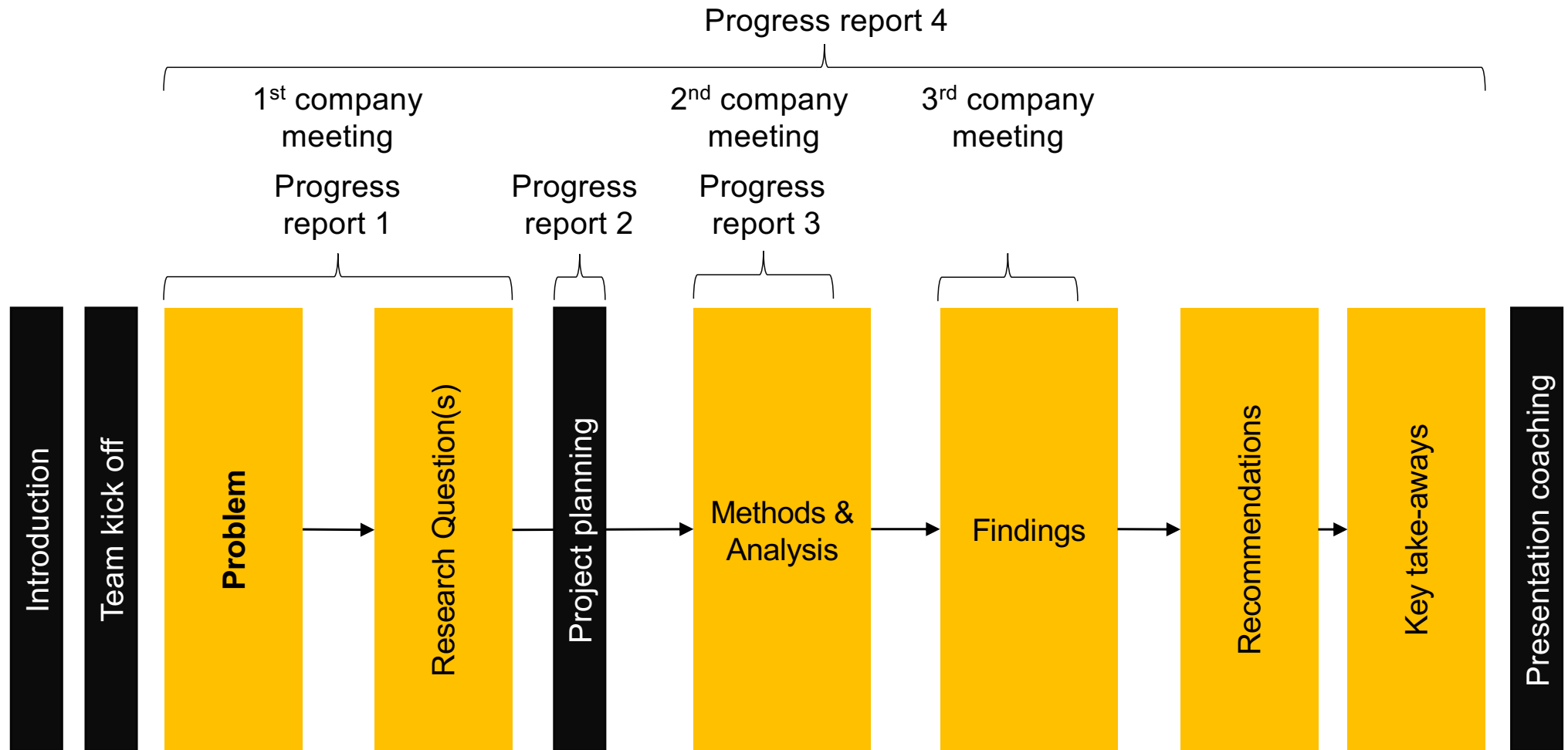
Student from spring 2021

→ **It's your responsibility to decide how to solve the problem 😊**

→ **There is room for defining the scope of the project so you can contribute with your expertise and background**

Project structure

Structure of the Capstone project



Course schedule

Wk	Date	Fall 2022
1	20.9.	Kick-off
1	21.9.	Submit case preferences
2	27.9.	Team kick-off meeting with facilitator
2-3	27.9.-4.10.	First meeting with the client company, facilitator will join this meeting
3	4.10.	Project management seminar
3	4.10.	Progress report 1 (problem statement, research questions)
4	11.10.	Progress report 2 (project plan, planned methods & analysis)
5-6	18.-25.10.	Second meeting with the client company
7-8	1.-8.11.	Third meeting with the client company
8	8.11.	I like I wish facilitated team feedback session
8	8.11.	Progress report 3 (findings)
9	15.11.	Progress report 4 (draft of the final report)
10	22.11.	Presentation coaching session
11	27.11.	Submit final report
11	29.11	Final presentations
12	7.12.	Submit individual portfolio

Course deliverables

Three key deliverables

	Task	Weight	Deadline
A. 1	Written team case report	50%	
	1a. Progress report 1		4 October
	1b. Progress report 2		11 October
	1c. Progress report 3		8 November
	1d. Progress report 4		15 November
	1e. Final report		27 November
A. 2	Case presentation (10-13 min)	30%	29 November
	Presentation coaching session		22 November
A. 3	Individual student portfolio 3A: reflection paper 3B: creative product	20%	7 December

Final report (50% of the grade)

- Business report where you present the problem, your analysis, and recommendations
- Your team can choose between a traditional Word-based report or a consultant-style Slide-based report
- Although you are writing a business report, your academic expertise as soon-to-be MSc graduates should show!

Include:

- Executive summary
- Brief statement (one paragraph / slide) to clarify how the work was divided and tasks allocated in your team, i.e. who contributed what data/knowledge/information and how you put the report together
- 5,000 words + appendices and references

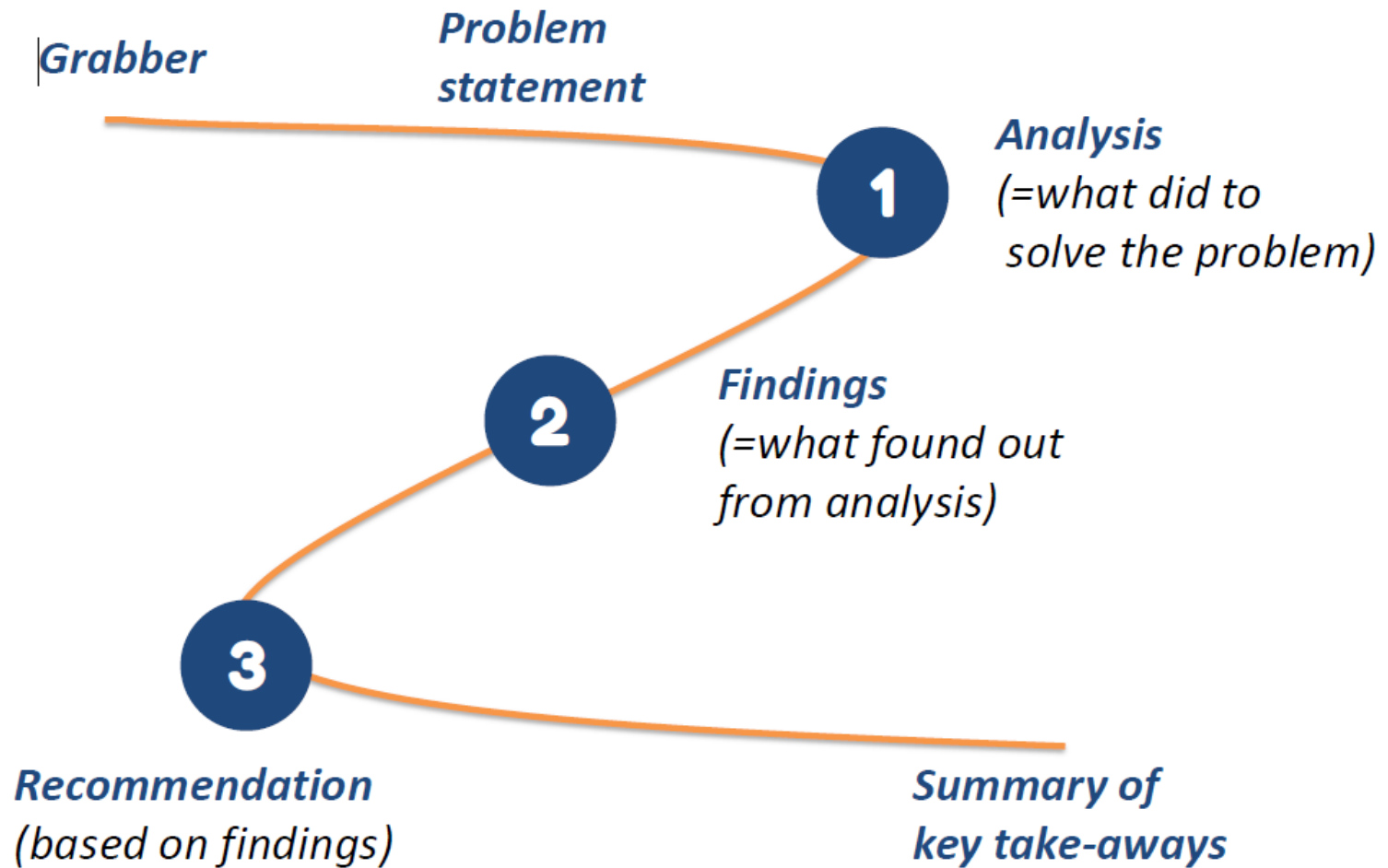
Final case presentation (30% of the grade)

- **Your presentation should be engaging, credible and persuasive!**
- 10-13 min (not shorter or longer!) followed by 12-15 min Q&A
- All team members do not need to present, but should engage in Q&A
- Case presentation slides: Upload to MyCourses by midnight
- Take benefit of the presentation coaching session!

Presentation coaching session (one hour per team)

- Each team will attend a one-hour presentation coaching session with their facilitator to get feedback on their presentation a week before the final session
- The presentation needs to be completed (does not have to be perfect yet) for the coaching session so that the feedback will be meaningful
- Your team is responsible for setting up a time with your facilitator (22 November from 15-16 or from 16-17)

Typical presentation structure



Individual portfolio (20% of the grade)

a) Reflection paper

- Reflection on learnings in the Master's program
- Reflection on learning in the Capstone course
- Reflection on the teamwork in the Capstone project

Approximately 2,500 words

b) Creative presentation of your learnings

- Express your key learnings and take-aways from both the Master's program and the Capstone course in a more out-of-the-box way (in the Aalto spirit!)

Some ideas for the creative presentation

- Visual representation or a model of your key learnings and take-aways
- Short, 2-minute video clip in which you present yourself and the key learnings and take-aways to prospective employers
- Song in which the lyrics are about the key learnings and take-aways

Evaluation & Rubrics

1. **Final Report** evaluated by your team's **Faculty Facilitator** based on **Business Writing Rubric** and **Capstone Rubric**
2. **Final Presentation** evaluated by the **Faculty Facilitators** listening to your presentation at the closing session based on **Business Presentation Rubric**
3. **Individual Portfolio** evaluated by one of the **Faculty Facilitators**

All **four RUBRICS** (see MyCourses/Materials) will be applied in the evaluation.

Participation

- **Attendance in all class sessions and meetings is compulsory**
- Accepted absences (e.g. medical reasons) will have to be compensated
- Teaching takes place on campus only
- Teams can decide on how they meet but we strongly suggest that you will have the first meeting with the case organization in person. Face-to-face meetings are encouraged.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes

Manage complex projects and work in diverse teams

Handle uncertainty associated with real life projects

Identify

Analyze

Solve

A real-life business problem from a multi-disciplinary viewpoint

Present a case report both orally and in writing

Critically reflect on your learning process and outcomes

Apply the knowledge and skills gained during your studies to real-life business tasks and challenges

Manage complex projects and
work in diverse teams

Create a project plan to help you to manage the project (include in Progress report 2)

- Use Excel, PowerPoint or any other tool that you are comfortable using
- Structure the timeline based on the deliverables and meeting times of the project (see Capstone - course introduction and instructions for dates)
- Fill in the project plan (See Videos I and II at MyCourses)
- Plan your work also according to other commitments outside the Capstone course (other courses' deliverables, exams, Master's thesis, work, etc.)
- Remember that you have **122 hours per student** allocated for the project are so adjust your plan accordingly if the project becomes too big

Assign a project manager to do the project plan

Handle uncertainty associated with real life projects

*“Another great lesson from the course is how to deal with the **uncertainty**. During our project, we planned more than one interview; however, due to different schedule and timeline, we did not get chance to carry out all the interviews planned. We **managed to adapt** accordingly to any change needed while **continuously updated our plan**, schedule and worked on the areas that needs to be focused on.”*

Teamwork

Teamwork skills and communication are crucial for the project to succeed

- *“The biggest challenge in this group work was precisely the poor quality of communication. The team members' different communication skills and habits led to frustration...”*
- *“Based on this group work, I learned that communication skills are highly valuable.”*
- *“I consider those learnings on teamwork to be the most valuable learnings during the course.”*
- *“ I believe that our team succeeded in teamwork because we had great communication overall. We had **weekly meetings** to update with each other, or with other streams and prepare materials to submit. In addition, we also had a WhatsApp **group chat** to discuss other ad hoc tasks and **Teams working space** to easily **share, access, and store all documents**. It means that each of us was fully aware of what the others were doing, so we had very up-to-date information thanks to timely communication.”*

What would you change in the course and how?

Student feedback

“I would also guide the teams a bit more by giving a few templates on team-work available, so that students that are less accustomed to working in teams would also have some sort of frameworks.”



Solution:

Create a **team agreement** and submit as part of the progress report 1.

Support material /
Teamwork skills section to
MyCourses

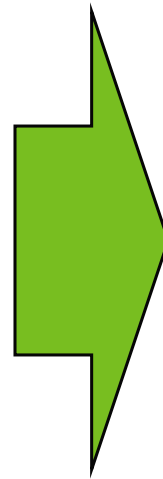
Enforce F2F meetings

Should individual effort be evaluated through peer assessment and have an influence on the student's grade?

Student feedback

“Yes, especially now that all work was done online, the amount of work was not equal to all in the team.”

“Maybe somehow, but not sure if peer assessment is the right way. Especially now when we are working remotely, it's hard to say who is doing the most etc. “



Solution:

Added a **contribution table** to be filled in together with the team throughout the course.

Contribution table

Please fill in the contribution form together with your team throughout the project to make sure the workload is evenly divided among the team

Name	Task 1 (e.g. managing the project)	Task 2 (e.g. defining the project scope)	Task 3 (e.g. conducting literature review)	Task 4 (e.g. conducting interviews)	Task 5 (e.g. analyzing data)	Task 6 (e.g. writing report)	Task 7 (e.g. creating presentation slides)	Task 8 (e.g. Presenting the slides and preparing for it)	Total contribution
Student 1	Major responsibility	Minor contribution		Minor contribution		Major responsibility	Major responsibility		Average
Student 2		Minor contribution	Major responsibility	Minor contribution	Some contribution	Some contribution	Minor contribution		Average
Student 3		Minor contribution		Major responsibility	Some contribution	Some contribution	Major responsibility		Average
Student 4		Minor contribution	Minor contribution	Minor contribution	Major responsibility	Some contribution	Minor contribution		Below average
Student 5	Major responsibility		Major responsibility		Some contribution		Major responsibility	Major responsibility	Average

Should individual effort be evaluated through peer assessment and have an influence on the student's grade?

Student feedback

“I definitely think it's unfair when the team members do not have the same goals for the course (eventhough we talked about them in the beginning)”



Solution:

If someone's individual contribution is significantly greater or lower than that of others in the team, individual student's final grade can be affected with one grade up or down).

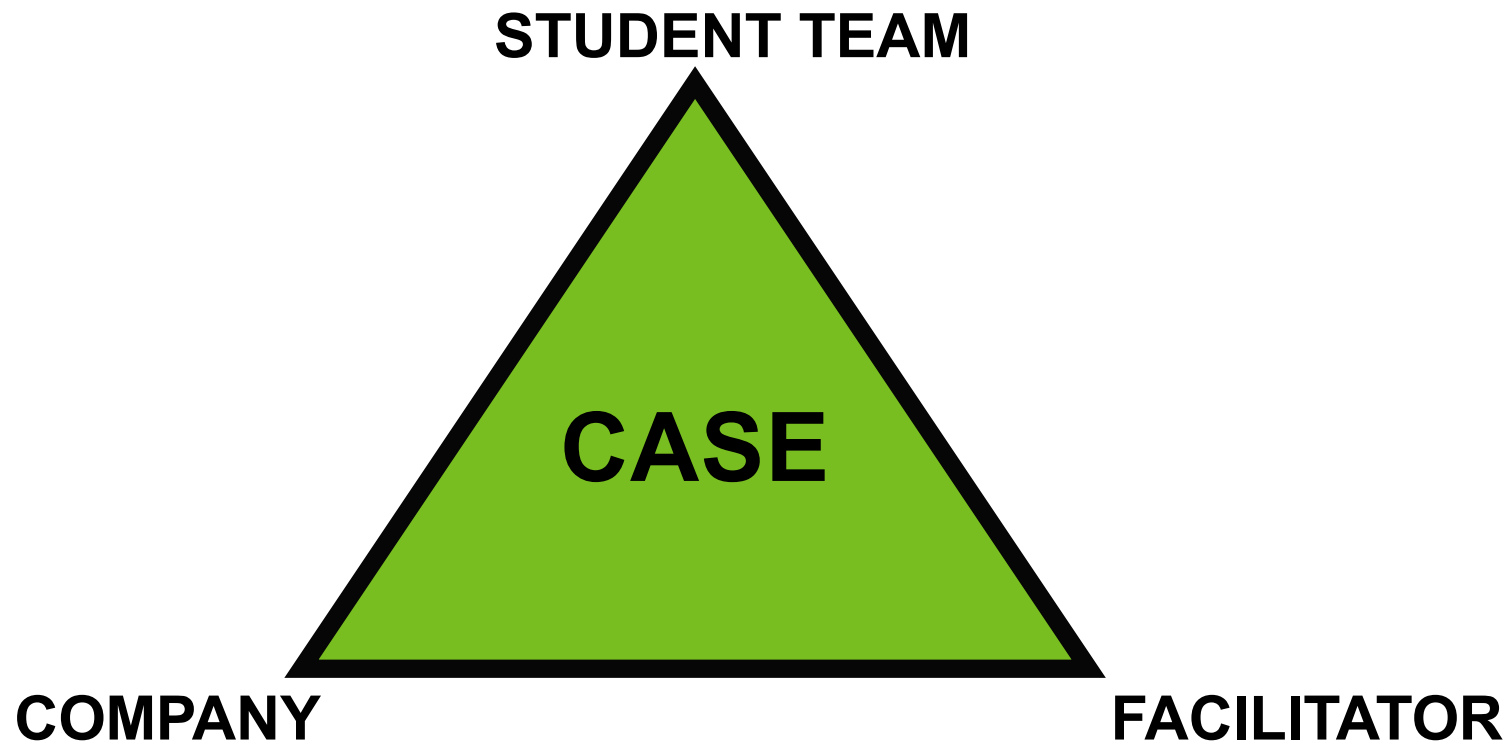
Support material

Support material in MyCourses

- **Project planning and management**
- **Research ethics**
- **Teamwork skills**
- **Presentation**
- **Final report**
- **Final report and presentation examples**

Facilitators

Each team has a faculty facilitator



Facilitators are there to give you feedback and help you

- To get organized – meet with your facilitator next Wednesday
- To make sure that the workload is not too heavy (scoping of the project)
- To discuss if there are any issues within the team or with the case company
- To make sure the project progresses as planned
- To assist with theories and methodologies

**Take benefit
of your
facilitator and
keep them in
the loop!**

Faculty Facilitators



**Anne-Sophie
Barbe**



**Paula
Koskinen
Sandberg**



**Tamara
Galkina**



**Iiris
Saittakari**



**Hiroshi
Kanno**



**Mark van
der
Giessen**

Next steps and some tips

Teams will be formed after the case pitches

- Select your **three most preferred cases**. Include short justifications - limited to 300 characters.
- If you have more than three preferences, you may indicate them in the justifications of the third preference.
- Submit case preferences through MyCourses by tomorrow midnight
- You can also select the least preferred case (optional)

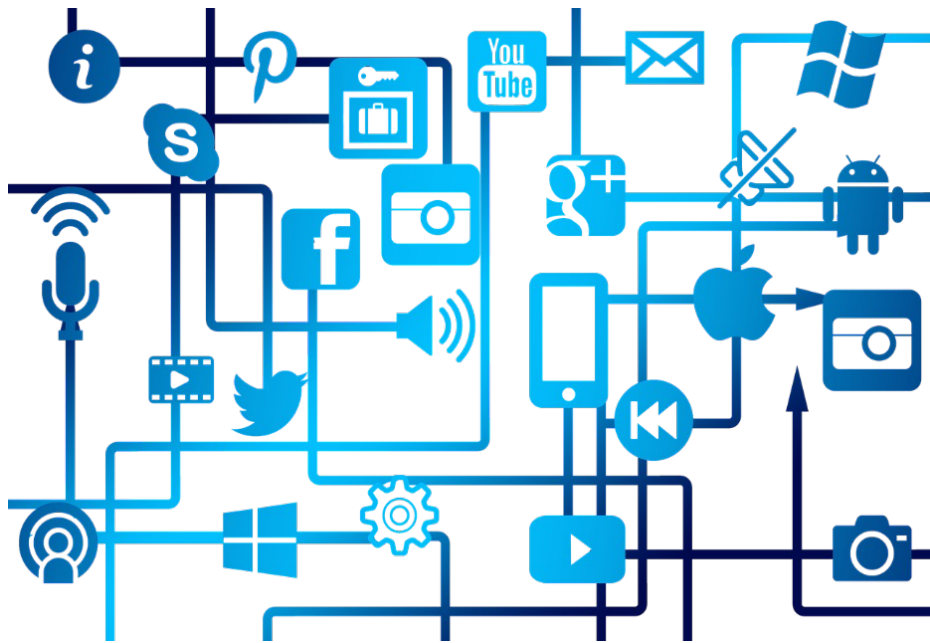
We cannot promise that you will get your preference, but we will do our best!

**Don't be afraid of the undefined project scope
– it's an opportunity, not a threat!**

Four ~~Three~~ pieces of advice

- ✓ Read "Capstone Instructions and Assignments" available on MyCourses
- ✓ Be active and communicate with your
 - team members
 - faculty facilitator
 - case organization
- ✓ If there are issues, address them immediately!
- ✓ **HAVE FUN** 😊

Expand your network



...with company representatives,
faculty facilitators and other
students!

Connect them on LinkedIn:

*Hi [name]! I'm in the Aalto
Capstone project and would like to
connect with you on LinkedIn.*

What can I expect?

CHALLENGES!

- Lack of time
- Colleagues you can't choose
- Problems unclear; limits and definitions need to be negotiated
- Work outside your own comfort zone or specific interests

All these are common in business projects!

“If it doesn't
challenge you,
it won't change you.”

Fred DeVito

