



*Updated March 8, 2019*

### **What would your Dream School look like?**

Over the years, X-Culture has worked with dozens of companies. Those companies represented all kinds of industries, from food to apparel, to IT.

Two of our partner organizations were the Finnish Schools International and The Experiential School of Greensboro. They want to know how they can improve their programs and how can they convince parents that these schools are the best choice for their kids.

So, we are asking you: If you were to build your dream school, what would it look like?

- Where would you build the school?
  - What courses would it offer?
  - How would you test if the kids are learning?
  - How would you select the teachers?
  - How would you select the kids?
  - How much should it cost?
  - And most importantly, how would you convince the parents to send their kids to your dream school?
- Where would you advertise your dream school, what would your ads say, and why?

To give you a starting point, here is some information about the Finnish Schools International and the Experiential School of Greensboro. You can do your own research to find out more what schools look like in different countries. Which system do you like most? Why?

### **About Finnish Schools International**



Webinar with the CEO of the Finish Schools International Dr. Alejtin Berisha:

<https://youtu.be/HxKBAQMkwWo>

Based out of Helsinki, Finland, Finnish Schools International is a new company that is aiming to bring the world-renowned Finnish School system to the rest of the world. A quick google search about the Finnish School system will quickly reveal that the Finnish School system has been received almost universal praise for its success over the past 40 years. Please read the following articles for some interesting results and praise for the Finnish School system.

- [26 Amazing Facts about Finland's Unorthodox Education System](#)
- [Why Are Finland's Schools Successful?](#)
- [26 Amazing Facts About Finland's Unorthodox Education System](#)
- [11 Ways Finland's Education System Shows Us that “Less is More](#)
- [Why Finland has the best schools - LA Times](#)

Finnish Schools International is taking the Finnish model and opening private schools around the world that will allow students from around the world the opportunity to learn according to the Finnish model. The company is opening its first school in Pristina, Kosovo in 2018 and in 2019, new schools will be opened in Tirana, Albania, and Zagreb, Croatia.

Finnish Schools International is a private network of schools, operating mostly as for-profit private schools unless there is a provision in a certain country that does not allow this. In this case, the school will operate as a private not for profit.

They are regular schools (usually from 8:30 - 15:30 hrs) operating with the Finnish National Core Curriculum, but also taking into account specific curriculum requirements of the country it operates.

The school is K-12 covering ages from 3 to 18. This way, the school cover all levels of pre-university education.

The schools are accredited by EduCluster in Finland. The schools are expected to be accredited by AdvancEd Accreditation Agency from the U.S. in the nearest future. If required to be accredited locally, such accreditation will be obtained in new markets within one to two years, depending on the process.

In addition, every school needs to have a local license from the Ministry of Education of the country it operates in. Such licenses are obtained prior to starting operations in the new country.

The Finnish Schools International covers all subjects based on the Finnish National Core Curriculum. In addition, it covers languages (local plus foreign) and programming classes starting from the primary school. History, Geography, and Social studies are designed to incorporate local particularities as well.

The Finnish Schools International does not cover religious studies, but ethics is introduced as a subject starting Grade 3.

### **About the Experiential School of Greensboro (TESG)**



Webinar with the Co-Founders of the Experiential School of Greensboro Heather Moore and Melissa Bocci  
<https://youtu.be/cJZl76ll0t0>

The Experiential School of Greensboro is a charter school. It relies on experiential learning method in all of its courses. The students attend the TESG for free.

### *How is TESS different?*

All classes at TESS rely on hands-on projects, games, and activities. TESS students use their math, language, science, social studies, arts, music, and movement skills together to solve real-world problems.

At TESS, all students have the opportunity to learn at a pace in concert with their individual strengths and talents. We believe each child comes to school full of interests, abilities, and knowledge and our job is to engage those assets to inspire learning. TESS students meet their learning goals through a unique curriculum that emphasizes curiosity, experience, community engagement, and creativity. We integrate our math, science, social studies, reading, and writing curriculum with the arts, community service, and urban farming to create project-based, hands-on learning experiences for students.

### *What is experiential learning?*

1) Learning is inquiry-based.

Teachers activate students' curiosity, interests, and prior knowledge as they work with them to pose problems and design projects to solve those problems.

2) Learning is hands-on and active.

Students learn by doing, gaining skills and information through activities that encourage them to experiment, find patterns, and create.

3) Learning occurs in context.

Students understand why they are doing the work they do because every activity happens in service of a larger project or real-world goal.

4) Learning is creative and cooperative.

Students assume responsibilities within the classroom, alternating leadership roles, playing to one another's strengths, and learning from and with each other.

5) Learning occurs in a supportive environment.

Teachers encourage students to experiment, make mistakes, evaluate their errors, and try again.

6) Learning is interdisciplinary.

Students rarely tackle subjects in isolation because experiential learning requires many kinds of skills to complete.

### *Project-Based Learning (PBL)*

Students in PBL

- Work in collaborative student groups
- Pose and solve real-world questions/problems
- Plan, research, experiment, and reflect
- Produce a product/solution

Teachers in PBL

- Help students set project tasks and timelines
- Help students learn the information and skills needed for their tasks
- Help students find project resources and expert advisors
- Ensure learning goals in all subject areas are attended to within the context of projects.

### *Design of the School*

TESG offers multi-age classrooms (which we call houses) for first through eighth graders, with Kindergartners in their own houses. Classroom spaces of the same grade level combination surround a common area used for inter-house activities. Kindergarten houses are capped at 18 students, houses for grades 1-6 are capped at 20, and the seventh, eighth-grade houses will be capped at 24 once the middle school houses are fully enrolled in our fifth year of operation.

## **DESIGNING YOUR DREAM SCHOOL**

The big questions you have to answer:

1. **Product:** Study different education models. Based on your analysis, design your Dream School; a school that is fun yet academically effective.
2. **Market:** What countries would your Dream School be most popular? Why?
3. **Marketing:** How would you promote your Dream School in that/those countries? How would you convince parents to send their children to your school?

Please write your proposal in a report that has the following three sections:

### **Block 1. Dream School**

#### *Preparations:*

Before designing your Dream School, start with a research into different education systems. Compare and contrast the schools your team members attend. Share with your team members about the school you're attending. It may be a good idea to take some photos of your school and show to your team members. You can even try to record interviews with your classmates and teachers, but please ask for your teacher's permission first.

Then, research how education systems in different countries are different. For example, how schools in Finland are different from schools in the U.S.A. or in Japan, or Singapore, or Poland? Do they have public or private schools, or both? If both, is there a difference between public and private schools?

When comparing the different schools and education systems, pay special attention not only to how the school building and the classrooms look, what subjects are taught, but also how the classes are taught, what the role of the teacher is, how the children are expected to interact with one another, how students are evaluated and tested, what kinds of projects they are asked to complete, how they spend their free time, and the like. You can also compare the cost of school (who pays for schools and how much).

Recommended length of the section that provides your comparative analysis: 2 to 5 pages.

#### *Development:*

After you have a good understanding of how different schools are similar or different, design your Dream School. If you could design the best school ever, what it would look like?

Remember though, the ultimate goal of a school is to prepare children to be happy and successful in life. A school where children play video games all day may be fun, but it probably will not be very effective at preparing children for the challenges they will face when they grow up. Please also keep in mind that there is a limit as to how much a government or parents can spend on a school, so try to design a school that is fun, effective, and can operate on a reasonable budget.

Recommended length of the section that describes your Dream School: 3 to 6 pages.

## **Block 2. Market**

After you design your Dream School, think where it would be most popular. That is, in what country the parents would want to send their children to your Dream School? Remember, schools cost money. So you have to select a country where not only the parents would want to send their kids to your Dream School, but also either the parents or the government would want to and can pay for operating at least one, and preferably many schools of your design.

Also, once your team decides on the most promising new market for your Dream School, conduct your research and describe this country in terms of:

- Population
- Geography
- Culture
- Economy
- Politics
- And most importantly, their current education system and how your Dream School will fit here.

Recommended length of the section that describes the proposed location for your Dream School: 3 to 6 pages.

## **Block 3. Marketing**

Your Dream School may cost a lot of money and there may be many other good schools in your proposed market. How do you inform the parents about your Dream School and convince them to send their kids to your school?

### ***Promotion Channel***

What are the best channels to inform the parents about your Dream School? Where would you place your advertisement and why?

Keep in mind the cost. For example, advertisement on TV may be too expensive and too broad. It allows to reach millions of people, but many of them may not have school-age children or cannot afford to send their children to your school and, thus, would never be interested in your Dream School.

Would advertisement via direct mail, online banner ads, Facebook, YouTube, email offers, participation in the school or science fairs, or other platforms be cheaper and more effective? Which one would be the most effective promotion channel for your Dream School?

Once you decide on the best promotion channel, describe how it works and how one can advertise your Dream School using the channel.

How do you place an ad there?

How much does it cost to place an ad there?

If the advertising platform allows for selecting a specific audience (e.g., Facebook), how would you define your audience in terms of their demographics and interest?

Recommended length of the section that describes the best promotion channel and how it works: 1 to 3 pages.

### ***Ad design***

For the new market, you recommended, design an ad or other promotional materials that could be used for your suggested promotion channel. It can be a printable brochure, an online banner ad, a Facebook ad, a promo email, or a promo video.

Explain your design in terms of:

- What message are you trying to convey in your ad?
- What pictures or graphics do you use and why?
- What words or slogans do you use and why?
- What music do you use and why (if applicable)?

Please keep in mind the culture and traditions of the country. Use the colors and words in your ad that would be appealing to the people in that country.

Recommended length of the section that provides an example of an ad and explains it: 1 to 2 pages.

## Report Structure and Formatting Guidelines

### Structure:

- Include an Executive Summary (300-400 words, bullet-list format preferred) that provides a short review of your key findings and recommendations. Please remember, the busy company owners and executives will not have the time to read hundreds of the reports, so they must be able to get a quick summary of the content of your report from the Executive Summary. Most managers will make a decision on whether to continue reading the report if the Executive Summary catches their attention. Therefore, make sure this important part makes it easy to see your key recommendations.
- At the beginning of each report section include a bullet list of the key recommendations and figures presented in the section (2-4 bullets, each 4-10 words long). Again, when presented with hundreds of the reports, busy executives must be able to get key figures and recommendations from these summaries.
- The Title Page must contain team number, client company name, names, emails, and countries of residence of all the team members and a short summary (5-15 words) of the role and work completed by each team member. If any of the team members dropped out or did not contribute to the report, please still list them, but add a note "Did not participate" by their names.

### Formatting:

- The report must be 20-35 pages (5,000-8,000 words) including the title page, executive summary, and references. Each section should be 1-3 pages long. Generally shorter is better, so be as concise and focused as possible.
- Number all pages in your team report.
- Margins should be 2.5 cm (one inch) at the top, bottom, and sides of the page.
- Font type should be 12-point Times New Roman throughout the report.
- Double-space all body text.
- Indent the first line of a new paragraph.
- The text should be left-aligned.
- All citations used must be cited in the text and in a reference list at the end of each report. In-text citations should include only the name of the author(s) and the date of the publication. Full references should be provided at the end of the report. Please use [APA reference style](#).
- A picture is worth a thousand of words, so use of figures, graphs, pictures, as well as tables is encouraged. It is recommended these are included in the main body of the report.

---

## TASKS AND DEADLINES

Each week, you will be asked to fill out a short survey to report your team's progress, evaluate the performance of your team members and provide other information we need to better understand why some teams perform better than others. Please see the informed consent form at the end of this document for more details.

**Important:** Participants who receive peer evaluations **below 2.0** (out of 5.0) will first receive a warning. If their peer evaluations stay **below 2.0** two weeks in a row, they will be automatically excluded from the team.

**Important:** Occasionally emails with invitations to take a survey are filtered into the Junk/Spam email folder. Please check your Junk/Spam email folder (search for messages with "X-Culture" in subject line) if you don't receive a survey invitation message around the date specified in the table above.

*All deadlines are set for 11:59 pm (23:59), EST time zone (New York).*

---

### 1. Pre-project Readiness Test

Due: Any time before the official project start

Before the project starts, all participants must review project materials and take a Readiness Test. The test will include questions about the project and online collaboration tools, as well as questions about your prior international experience and background. You must successfully pass the Readiness Test (80% or more correct answers) to participate in X-Culture. If your semester starts after the official start of the project or you do not complete the Readiness Test on time for another reason, do so as soon as you can – we will continue adding new participants for about ten days after the project start.

---

### Official Project Start, Teams Formed

Monday, March 4

As long as you successfully completed the Readiness Test, you will receive the names and contact information of your team members on this day. Please reach out to your teammates immediately to establish contact. Introduce yourself, and start working on the project. Students whose semester starts later will be added to the existing teams once their semester starts, so it is likely an additional student may be added to your team in the first two weeks.

---

### 2. Establish Contact with Your Teammates

Due: Thursday, March 7

By this date, you are expected to have exchanged at least a few messages with your teammates. If some teammates are not responding, you are expected to send at least three email reminders to them by this date. Team members who fail to establish contact with their teams will be excluded from the project. Your communication starts via email, but once the initial contact is established, your team can use any means of communication.

**Deliverables:** A few days before the deadline, you will receive an email with your personal weekly survey link. The survey will ask you to report whether or not you have communicated with all of your team members. Team members who fail to establish contact with their teams may be removed from the project.

**Note:**

This and all other weekly surveys will also ask to evaluate your team members' performance and provide other information we need to better understand why some teams perform better than others. Please see the informed consent form at the end of this document for more details.

---



---

### 3. Meet Your Teammates

Due: Sunday, March 10

Meet your team members: Please learn as much as possible about your teammates (background, interests, hobbies, experiences, etc.). Research shows that spending a little time on getting to know team members greatly improves team effectiveness. It is also strongly recommended that you try a live video call (e.g., Skype).

**Deliverables:** A few days before the deadline, you will receive an email with your personal weekly survey link. The survey will test how well you got to know your team members. It will contain a few questions about your team members, such as their background, interests, etc. The acquaintanceship test will not be graded, so do not feel obliged to reveal any personal information to your team members or insist that your team members reveal their personal information to you. However, try to get to know your teammates as much as you can.

---

### 4. Select your Client Organization

Due: Sunday, March 17

By this date, your team is expected to review all available challenges and select your client organization. Before you choose your client organization, please carefully review the challenges presented by each organization and try to attend (or watch the recordings of) the webinars with each of the client companies, which will be held in the first week of the project.

**Deliverables:** A few days before the deadline, you will receive an email with your personal weekly survey link. The survey will ask you to report the name of your client organization.

---

### 5. Initial Individual Research and Ideas

Due: Sunday, March 24

Conduct your initial research and try to learn as much as possible about the industry your client operates in: Who are the main players? What the most popular products and technologies? What new technologies and approaches are likely to dominate the industry in the future? Is the industry regulated by the government and how? What are the differences in different regions of the world? How does your client compare to the competitors? What are your client's strengths and weaknesses? Try to interview 2-3 potential customers of your client company to better understand how they make purchasing decisions and if (and why) they would choose your client over the completion.

Review the challenge questions listed in the three sections earlier and, based on your initial research, jot down your personal initial answers to each of them. You do **not** have to write more than a few words in response to each question at this point; just your initial ideas and possible answers. This will prepare you for the team discussions when your team will be collectively developing the best answers to each question. Even if your team decides to assign different report section to different team members, it is very important that each team member shares his/her suggestions for each question. This will give the team member responsible for the report section more to work with and help develop better final answers.

**Deliverables:** A few days before the deadline, you will receive an email with your personal weekly survey link. The weekly survey will ask you to report the results of your initial individual research and your initial individual suggestions for responding to each block of questions listed earlier. Specifically, you will be asked to:

- Report the results of your industry analysis, including a brief description of the industry, your client's strengths and weaknesses compared to the completion, etc. (bullet list of key findings, half a page total)
-

- 
- Your initial recommendations for the most promising market, market entry mode, key elements of the promotion and marketing strategy, and key elements of the operation strategy (1-2 points in response to each question, a paragraph per question).
- 

### **6. Block 1: Dream School Design**

Due: Sunday, March 31

This week, your team is expected to submit a draft of your Section 1. It does **not** have to be a fully finished report section. However, try to complete as much as possible. The more you complete now, the less work your team will have to do later. The drafts will not be graded by X-Culture and will not affect your chances of winning the completion (we only evaluate the final reports). However, the instructors will have access to these documents in case they would like to review your work and provide feedback.

***Deliverables:*** A few days before the deadline, you will receive an email with your personal weekly survey link. The survey will ask you to submit a draft of your Report Section 1 (the survey will contain a document upload link). Although your team is expected to develop the section draft collectively, only one team member will be asked to upload the document on behalf of the team. However, every team member will be asked to complete the rest of the progress survey (questions about how your team is doing and peer evaluations).

---

### **7. Block 2: Market Analysis**

Due: Sunday, April 7

This week, your team is expected to submit a draft of your Section 2. It does **not** have to be a fully finished report section. However, try to complete as much as possible. The more you complete now, the less work your team will have to do later. The drafts will not be graded by X-Culture and will not affect your chances of winning the completion (we only evaluate the final reports). However, the instructors will have access to these documents in case they would like to review your work and provide feedback.

***Deliverables:*** A few days before the deadline, you will receive an email with your personal weekly survey link. The survey will ask you to submit a draft of your Report Section 2 (the survey will contain a document upload link). Although your team is expected to develop the section draft collectively, only one team member will be asked to upload the document on behalf of the team. However, every team member will be asked to complete the rest of the progress survey (questions about how your team is doing and peer evaluations).

---

### **8. Block 3: Marketing**

Due: Sunday, April 14

This week, your team is expected to submit a draft of your Section 3. It does **not** have to be a fully finished report section. However, try to complete as much as possible. The more you complete now, the less work your team will have to do later. The drafts will not be graded by X-Culture and will not affect your chances of winning the completion (we only evaluate the final reports). However, the instructors will have access to these documents in case they would like to review your work and provide feedback.

***Deliverables:*** A few days before the deadline, you will receive an email with your personal weekly survey link. The survey will ask you to submit a draft of your Report Section 3 (the survey will contain a document upload link). Although your team is expected to develop the section draft collectively, only one team member will be asked to upload the document on behalf of the team. However, every team member will be asked to complete the rest of the progress survey (questions about how your team is doing and peer evaluations).

---

---

## 9. Complete Draft

Due: Sunday, April 21

By this date, your team is expected to have a complete draft of your report. It does not have to be a finished report, but it should be as complete as possible, including Title Page and an Executive and Chapter Summaries, and correct formatting throughout the document.

**Deliverables:** One team member should submit the draft [via TurnItIn.com](https://turnitin.com) on behalf of the entire team (see step-by-step submission guidelines below). After your document is submitted, TurnItIn will generate a plagiarism report that will show you if any parts of the report have been plagiarized (takes several hours to produce). Usually, up to 20% similarity is acceptable, provided that copy-and-pasted materials are properly referenced. If plagiarism is detected, your team will have until the Final Report deadline (see below) to fix the problem and submit a plagiarism-free final report.

This draft will not be graded and the plagiarism statistics will not be shared with your instructors. This is only for your information. You should continue editing the report until the final deadline and you can still make any changes or additions.

However, it is strongly encouraged that you submit as complete a document as possible. You will be able to submit your draft and check it for plagiarism [only once](#), so the more complete the draft, the less the chance that the final report will contain plagiarism.

Also, **every team member** will be asked to submit your usual weekly progress survey. A few days before the deadline, you will receive an email with the usual questions about your team.

---

## 11. Final Report

Due: Friday, April 26

By this date, your final report must be submitted via TurnItIn.com (see Submission Guidelines below). Please note, the plagiarism statistics for final reports will be generated by TurnItIn and shared with the instructors, but the plagiarism report will **not** be shared with the students.

Only one team member must submit the final document via TurnItIn.com on behalf of the team.

---

## 12. Post-Project Survey

Due once report submitted, but no later than: Sunday, April 28

A few days before the deadline, you will receive an email invitation with a link to your post-project survey. This is the **most important** survey.

The survey will ask about your experiences in X-Culture and evaluate the performance of your teammates. Your answers are extremely important and will help us improve the project in the future.

**Every team member** must complete the survey.

---

### Submission Guidelines

The report draft and the final report documents must be submitted via [www.TurnItIn.com](http://www.TurnItIn.com). Only one team member must submit the documents on behalf of the entire team. The team member who will be submitting the draft and final report must follow these steps:

*Part 1. Create a TurnItIn account (time required: 60-90 seconds).*

1. On [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) and click on the link "Create Account".
2. On the next window, under the "Create a New Account" heading, click on the "Student" link.
3. Enter the Class ID. Note the Draft and Final report submissions have different Class IDs:  
Class ID: **20068758** (password **xculture**)

Note: if you already have a TurnItIn account, simply log on using your "old" login information, click on the "Enroll in Class" tab on the top, and repeat step 3.

*Part 2: Submitting the paper (time required: 60-120 seconds)*

4. Once the account is created, you can log into your account. Your home page will list your classes.
5. Select the correct class and click on the "Submit" button.  
**Make certain to select "Draft" assignment for the report draft and "Final Report" for the final report.**

6. Choose Single File Upload.

Make certain the file name only contains your team number.

**Wrong:** "Final report 123.pdf", "Team Report.pdf", "Team 123.pdf", "John Smith.pdf"

**Right:** "123.pdf"

7. Click on "browse" to locate the paper saved to your computer.
8. Click on the file and click "open".
9. Click the "upload" button at the bottom.
10. Click "submit" to confirm your submission. Once the submission is finalized, you will see "Your submission was successful" on the top of the page. If you wait a few hours, you will see your "originality report" that shows how much and what parts of your report have been plagiarized.