

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

An Investigation into Undergraduate Research:

Facilitating and Implementing Undergraduate Research at A Small University

BLASTER Undergraduate Research Project:

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Abstract

Undergraduate research, or research in general, is part of the academic life of most universities around the world. It takes the form of an individual research project for either coursework or the final bachelor thesis. Large universities have the possibility to include undergraduate research in curriculum due to their larger scale, capacity and modern facilities. Small-scale schools are less fortunate when it comes to undergraduate research. Nevertheless, that does not mean they are not able to provide opportunities for such research. The purpose of this research project was to analyze the potential of Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts (BISLA) in relation to the possibility of conducting undergraduate research. BISLA is a small university with a total of 46 students in a three-year BA program. The analysis was based on interviews conducted with professors, current third-year students, and alumni. While professors are optimistic about the feasibility of research at BISLA, students and alumni are not satisfied with more than one aspect relevant to conducting research. Students believe that improving facilities and better-structured curriculum is needed to prepare them for any type of research whether for coursework or their bachelor thesis.

Keywords: undergraduate research, liberal arts education, small universities, bachelor theses, BLASTER

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Introduction

Often enough, students have many possibilities available at their schools. Some less, some more. Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts (hereafter: BISLA) is a small university with only 46 students and six full-time instructors. One might believe undergraduate research would be impossible to conduct at BISLA. We might have believed it as well. Undergraduate research experience is highly valued at many institutes. Research universities offer students to participate in undergraduate research. Even though, there is no data on what schools need to conduct undergraduate research, David Lopatto, a professor at Grinnell College, a private liberal arts university in Iowa, has conducted surveys on the benefits of doing such research (Lopatto, *Undergraduate Research as a Catalyst for Liberal Learning* 2007).

According to Lopatto, it not only teaches students to be engaged in a project, but helps them grow and work on their communication, problem solving and teamwork skills. Most of all it teaches responsibility (Lopatto, *Undergraduate Research as a Catalyst for Liberal Learning* 2007). Conducting undergraduate research might not make a student-researcher pursue a career in the topic of their research, but it will teach them skills. Students will grow personally “including the growth of self- confidence, independence, tolerance for obstacles, interest in the discipline, and sense of accomplishment, centers on the increasing understanding of one’s self and one’s capabilities” (Lopatto, *The Essential Features of Undergraduate Research* 2003). As the benefits of doing undergraduate research have been researched and surveyed, a different question is needed.

Large colleges and universities are either already research-based or have the potential for its development due to their facilities, faculty and many offered fields of study. Small-scale universities might find it harder. BISLA’s undergraduate research primarily takes the form of the bachelor thesis. Students spend nearly a year collecting data, assembling and analysing it, and finally produce their findings in the shape of a thesis paper

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The question of “Is it enough?” comes to mind. Are BISLA students well enough prepared to conduct research even though the scale of research offered at BISLA (mostly in the shape of student’s bachelor thesis) is not as broad as other undergraduate research may be? Is ‘enough’ only a matter of research-friendly facilities, comfortable space and the availability of mentors/supervisors? The assumption is that if students experienced conducting research in some shape and form before working on their bachelor’s thesis, they would be more confident in, and perhaps more capable of, producing a high-quality paper. Thus, the question follows: What would it take for a tiny school like BISLA to implement/facilitate undergraduate research?

Methodology

To find out if undergraduate research is possible at a small university, the team had to first find out the current situation at their own small school, Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts (BISLA). They decided to conduct qualitative research by doing interviews on the subject with current instructors, current graduating students, and recent alumni.

There were three sets of questions, one set for every interviewed group (see Appendix A). There were only four closed-ended questions out of 27 questions asked. Three members of the research team were each responsible for interviewing one specific group. This was done to ensure that the conditions for those in that group were consistent. The interviews were conducted mainly on BISLA premises between January and April 2017. The language of the interviews depended on the language the interviewees felt most comfortable; however, most were conducted in English.

Conducting the interviews with participants was not difficult in itself; however, it was challenging for the interviewer to keep the interviewee to actually answering the questions. With regards to professors, often enough, instead of providing a clear answer, their answers were off topic, thus making it difficult for the research team to properly analyse and find appropriate answers. Some answers were, therefore, irrelevant.

A total of ten interviews was carried out, recorded, and transcribed. Complete transcripts can be found in the Appendices B, C and D.

The Participants

The Teachers (Appendix B)

Since BISLA as a small school does not have a high number of teachers, the research team did not have a problem choosing among them. The criteria the team found important, however, was each teacher's understanding of research, their own experience in such activity, and their academic background. In addition, a variety of types of teachers was important in order to get different perspectives. Thus, the selection was based on whether the teacher is a full-time or adjunct professor, where the teacher comes from (i.e. their country of origin), and which field they focus on. The final decision on which professors are most suitable for an interview came down to their experience in differing academic backgrounds making their responses relevant due to their ability to objectively compare BISLA with other institutions.

The research team interviewed four teachers, of which two are adjuncts and two are full-time university staff, representing vast teaching experience spanning from 10 to over 30 years of active participation in academia and research. Three have taught in both Slovak and non-Slovak institutions. One is non-Slovak with long experience in an English-speaking country. Two, though Slovak, have experienced teaching in various non-Slovak educational systems, therefore having the ability to compare the environments. Three of those interviewed were female and one male.

The Students (Appendix C)

When it comes to current students, the team chose students with the most experience at BISLA – those in their final year. Moreover, it was important to pick students who are active, those having the initiative to improve in connection to their studies. Out of the four students interviewed, only one was female due to the fact that there are three times as many males as females in the current third-year class. Of those interviewed, two of four students plan to pursue

an MA, one has not decided yet on his future studies, and one will start work fulltime after graduating.

The Alumni (Appendix D)

Talking to BISLA alumni students was challenging. Many of them are not in Slovakia, most are busy, or few responded to the emails that were sent to them. Once again, the variety of opinions was important in this research. The goal was not only about finding out ‘yes or no’ information. The team needed to find alumni who had been active in their bachelor studies as well as those still active within academia. The research team looked at where the alumni are located, what they are doing now, and whether they finished their studies, went to work right after graduating, or are still in the process of pursuing their MA or PhD. In the end, three recent alumni were interviewed, two females and one male. One is pursuing an MA, another is pursuing a PhD, while the third is working for a multinational non-profit organisation after getting her MA degree.

The Analysis

The analysis of the interviews was done by collating individual answers for each question in each group. We focused on similarities and put emphasis on the statements that occurred most frequently. In the analysis sample that follows, the similar answers to one question (2. *What do you think would be the effect of conducting undergraduate research?*) given by the participants in one group (*Alumni*) are shown:

Alumni 2

- *Beneficial for future career, future academic achievement, good basics 2*
- *Basis of building up following research – resulting statement from the interview*
- *Contribution to the field 2*
- *Methodology and skill of conducting research*

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The numbers at the end of lines (in this example, the '2' at the end of the first and third answers) indicate the how often this answer was given by participants. This was done for all the groups, questions, and participants' answers. Then, based on this analysis, the team created a summary derived from the sets of answers. Those summaries provided the basis for the script of the video presenting the research results, "Sorrows of a Young Undergrad".

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis of the interviews conducted, the research team discovered, that research is not that difficult to conduct. After all, as one student participant said in an interview, “You can conduct research from your grandma’s basement.” However, is it going to be well facilitated research? This initial question of the research team of whether it is possible to facilitate and implement undergraduate research in a small university such as BISLA.

BISLA professors believed that undergraduate research is possible at BISLA. Based on the analysis of interviews, it can be said that BISLA has everything needed to conduct successful research. It has well furnished and maintained facilities. It has its teachers who are ready to help students with anything they need. And last but not least, it has its resources in the shape of books, articles, and journals, as well as online databases available to students anytime.

Current BISLA students had similar answers to their professors. They did not say undergraduate research is impossible. However, they disagreed in that, students believed they were not ready enough, because they were missing one main component: methodology. Another aspect mentioned was facilities. Current students agreed that BISLA has great facilities available to their students. Nevertheless, it does not have one spacious room in which they could do their research, use printers or databases, and relax as well and not be closed in a basement.

BISLA alumni had similar opinions to those given by the current third years with small deviations. They would appreciate a better situated research space as well as a course on methodology. One former BISLA student, mentioned that different fields require different kinds of research.

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It is important to look at that aspect, because research in philosophy would be conducted differently than in comparative politics. Lucky for BISLA, they offer courses for both, but not methodology for both.

Overall, all three groups interviewed by the research team agreed that BISLA is ready for undergraduate research. It provides every necessary tool to conduct research ranging from space to supervision. However, it is recommended to improve the course on methodology, provide training in different ways to conduct research and create a space needed for such projects. Even though the research team focused on BISLA, it can be concluded that facilitating undergraduate research at small universities is not difficult; however, implementing it successfully into schools' curriculum and daily college life can be more challenging.

The Video and Its Content

“Sorrows of a Young Undergrad” is an 8-minute video introducing the viewer to the issues surrounding conducting undergraduate research at small university such as BISLA. Since the researchers do not have any experience with any other university large or small, they focus on the only university they have attended thus far: BISLA. The team looks at what undergraduate research entails and what an undergraduate researcher needs to end up with high-quality results. Thus, this video covers the questions interviewers asked and gives the viewer a quick summary and analysis of what BISLA as a liberal arts institution does well, what it needs and what it lacks from the perspective of three groups of people associated with it: its instructors – all of whom are thesis supervisors; its graduating students – all of whom completed their bachelor theses this last year; and its alumni – all of whom are now studying or have studied in degree programs around the world.

The research team decided on this form of presenting their findings because the whole project is personal. The research team, all being students of BISLA, chose a topic close to their hearts and closely analysed it. The video shows the positive as well as the negative aspects of BISLA in relation to undergraduate research and preparation.

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Appendix A: Undergraduate Research Interview Questions

Questions for BISLA Instructors

1. How would you define research?
2. What are the suitable conditions for research?
3. To what extent does BISLA provide conditions for research?
4. What are the differences between undergraduate research and professional research?
5. How would you define undergraduate research?
6. What would you say is the goal of Undergraduate Research?
7. What would BISLA need to implement/facilitate in order to conduct Undergraduate Research?
8. What product/result (we could not decide) would you expect from Undergraduate Research conducted at BISLA?

Questions for Third-Year BISLA Students

1. How would you define undergraduate research?
2. What do you think would be the effect of conducting undergraduate research?
3. Do you think BISLA is giving you necessary skills for conducting research?
4. What problems/lack of preparation did you encounter or are encountering in relation to conducting research on BISLA?
5. If you could start BISLA all over again what would you want to be taught in order to help you with conducting research?
6. Do you believe UR requires supervision? Why? Why not?
7. Please describe the supervision you received.
8. While conducting research, what facilities did BISLA provide?

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9. Are the facilities of BISLA sufficient for conducting UR?

Questions for BISLA Alumni

1. How would you define undergraduate research?
2. What do you think would be the effect of conducting undergraduate research?
3. Did BISLA give you necessary skills for conducting research?
4. What problems/lack of preparation did you encounter on BISLA in relation to conducting research?
5. If you could return to BISLA, what sort of skills would you teach yourself in order to help you with research?
6. Do you believe UR requires supervision? Why? Why not?
7. Please describe the supervision you received.
8. While conducting research, what facilities that BISLA provides did you use?
9. Were the facilities of BISLA sufficient for conducting UR?

Appendix B: Instructor/Supervisor Interviews

Participant 1 (female, over 30 years in academia)

I: How would you define research?

P: Research is looking for information and knowledge from a variety of sources and trying to go beyond what is already being written. Though there is a difference between secondary research and original research and generally it's not expected for example that undergraduates would do original research, sometimes they do, but generally, it's accepted that a PhD level for a research degree you would do original research or generate original ideas using secondary sources.

I: What would you consider are suitable conditions for research?

P: That depends entirely on the discipline and also the sort of research. Scientists are very tight down because they tend to need quite well equipped labs in order to do research. People in the area of the arts find it much easier because they don't need a large research infrastructure and a historian for example can work well on their own but they will have to travel around consult archives and things like this. Political science research is different for example from sociological research. Sociological research in many respects is more demanding in the conditions it has than politics research. The classic problem being interviewing in sociological research you need a large sample and you will frequently employ people to go around questioning respondents. Political science research you are more likely to be doing elite interviews so the principle investigator the main researcher will probably do the interviewing themselves because they're dealing with quite experienced interviewees and they need to be able to do what normally in political science you are much more likely to do a semi structured interview whereas in sociology you'd be more likely to do structured interview where every question, respondent gets the same questions.

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I: To what extent does BISLA provide these conditions for research?

P: In some respects, I think the conditions for research here are better than at most universities, particularly for undergraduate research, because there is far more individual attention and individual supervision at BISLA which can be quite important for high quality research by inexperienced researchers and that in a sense can be more important than huge buildings and large numbers of people.

I: What would you consider are the differences between undergraduate research and professional research you mentioned earlier?

P: By professional research you mean?

I: Graduate research. (laugh).

P: Okay, PhD research, research degrees or a post-doctoral research okay. Because professional research it can have the other meaning of market research by companies. I think the main difference is that the chances of original research being done are much less at undergraduate level. Simply because the time available is less the space you have to write up your results is less and the experience of the researcher is less, so it's more in scope.

I: And how would you define undergraduate research by itself?

P: Undergraduate research is designed to equip students with what they need to carry out more research later. It introduces the fundamentals of how to search out secondary resources. It should acquaint students with ethical issues if they are going to deal with what are called human subjects and the human subjects typically comes from medical research or can be sociological research, but some of the issues also relate to interviewing politicians so the basis of research ethics using of sources, citing of sources. Introducing students to the importance of theoretical frameworks of acquainting themselves with existing research. I mean one of the limitations of undergraduate research, particularly because of the limited time students have, is that the first

thing a PhD student does, someone who is researching full time for number of years, is they read all the secondary literature. They look at everything that's being written on a subject as well. Some people who are dealing with quite new fields find that not much is being written but they have to look the what's being written in the nearest field and work how and why it's different so I think the huge amount of background reading you need to do before you can identify what's needed in terms of empirical original research is there, so in a sense there is that problem with undergraduate research.

I: So what would you say is the goal of undergraduate research?

P: The goal of undergraduate research is to allow students to think for themselves to a much greater extent than they can do in individual courses and give them an open field to explore where that not being closely led where they can literally research, explore, going different directions, but at the same time trying produce a coherent, constructive project for what they doing. This is the same also, it is necessary for them to gain basic research skills.

I: What would BISLA need to implement or facilitate in order to conduct undergraduate research or allow conducting undergraduate research?

P: It seems to me that a current structure of the bachelor's dissertation places quite a lot of emphasis on research and original research. The idea that you do, what did I call it? A practical part. There seems to be an expectation that people will go and interview people, which would not be the case of the British university. British universities are very nervous about undergraduates interviewing people. Because you can easily find that certain subjects become saturated by too many students interviewing them and then access is harder for more advanced researchers and also I think you need to differentiate between students who definitely do want to go on and do academic research, who will be prepared to sort of look at the technical details of interviewing things like this. And weaker students, who probably won't be doing this kind

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of research, so you know using secondary sources is adequate. I find generally in Slovakia, this applies to all universities, the emphasis on research ethics is much weaker than in Britain. For example, in a British university, where I worked, you every student with the supervisor had to fill in a form and one of the first question is: Are you using human subjects, are you doing any interviewing? And if you'd be doing any interviewing then you had to fill in another research ethics form, to show that you reflected on the issues concerned. And you would have to a read a section on this and I think that's quite important. And I have actually noticed, once with a set of PhD students, taught myself another lecture, were telling them different things regarding a research ethics dilemma about actually about material being used (inaudible) for years down the line for a different purpose, because the British view is that you explain to the subject what the research is being used for. And even if it becomes very interesting, for years down the line, he said (inaudible) now he is saying this, you have to tell yourself that. You're not a journalist, you're not looking for sensualism, whereas I think the Slovak view I counted on this was that a if the interviewee agrees that you use, the interview is on record, and you can use the material you can't keep on going back to them and getting you know renewed consent if you want to use it for something else so you know you get these issues and I raise it as an important one because Slovakia in particular is more dependent than some countries at PhD and postdoctoral level on EU funding and you're likely to have to fill in there a section there about having a reflected on research issue, ethics issues, so I think that, that's quite an important issue to look at with undergraduate research. As I said, the supervision conditions here, at BISLA, are much better than some places but you know it is an important thing to, it is an important thing to look at.

I: So the ethics of research is needed to be?

P: Yes, it's quite a difficult area. I mean one when they did it Britain, one of the problems we found was that it tended to assume that you had none elite interviewees and that you were, you

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were working in the same culture as your university in other words, that you weren't operating in in foreign countries and one of the favorite ones that, people like myself who studied post-communists countries, came across was that there was a requirement for interviewees to sign a piece of paper, saying that you know, things being explained to them and they'd understood. We just said: "Hey, this is a country where people don't like signing piece of paper". You know that, this isn't going to be that easy, plus of course, if you're doing elite interview, if you're interviewing politicians, they have a limited amount of time and they don't necessarily want going want you to impose your complicated agenda on them so you know, you get these issues, but it is at the same time quite important because one of the problems you get when interviewing politicians is trying to explain to them that you're not a journalist, you're an academic. And as long as you've got academics using, or if you've got academics using information in a way that embarrasses politicians and let's face it, in this country, there are quite a lot of politicians who deserve to be embarrassed. You know the boundaries can get blurred and long term for quality academic research that is a problem.

I: What product would you expect from undergraduate research, what should be the outcome of it?

P: Well, we're dealing here with two sorts of outcomes. The tangible outcome, what is actually written – the product. And then the intangible outcome of how the mind is being trained and how you prepared someone. So, in a sense I think both are equally important. Because of the importance of assessment for students, people tend to look a lot about the product that's being produced, which to an extent is only partly a result of the research, it's also a result of the other skills that are required for writing up research. So, you're making sure that student can gather material from a wide range of sources and structure and order them and present them in a coherent manner. You're looking at that one point. And then you're looking that you have trained someone who can do better research. For example, someone who could go to university

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abroad to do a master's degree and would understand how to search secondary resources and some of the issues concerned in conducting original research for master's dissertation.

Participant 2 (female, approximately 10 years in academia)

I: Ako by ste zadefinovali výskum?

P: No teda konkrétne v mojom obore, čo je buď teda komparatívna politika, alebo čosi antropologicko-psychologicko-spoločensky ladené. Je to určite terénny výskum, v prvom rade, ktorý teda skúma to čo zistíme alebo to čo predpokladáme z teórie. U mňa sa to väčšinou týka vzťahov, buď medzi ľuďmi, alebo medzi inštitúciami, prípadne dopad niečoho na niečo, nejakého naratívu na nejakú politickú prax, vzťahov alebo naratívneho kontextu na politickú realitu - takže na to samozrejme potrebujeme terénny výskum aj prieskum názorov. Čiže znamená to zisťovanie, originálny zber dát z terénu alebo teda z výskumov ktoré už existovali dovtedy. Za tým účelom aby sme zistili niečo nové alebo nový uhol pohľadu či kontext toho čo už vieme, ale chceme zistiť do akej miery to je platné v iných situáciách, všeobecne platné, rozširiteľné a tak ďalej. Objavovanie niečoho nového. Spracovanie originálnych dát, používanie toho čo už existovalo a zisťovanie. Rozširovanie teoretických poznatkov cez empirické dáta. Výskum môže byť strašne široký v iných oblastiach, to vôbec nemusí znamenať empiricky výskum ani terénny. Úplne kľudne sa môže diať v jednej malej pracovni a môže to znamenať hrabanie sa v archívnych dátach, ale vždy ide teda o empirické overovanie si nejakých teoretických predpokladov, s dátami ktoré zistíme.

I: Čo by ste nazvali optimálnymi podmienkami na výskum?

P: Čo sa týka inštitúcií, alebo konkrétne našej inštitúcie?

I: Možno osobnú skúsenosť – keď mám toto k dispozícii, tak to viem spraviť.

P: Čas. To je *first and foremost*. Mať na toto inštitucionálne zázemie, ktoré s tým výskumom plánuje už dopredu a keď sa plánuje celý rok alebo keď sa plánuje každý semester. Že je čas na výskum daný pracovníkom, ktorí ho majú uskutočňovať. Nemusí sa diať po nociach alebo víkendoch či voľnom čase, ako to veľmi často býva nielen u nás - je to veľmi bežná vec. Pre

akademické inštitúcie je nevyhnutné, aby si ten čas na to urobili, aby si cenili ten čas na výskum rovnako, ako inú akademickú činnosť. Aby to bolo tou inštitúciou vnímané, oceňované a skrátka aby to bolo na tej istej úrovni, ako akákoľvek iná činnosť tejto akademickej inštitúcie. Aby to bolo rovnako oceňované aby sa o tom diskutovalo a tak ďalej. Samozrejme druhá vec je také to infraštruktúrne zázemie, takže by mali byť na to dopredu vyhradené granty, alebo podporný mechanizmus, aby som nemusela vždy zvlášť riešiť a mať nebudaj pocit viny, keď niečo potrebujem. Alebo keď potrebujem niekam ísť, alebo nejaké technologické zabezpečenie, alebo keď sa to týka nejakej cesty, materiálov. Takže aby rátala inštitúcia s časom, alebo minimálnym *budget-om*. Väčšina z nás nepotrebuje na výskum nejaké *exorbitant amounts of money*, ale mať proste ten čas, priestor, aby sa s tým počítalo. To znamená aj finančné zabezpečenie, také minimálne. Aby to teda nebolo vždy na *case by case basis*, ale existoval nejaký mechanizmus, ako existuje *student council*, alebo jej myšlienka, tak presne tak isto by malo byť pre vedeckých pracovníkov nejaký veľmi podobný mechanizmus - kde my sa skoorinujeme. Kto, kde, kedy a kam potrebuje ísť, čo na to potrebuje - aby to bolo samozrejmé. Ak to nie je samozrejme, že idem kupovať vesmírnu stanicu alebo niečo.

I: Do akej miery BISLA poskytuje tieto podmienky?

P: Ako kedy, pravdupovediac. Keď sa zadarí... Mala som napríklad kurz ktorý mal výskum priamo zabudovaný do tých sylabov, čiže to bolo súčasťou celého semestra – vtedy na to samozrejme priestor a čas je, keďže som si ho vyrobila v rámci toho kurzu. Počítalo sa s tým, bol tam aj ten výskumný field trip zakomponovaný - ako element do semestra - čo, neskôr sa k tomu dostaneme, nie je zlý nápad mať viac takých kurzov a rátať s tým vyslovene v kurikulu, priamo v učebných osnovách. Mimo toho je to ťažšie, teda ja by som sa nemala sťažovať, lebo práve sa vraciam z vyslovene výskumného mesačného pobytu. Ten som si platila aj zabezpečila sama, takže škola mi ponúkla sama. Ale všetko ostatne som si hradila a zháňala sama takže... ale dostala som ten čas čiže to nie je zlé. Len malo by byť takého, taký čas by

mal byť k dispozícii v rámci celého roku, aj v rámci semestrov, čo je vždy najväčší problém na každej škole - počas semestra sa nedá reálne robiť výskum. Nie je na to čas.

I: Aké sú rozdiely medzi profesionálnym výskumom a tým...

P: Undergraduate.

I: Undergraduate research.

P: Musíme na to nájsť nejaký termín. Tak cieľom bakalárskeho výskumu je... ciele bakalárskeho výskumu sú trochu iné, alebo sú tam *additional goals*, než na profesionálnom výskume, ktorý sa týka už len samotného predmetu skúmania a všetko ostatné sa berie *for granted*. Cieľom bakalárskeho výskumu je hlavne – osvojiť si teoretické ciele, zorientovať sa v tom odbore. Takže je viac tej teoretickej časti ktorá tam musí byť. Aby sa študenti v tom odbore zorientovali, v ktorom sa koná ten výskum. A samozrejme aj s tým samotným procesom toho výskumu – od plánovania cez *budget*, čo k tomu treba, akú metodológiu využijú, ako to treba nastaviť. Všetko toto je aj súčasťou toho profesionálneho výskumu tiež, ale mnoho z tých vecí sa berie *for granted*. Netreba sa im (nerozoznateľné slovo) čiže, tento cieľ tam v podstate odpadá – to už tí výskumníci ako keby majú ovládať a vedieť. Samozrejme že sa musia stále vzdelávať koordinovať a tak ďalej. Ale ten *undergraduate research* má ešte *additional goal* - že aj samotný ten proces výskumu je cieľom, jedným z tých výstupov samotného projektu. Osvojiť si ten výskum, vedieť vybrať najlepšiu metodológiu, naplánovať a vedieť prepojiť tú teóriu, problém ktorý skúmame s tou najlepšou metodológiou v praxi a vedieť to zrealizovať. Takže tam aj ten proces učenia je oveľa dôležitejší a možno dokonca oveľa dôležitejší ako samotný výstup toho výskumu – aspoň pre mňa. Pre tých študentov je to ten podstatný cieľ a ten samotný výskum je možno až sekundárny. Samozrejme, keď sa podarí, je to fantastické - ale to je iný, zvlášť cieľ. A myslím že to učenie sa, je ten najdôležitejší cieľ v tomto zmysle.

I: Čo zahŕňa pred-bakalársky výskum.

P: V podstate je to podobne ako ta predchádzajúca odpoveď. Pred-bakalársky výskum je predovšetkým o učení sa toho výskumného procesu. Čo je v ňom dôležité je to, čo bolo opisované v štvrtej otázke. Popri tom ešte spolupráca s expertmi v tom obore. Úzka spolupráca s výskumníkmi, ktorí ten výskum robia, dajme tomu profesionálne, alebo ktorí sú odborníci v tom obore, že študenti majú možnosť one-on-one, dlhodobo s nimi spolupracovať a učiť sa z prvej ruky. Zmapovať si to pole empiricky a okrem toho získať kontakty *skills* a tak ďalej. Je to ale aj o učení a spolupráci, o osobnom raste, prostredníctvom rozvoja týchto *skills* a získavania kontaktov z toho výskumu.

I: Čo je cieľom pred-bakalárskeho výskumu?

P: Tak isto sme o tom už trochu hovorili. Cieľom je čo najlepšie osvojenie si samotného výskumného procesu, jednak. Tak isto aj zorientovanie sa v tom, čo výskum ako taký znamená. Aké sú v ňom všetky rôzne možné možnosti. Čiže nielen samotný jeden konkrétny výskum, na ktorom študent alebo študentka pracuje, ale aj vedieť prečo práve tato výskumná metóda, aké sú ostatne možné výskumne metódy, ktorá je vhodná načo, na aký cieľ sa hodí, vedieť si predstaviť čo to znamená, zahŕňa, čo k tomu budem potrebovať – či už materiálne alebo časovo, v akom rozsahu potrebujem vykonať nejaký výskum aby som zistila tie ciele, čo si stanovím. Čiže vedieť pochopiť a naučiť sa, cez tu praktickú skúsenosť, čo vedecký výskum vôbec znamená, čo to obnáša, aké sú v ňom možnosti a ako som spomínala, ak ide o konkrétny výskum, týka sa to aj toho teoretického štúdia. Vedieť teda skombinovať teoreticky problém s tou konkrétnou najvhodnejšou empirickou metódou. To je dosť veľa práce, aby bol undergraduate research úspešný a kvalitný, musí nutne obsahovať toto všetko. Toto všetko musí študent pochopiť aby bol ten výskum dobrý.

I: Čo všetko by musela BISLA ponúknuť, aby bol pred-bakalársky výskum bol možný?

P: O tom sa rozprávame často a aj máme nejaké nápady, ktoré by boli celkom ľahko realizovateľné - aj sme ich preberali na poslednom stretnutí učiteľov. Jednak, ako som spomínala, mať viac tých kurzov, ktoré majú undergraduate research priamo v náplni toho-ktorého kurzu. Čiže počas toho semestra je jedným z očakávaní, že študenti urobia mini-výskum, v rámci toho predmetu v teréne, alebo čokoľvek už to obnáša. Mať takých kurzov každý semester aspoň zopár – pravidelne a dbať na to, pri zostavovaní kurikula. A druhá vec, čo sa veľmi ľahko dá rozbehnúť aj zaviesť... jednak skoordinať to s *writing centrom* - ak sa rozbehne. Teda mať tam komponent pre *undergraduate research*, aby študenti samotní mali záujem, keď majú nejakú myšlienku. Sám študent to ťažko nejako zrealizuje bez nejakej skúsenosti.

Druhá vec, ktorá sa dá veľmi ľahko zrealizovať, je ponúknuť študentom možnosť, pôsobiť ako výskumní asistenti k projektom, ktoré už jednotliví profesori robia - ako *research asistent*. Čiže niečo na obdobu stážovania alebo *internship-u* – skrátka dlhodobo sa podieľať na už prebiehajúcim výskume, ktorý niekto už vedie. Takže vyžaduje si to ani nie veľa financií. V podstate *undergraduate research* si nevyžaduje veľmi veľa financií. Sem tam keď sa naozaj ide - keď ide skupina študentov do jednej lokality a ostať tam pár dni. Ale to všetko sú minimálne náklady, takže v našom odbore to naozaj nevyžaduje ten finančný vklad, skôr tú koordináciu nápadov, ochotu a dať niekoho, kto bude mať ten čas a bude schopný to koordinovať, venovať sa tomu a bude ten človek, za ktorým môžu študenti prísť, keď majú nejaký nápad a chcú niečo zrealizovať.

Participant 3 (female, over 30 years in academia)

I: Tak prvá otázka. Ako by ste zadefinovali výskum?

P: Výskum.

I: Výskum.

P: Uh, systém ---systém ústupou, procedúr, metóda techník (n)a poznávanie skutočnosti ktorý má svoje špecifiká z hľadiska toho o akú skutočnosť sa jedná.

I: Ďakujem.

(Inaudible)

P: Teraz rozprávame o vedeckom výskume.

I: Áno, áno.

P: Predpokladom vedeckého výskumu, jeho efektívnosti je, že bude systematický, komplexný, že bude spĺňať kritéria validity a reliability. Uh... že jeho výstupom budú buď deskriptívne, funkcionálne, kauzálne alebo evolučné koncepty. Každá úroveň poznávania podľa výskumného problému, determinuje a ovplyvňuje aj podmienky pre realizáciu vedeckého výskumu, čím komplexnejší výskum je, teda pokiaľ má ambíciu tvorby veľkých teórií, predpokladom vždy je relevantný, meritorný k danej téme orientovaný tím, dobre zvládnutý sledovateľský výskum a následne po sledovateľskom výskume precízne formulovaný výskumný problém, výskumná otázka, hypotézi a adekvátne zvolené metódy buď na overenie alebo vyvrátenie vstupných hypotéz, aby sme zodpovedali a odhalili problémy výskumu,.. uh. Podstatu výskumných problémov , takže určite je dôležitý, nesmierne dôležitý kvalitný výskumný tím.A predpokladom kvalitného výskumeho tímu a jeho postavenia je dobrá orientácia a vlastná pozícia k danej problematike alebo téme.Pochopiteľne je rozdiel či hovoríme o vedeckom výskume v prírodných, technických alebo spoločenských vedách, každý

má následne iné požiadavky a podmienky na priestorové riešenie. Niektoré môžete zvládnuť bez toho aby sa fyzický výskumný tím kedykoľvek na jednom mieste stretol, čiže môžu tam byť veľké nadnárodné tímy v dnešnej dobe v podstate existencia tímu v jednom prostredí nieje nevyhnutnou podmienkou, nové technológie, informačné systémy umožňujú v podstate rozptýlenosť fyzickú po celom svete, ale spojenie na práci veľmi intenzívne a koherentne bezohľadu teda na priestor. Uh. Iné nároky preto odčleňujem na už len napríklad experimentálna psychológia a teoretická psychológia, pretože pre tu experimentálnu už je predpoklad existencie laboratória, kde môžete daný experiment realizovať. Iný predpoklad je. uh. zázemia keď realizujete kvantitatívny a kvalitatívny výskum, minimálne rozdiely sú už v nárokoch na finančné krytie takýchto výskumov, v každom prípade základ úspechu v dnešnej dobe je špičkové technické vybavenie, schopnosť využitia nových technológií na vytváranie siete výskumných a prístup do svetových databáz a to je asi rovnako významná a rovnako veľká aj finančná položka pre každý vedecký výskum.

(inaudible)

P: Akýkoľvek. V tej oblasti bakalárske štúdium orientované na liberal arts... to znamená predmet skúmania je jasný a zrejmy. Napokon, na to aby BISLA získala akreditáciu tak jednotliví pedagógovia musia vykazovať špičkové vedeckovýskumné výsledky. A tak to aj je. Takže sú buď zaradený do APPV v rámci Slovenskej Republiky alebo do medzinárodných tímov kde sa pracuje na vedecko výskumných projektov takže poviem príklad za seba, pracujem v rámci Fresco čo je medzinárodný tím v rámci európy ktorý robí výskum prenosu sociálnych práv medzi jednotlivými krajinami a výskum sociálnej spravodlivosti a solidarity. Okrem toho v New Pact for EU čo je ďalší nadnárodný európsky projekt z čoho sú samozrejme výstupy konkrétne na vedeckých konferenciách, prednášky na svetových univerzitách, výstupy v rámci riešenia daného výskumného projektu takže potej osobnej linke každý musí mať svoje publikácie, svoj výskumný project, svoje zaradenie do výskumných kapacít záleží od

výskumného zámeru toho ktorého pedagóga alebo výskumníka. Dnes nieje možná akreditácia pokiaľ škola dnes nieje možná akreditácia pokiaľ škola respektíve jej pedagogický zbor nespĺňa kritéria výstupov vo vede a výskume. Škola by nedostala akreditáciu.

I: To znamená že tie podmienky na to, aby ten výskum mohli uskutočňovať poskytuje BISLA?

P: BISLA neorganizuje ani špeciálne nevytvára podmienky pre vedu a výskum. Sú to vlastne individuálne aktivity členov BISLA, prípadne zaradenie inštitucionálne to je ten prípad APPV kde bisl ako inštitúcia je partnerská organizácia vo výskumnom projekte, ale nieje koordinátor tohoto výskumného projektu, takže máme dve polohy: partner vrámci iného väčšieho výskumného projektu, alebo sme v pozícií individuálnych projektov. Aspoň nemám vedomosť žeby BISLA bola koordinátor výskumného projektu.

I: Takže (BISLA) nemá ako keby samostatný výskumný tím alebo také?

P: Nie, nie.

I: Aha...

(otázka nie je na nahrávke)

P: Rozdiel je už... vyplýva zo samotného, samotných stupňov vzdelania, tak ako rozdielne sú požiadavky na bakalársku prácu zodpovedajúce trom rokov štúdia a na magisterskú prácu prípadne následne na prvý vedecký stupeň a to je PHD. Čiže o vedeckom výskume hovoríme pri prvom stupni vedy a výskumu a to je phd. Uh, čo neznamená že tie predchádzajúce etapy niesú založené na výskumnej práci, a na výskumoch, ale požiadavky na ich kritéria som vymenovala v prvej druhej otázke sú rozdielne. Sú rozdielne. Pri bakalárskej úrovni to môže byť veľmi čiastkový veľmi špecifický vybraný problém ktorý zároveň nemusí to mať podobu a charakter longitudiálneho výskumu, nemusí sa to mať ambíciu vytvárať veľkú teóriu. Môže to byť naozaj veľmi špecifický selektívny spôsob výskumnej práce. Čo nijak nedegraduje tento typ výskumu, naopak on zodpovedá úrovni bakalárskeho štúdia. To čo je možné urobiť a ja

zalovím v spomienkach, na katedre sociológie najprv jeden potom viacero pedagógov viedli takzvaný vedecký krúžok ktorý spájal študentov naprieč ročníkom a spájal ich k jednej téme ktorej sa venovali. Čiže sa realizoval každé tri roky istý čiastkový výskum ktorý realizovali študenti pod tutoriálom jedného alebo viacerých pedagógov, nie všetci v tom boli zapojení lebo nie každý jednak mal vôbec záujem v priebehu troch rokov robiť nejaký na nejakom výskume a zároveň nie všetkých oslovila zvolená téma. Čiže vidím veľmi dobrý spôsob overený praxou, veľmi efektívny najprv sa stretnúť diskutovať ktorá téma by bola tá ktorá je zvládnuteľná za tri roky a ktorá by vzbudila záujem viacerých študentov ktorý by ale dobrovolne a aktívne a pravidelne boli ochotní sa venovať takejto výskumnej činnosti opakujem pod tutoriálom pedagóga. Z každej tej účasti môže a mala by byť a mohla by byť napokon konkrétna individuálna bakalárska práca. Ja by som to veľmi privítala bolo by to postupne, systematické z nabalovaním vedomosti nielen v oblasti výskumu ale aj v oblasti teoretickej plus vznik synergický efekt že by sa mohol realizovať spoločný terén pokiaľ by bol potrebný, terénny výskum. Čo asi je. Potrebný teda na empirické zdroje a bez ohľadu na to či by šlo o kvantitatívny alebo kvalitatívny kde spoločne okolo okrúhleho stola by sa mohli diať spracovania základné dát aby sme sa vyhli chybám a každý by na spoločnom zdroji na tej vlastnej získanej databáze mohol potom produkovať bakalársku prácu a pokiaľ by ten spoločný synergický efekt bol dobrý, publikovať ako výstup BISLA študentov, veľmi pekný projekt, veľmi pekný plan.

I: Ako by ste zadefinovali pre bakalársky výskum?

P: Spoločne vybraný výskumný problém ktorý zodpovedá úvodom do problematiky s cieľom istej selekcie a možnosti vybrania takej výskumnej témy a výskumného problému ktorý môže byť predmetom bakalárskej práce. Vytvorenie tímu k spoločnej téme s tutoriálom pedagógov ktorý pracujú v danej oblasti a danej téme. Vytváranie spoločnej databázy a následne synergické spracúvanie výsledkov.

I: Takže v podstate taká cesta k bakalárskej...

P: Áno, cesta k bakalárskej práci.

I: Ďakujem.

I: Aký je cieľ pre bakalárskeho výskumníka? Bakalárskeho výskumu?

P: Zoznámiť sa. Zoznámiť sa s metódami ktoré spoločenské vedy majú k dispozíci. Ale nielen sa s nimi zoznámiť ako keby na diaľku platonicky ale tak že človek bude realizovať, že si ich vyskúša že sa s nimi hlbkovo zoznami, že bude schopný porozumieť ktorá metóda má aké výhody nevýhody, ktorá technika, čo je predpokladom voľby konkrétnej metódy a postupu pri danom výskume a ako úzko súvisí presná definícia výskumného problému a výskumnej otázky so správnou voľbou metód a techník poznávania. Teda čo sa skrýva za tým zaklínadlom a pojmom metodológia.

I: Že čo by BISLA musela poskytnúť aby bakalársky výskym bol možný.

P: Nemusela by poskytnúť vôbec nič..... Na druhej strane by mohla poskytnúť to čo je k dispozícií a tie študent k dispozíci majú. Majú Technické vybavenie, priestorové vybavenie, ochotu pedagógov, participovať pri takomto výskume. Pomoc pri voľbe spoločnej témi, organizovanie výskumu, otvorenie prístupu do databáz ktoré pedagógovia majú, sprístupnenie študentom, otváranie v uvodzovkách prosím dvier k výskumným tímom ktoré sa podobnou problematikou zaoberajú, organizovanie diskusných seminárov, organizovanie okrúhlych stolov k danej téme, prižívanie odborníkov k danej téme. Toto všetko môže BISLA urobiť ale napokon ona to robí stále. Tieto formy nachádzate na BISLE, stále sú tu pravidelné diskusie, pravidelné témy. Stačí po nich siahnuť.

I: Aký výsledok alebo produkt by ste očakávali od tohto predbakalárskeho výskumu? Ktorý by bol vedený na BISLE.

P: Kvalitné eseje. Kvalitné eseje ktoré spĺňajú kritéria vedeckej eseje. A Prípadne nemusí to byť forma vedeckej eseje. Dobre rozpracovaný vedecký projekt pre bakalársku prácu.

I: Takže ako ste hovorili už predtým vlastne takú tu, taký ten stupienok na bakalársku prácu

P: To je jedna možnosť, to je ten výskumný projekt na bakalársku prácu prípadné dielo či výstup už ako súčasť bakalárskej práce alebo ucelenú, ucelenú spracovanú vedeckú esej na vybraný problém.

I: Ďakujem.

Participant 4 (male, over 20 years in academia)

I: Tak sa vás spýtam ako by ste zadefinovali výskum?

P: toto je áno, TO je veľmi všeobecná otázka. Často, Ťažko sa na ňu odpovedá. cieľom výskumu je rozšíriť naše znalosti v nejakej problematike, verifikovať to čo častokrát tušíme. Dokonca častokrát vieme, ale bez dôkazov uh, bez relevantných dát, dát bez hlbšieho pochopenia nejakých súvislostí proste je to taká znalosť ktorá je s prepáčením krčmová, čiže my môžeme tisíc krát mať pocit, že sme si istý a to čo sa deje v realite či už v sociálnej realite alebo v realite iných vedných odborov, áno ale treba si to overiť. A ja z vlastnej skúsenosti musím povedať, že ten výskum nikdy nepodcenať, pretože pretože x-krát som mal pocit že niečo, niečomu rozumiem a že je to takto a potom a potom tá sociálna verita sa ukázala. Či už ľudia mali na to iný názor alebo jednoducho úplne ináč, ináč veci vyzerali v nejakom inom kontexte ktorý sa mohol zmeniť veľmi rýchlo. čiže takže v tomto zmysle výskum je pre mňa o vlastne takej (pocitivosti ku svojmu okoliu a k samému sebe. Áno. Bez výskumu je to nejaké. sú to take metafyzické poznania že “mám pocit že teda nejakou emanáciou som pochopil komplexi tohto ... nikto, nikto nepochopil. Aj keby je niekto pochopil tak si spomínam na jedneho z novoplatoncou Plotina ktorý hovoril že aj keby ste pochopili komplexiu tohto sveta tak naše rečové možnosti neumožňujú aby sme to zdelili bližnému svojmu hej, čiže lebo tá komplexita sveta je tak veľká že náš jazyk akoby, by to neumžnil čiže preto je ten výskum aby sme sa k tomu aspon priblížili.

I: Čo by ste nazvali optimálnymi podmienkami na výskum. To znamená v ideálnom prípade čo by tie podmienky boli.

P: To je zase .to je vlastne. premietam si rôzne svoje skúsenosti. Podmienky. No uh... prvá vec je Sloboda bádania že človek vlastne je mu umožnené aby bádala a to nieje vôbec banálne pretože veľmi často sa človek stretáva s tým že je obmedzovaný. Druhá vec je uh no vytvorené

podmienky a teraz nemyslím finančné tie je pre mna dobré tie sú predovšetkým o tom že výskum. to musí do seba zapadať ako lego. Tí ktorý riadia to musia riadiť dobre, vedieť dobre plánovať, vedieť viesť tých ktorý povedzme robia samotné tie náročné doplnkové práce častokrát sú to taký tí áno. Teraz to poviem veľmi zle ako dievčatá pre všetko. Ale v skutočnosti sú veľmi dôležitý a keď sú zle vedený alebo ich ten kto to vedie. Nechá sa v tom vymáchať. Áno aby urobil všetko vlastne za neho tak to, to má od tých ideálnych podmienok ďaleko. No a V našich podmienkach musím povedať že, je to, že je to veľmi často o, o tom aby, aby vlastne uh bolo inštitucionálne a personálne zabezpečené to že ten výskum nebude mať nejaké akože tam nebudú žiadne diskontinuity. To je moja skúsenosť, že že vlastne neustále sa riešila administratíva diskontinuity uh počas akéhokoľvek výskumu ktorý som robil, som vždy riešil obrovské množstvo administratívy, nezmyslov a nemohol som sa sústrediť na tú prácu a túto ma niekedy sa pozriem akoto to ma neveritelne vždy odťahovalo od tej prace, čiže áno a niekto možno povie že je to možno od samozrejme nezvládnutí, že tu administratívu by mal riešiť, vždy niekto iný no ved' práve v tom je problém že že ono to samotné nastavenie je problematické tak ako ja som sledoval povedzme v USA výskum tak tak ako nie vždy platé že americký výskumníci by boli tak intelektuálne skvelý.to ja mam skúsenosť že to tak vôbec nieje Ale v čom sú skvelý je samotné pochopenie organizácie výskumu a to majú rozhodne lepšie. Výskumník sa skutočne môže viac sústrediť na to čo robí.

I: Do akej mieri BISLA poskytuje tieto podmienky?

P: Priznám sa že, že neviem že či poskytuje a vlastne do istej mieri je to pochopiteľné. lebo Je to undergraduate college, uh je zameraná do istej mieri teoreticky ako nevyhnetne, tých takzvané praktickejších predmetov je predsa len menej. Hej. Uh., v momente keby to bolo všetko zamerané napríklad na tú výučbu, masívnu výučbu kvantitatívnych, kvalitatívnych metód tak už vtedy by si študenti mohli niečo overovať áno, uh mohli by na minimálne ako skúsiť napríklad nahadzovať dáta, potom ich skúsiť interpretovať. Áno a to už na

undergraduate level samozrejme fungovať môže. Ale bisla ako vlastne tak ako je zameraná na liberal arts uh premýšlam do akej miery vlastne vlastne toto môže poskytnúť. Hej a keď tak viem si predstaviť že je to skôr o nejakom undergraduate research ktorý bude o tom že ľudia sa vôbec dostanú do terénu. Viem si predstaviť že keď sa niektoré náročné témy preberajú ktoré sa môžu týkať trošku okrajovo zahraničné politiky alebo povedzme toho čo ja učím. Nejaké témy ktoré sa týkajú xenofóbie a rasizmu tak dá sa to predstaviť že minimálne dostať sa do terénu by vlastne mohla byť dobrá skúsenosť. Hej ale určite to nieje v tomto zmysle to určite nieje ako na nejakých hard sciences kde už undergraduate students ktorý naozaj majú záujem tak teoreticky sa môžu stať súčasťou nejakého tímu ktorý, kde určite budú posledný ale môžu sledovať čo sa deje a tým ohromne rád samozrejme. v tomto prípade vlastne rozmýšlam že či ten výskum v tom pravom slova zmysle vlastne je a teraz je otázka či je vlastne žiaduci. Ja vlastne neviem. Hej lebo liberal arts college určite by mala vychovávať k nejakému typu aktivizmu, a v tomto je veľmi špecifická v tom kontexte iných škôl. Otázka je, že či ten aktivizmus sa s výskumom spojiť dá ale nemám na to úplne vyhradený názor.

I: Rozdiel medzi undergraduate research a takým tým už reálnym výskumom?

P: Teraz možno poviem názor ktorý vlastne až tak do hĺbky som nad tým nepremýšlal. Ja to vidím v dvoch dimenziách, že predbakalársky výskum by poprvé mal vôbec umožniť študentom ísť do terénu alebo skúsiť si niečo praktické, čo vlastne nikdy predtým neskúsil. To neznamena že ti študenti nemohli niekde praxovať ale toto už by malo naozaj byť zamerané na výskum aby napríklad ja to poviem ako sociológ. Aby vyšli do terénu zbierať dotazníky aby si skúsili spraviť pár rozhovorov. Oni to väčšinou zblbnú urobia nejaké chyby no ale presne o tom to je keby niekto má v budúcnosti riadiť nejaký výskum napríklad sociologický tak by si mal práve na tom undergraduate level-i odchodiť s dotazníkmi v rukách ľudí aby vedel, aby mal aj trošku empatiu k tým ktorých pošle do terénu ale aj aby rozumel nebezpečenstvám ktoré

sa s tým stýkajú, hej. ktoré s tým súvisia, no a druhý rozdiel je podľa mňa ako tiež taký prozaický.

P: Že ten pred bakalársky výskum vlastne nemusí mať ambíciu aby tí ľudia urobili veci nevyhnutne najlepšie na svete. Vlastne ja tak s úsmevom hovorím, že pri bakalárskom výskume by sa ten študent vlastne mal popáliť. že je to súčasť toho že to popálenie jednak to tým kvalitným študentom zrazí ten hrebienok ktorý majú lebo v jednej chvíli majú pocit že tomu rozumejú a pri undergraduate.... a ja som si tým prešiel tiež nevyhnutne človek urobí metodologické chyby v prístupe. V niečom hej. Ja vám to môžem aj konkrétne povedať, aj ja som robil chybu. Lebo tá skúsenosť keď človek chybujie neskôr už nemá taký vplyv na jeho prácu. Lebo už si nájde tisíc dôvodou prečo chyboval. Nebol čas, boli objektívne dôvody prečo sa niečo nedalo ale paradoxne keď si ja spomínam na to svoje. Tak vtedy som to bral ďaleko vážnejšie a viac som sa s toho naučil stých chýb ktoré som urobil na tom undergraduate level. Čiže ono je to ako vlastne o tom aby si ako jasné že to znie hrozne pred mladými ľuďmi ale je dobré keď sa popáli lebo chytia pokoru.

I: Ako by ste zadefinovali ten undergraduate research?

P: Ako jednoducho. Prvý dotyk s tou realitou. Ono je to strašne dôležité aby v tomto zmysle vlastne to bude možno nevhodné porovnanie ale je to ako s prvými láskami alebo nebodaj s prvým sexom, že ono je to niečo čo si človek potom pamätá a preto je strašne dôležité aby školy vlastne ako dobre premýšľali že čo to bude. Lebo tam príde k popáleniu vždy presne ako v prvej láske a s prvým sexom, ako niečo nebude fungovať dokonale ale tá skúsenosť je strašne dôležitá a formatívna a nebolo by dobré robiť vlastne to čo veľmi často je príbehom slovenských škôl že na tie undergraduate leveli sa vôbec nepracuje so študentmi ako keď sa počíta s... počíta sa s tým že až na magisterskom leveli niektorý môžu zasvietiť a nieje to celkom tak áno už na tom undergraduate leveli tú kvalitu vidieť. A ja to poznám aj so svojej vlastnej skúsenosti že vlastne so študentmi bakalárskeho stupňa sa bezproblémou dá robiť a dá

sa ich vtiahnuť do veľmi zaujímavých vecí. Ako netreba čakať na magisterské alebo doktorské leveli. Takže no asi takto.

P: siahnuť si na realitu a vtiahnuť tých študentov do hry. V momente tá skúsenosť ktorý máme mi v strednej Európe ak si na to nesiahnu aspoň trochu už na undergraduate leveli tak na magisterskom môže byť neskoro. Už totižto môžu mať, môžu byť súčasťou nejakých, proste začnú pracovať zarábať peniaze a to ich pohltiť. Už potom budú robiť výskum tak skôr z povinnosti lebo však to do školy treba ale už ich začne pohlcovať iná sociálna realita, čiže hlavným cieľom je podľa mňa vôbec ukázať im to pekne čo všetko sa dá skúmať ako sa dá skúmať. Vtiahnuť ich do hry. Ani by som nepovedal že je to o skills. Nie je to len o skills. Je to primárne o tom ukázať im, ukázať cestu a hlavne nadchnúť ich.

I: Čo by BISLA mala/mohla poskytnúť aby to tu bolo možné?

P: To je práve to čo premýšľam, že čo by tu malo byť v prípade liberal arts college, určite by to mohlo byť niečo naviazané na nejaký druh aktivizmu. Ja si viem predstaviť, že a teraz je otázka na koľko by to vôbec spĺňalo predstavu o výskume ale napríklad keď sa bavíme o nejakej realite ktorá sa týka politiky, no tak by bolo dobré skúsiť urobiť nejaký spoločný výskum ktorý by ja neviem pre toho typu ako je demagóg, skúsím napríklad to je, alebo keď sa budeme baviť o rasizme no tak chytiť študentov a zobrať ich do rómskej osady na východnom Slovensku a skúsiť im ukázať realitu, že to niektorí vidia len, áno... a niektorí menej... to je moja skúsenosť, že tisíckrát ako môžeme niečo vidieť v televízií, ale keď potom vycestujem tak môžem byť veľmi zaskočený z toho čo nájdem v sociálnej realite, čiže minimálne čo BISLA rozhodne môže, je zobrať do terénu aj hej. A ten terén myslím veľmi široko.

I: Aký výsledok alebo čo by malo byť tým produktom tohto výskumu. Aké výstupy by ste očakávali?

P: Premýšľam, nemám úplne uzavrenú odpoveď, ale povedal by som že tí ľudia by mali vďaka tomu výskumu sa vyprofilovať mohli by sa vyprofilovať a tým pádom by boli úspešní pri aplikácii smerom ďalej na magisterské a PhD štúdium.

P: Siahnuť si na realitu a tým pádom uzrejiť si čo vlastne v živote chcem. To si myslím, že to je nevyhnutné. A to sa nedá len tým, že budú len teoretické predmety, kde sa bude rozoberať a to teraz nemyslím v zlom. áno, keď budem celý rok diskutovať o Foucault-ovi, tak si veľmi neujasním, že čo v živote chcem. áno a ako to myslím to v dobrom. Treba diskutovať, ale ono je vlastne strašne dobre si to vyskúšať v realite, že ako napríklad ta Foucault-ova government-alita funguje. Hej čiže minimálne urobiť nejaký praktický seminár kde si človek pozve ľudí z politiky a bude ich konfrontovať s tým pojmom government-alita a zrazu sme niekde inde.

Appendix C: Current Third-Year Students Interviews

Participant 5 (male, taking a gap year before pursuing an MA)

I: How would you define undergraduate research?

P: I don't think it differs from any other research. It's just that its done by undergraduates. Therefore, it is maybe less academic... no that's not the right word. Basically, you are learning how to do that. That's kind of the thing that undergraduate teaches you, right?

I: What do you think would be the effect of conducting undergraduate research?

P: First of all, the conclusion to get the results of that particular research and also the effect on your CV and your future academy life and career life maybe.

I: Do you think BISLA is giving you necessary skills for conducting research?

P: I think that BISLA gives us... considering... my experience from the university I did before, on the philosophical faculty, BISLA is giving us just enough. I mean, within Slovakia BISLA is the best in giving this, cause it's like the closest. Maybe even there could be something more, I don't know, just like nothing is really like always the best so.

I: What problems, or lacking of preparation did you encounter or are encountering in relations of conducting research at BISLA?

P: I think the question opens that what is research, right, what is undergrad research. Is it a thing that we do while doing our essays? When we are writing other stuff, or I don't know like conferences or something. And if it's the first thing I said, if it also comprises the thing like writing essays for subjects you're taking, then we are doing it or something, right. But if its something more of it, just like something more academic, just like thesis or something, which I'm not sure if its, then maybe the school could be maybe more attentive to or give us more

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information of how to, or what is it. The question is, I don't know what is it, so. That kind of answers the question.

I: Everybody asks that question, that's why we're asking you. If you could start BISLA all over again, what would you want to be taught in order to help you with conducting your research. Maybe your bachelor thesis or whatever you are implying.

P: I'm not sure it's, because... we develop, right. And I... the difference between the me that started BISLA and me as ending BISLA now is a huge difference, right. And also, the interests of my, kind of like, conducting something as research or at least just folding my interests, just develops along as subjects go and I just don't know exactly. I'm one of those that do not know yet, what to study so. It starts kind of like crystalize in next year maybe. I think the thing that BISLA did, that give us like a wider range of subjects of many fields, definitely help find precisely your way. The studies you're already interested in you can take up after. I would definitely not change a thing to answer your question.

I: Do you believe undergraduate research requires supervision? Why or why not.

P: I mean sure. I mean its implied in the word undergraduate. We are young and we do not what to do, we are learning. Just like the first steps or something, therefore I think supervision is really helpful.

I: Please describe the supervision you received at BISLA.

P: Yeah, there are like two parts to that question I think. One could be like more of a personal, that had the chance to talk to the staff and help with kind of like my personal issues. And there is the second part that helped with like the actual research or academic skills or something. I think I received both, in very good ways. I mean for the second part it was mostly James Griffith. Cause I think, my interests are... they are conjoining with his and maybe therefore we can

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just... he can influence where my interest goes and help me with that. The staff and for the first part, there are like [name of a professor I did not recognize] or Dagmar and were really helpful.

I: While conducting research, what facilities did BISLA provide?

P: By facilities, you mean rooms or something?

I: Rooms, anything that can be found at the school.

P: The actual, kind of like facilities like computers, printers, scanners or camera to be borrowed or something. I think that's like secondary to what needs to be had... I don't know if that's a tense. Or the actual space that the building creates, or the environment or the atmosphere of the buildings and garden and stuff and staff and faculty, that just kind of like inspires you. So yeah, I think that the environment is influential or motivating, when you encounter people passing by in the garden and you just talk to them for few minutes about what is going on. That's what's really helpful I think. Having more computers would not necessary help.

I: My last question would be, are the facilities of BISLA sufficient enough for conducting research in your opinion.

P: Yes. Yeah. I think I answered it in my previous question.

Participant 6 (male, continuing in an MA program)

I: How would you define undergraduate research?

P: I would say it is a research like every other however, time that is spent on researching is very different from those postgraduate research, therefore you are spending much less time on research, on writing and therefore it is kind of like an intro for like real research, I would say because you spend like what two months at most researching and studying your topic. Which is like not sufficient. At all. because like for Ph.D. for example you are studying for two years and you are working on your research. Therefore, it is much less time consuming. However, the tools, the structure and everything else it's the same it is only matter of the size of the project and time you dedicate to the project.

I: What do you think the effect of conducting undergraduate research would be?

P: It is once again due to the size and time dedicated to the project, it is not really a scientific proof or anything but it is a good start for continuous research. I would say it is kind of good basis for continuous research, it's a good piece of literature, yeah so the outcome would be kind of an intro for the future.

I: Do you think BISLA is giving you necessary skills for conducting research?

P: Once again because BISLA is shifting its form all the time, it is really hard to say, but for me I feel that I am prepared like on 70% but I wasn't aware of like methodology for example but I am aware that other classes went through it, the methodology however the third years didn't, so that was our bad luck however all other aspects I think are quite sufficient compare to other Slovak schools because again compare to for example schools in Britain than it is really different but compare with Slovak uptake its really good. Yeah.

I: What problems, lacking of preparation did you encounter while conducting research at BISLA?

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P: Well as I mentioned it's the introduction to methodology, that's quite a problem. If you are not yeah that is. It was for me the biggest challenge, the methodology, I also as I observed other presentation of research of others it was the same problem. Methodology to be precise, to have data, to be sufficient enough to support the argument and so on, so yeah this aspect.

I: If you could start BISLA all over again, what would you want to be taught in order to help you with conducting research?

P: (Laugh) methodology.

I: anything else?

P: Well no, because most of the skills were there, sometimes in a very shaky form, I would say that sometimes. some courses need to be more narrowed down and some should be more explicit about what they are about to going to give you in terms of like knowledge, for example the structure of paper, it should be much clear sooner not in third year for example. So yeah this aspect.

I: Do you believe undergraduate research requires supervision? Why or why not?

P: Well yes. Even the most brilliant kid should have like a supervisor in order to help him with research, with all the aspects because well because you are undergraduate still and your knowledge is well not that good compare to your professors or I don't know your mentors, so this is a for me the essential part to have someone to look at it and say ok this is crap or this is good paper. But also to have someone to tell you ok, you should also look at his aspect for argument or this is the way how to look at the same problem with different like different scope of for example so definitely. So yes to supervision.

I: Please describe the supervision you received at BISLA.

S: ohm. At the beginning it was to help me how to phrase my argument, how to even describe my ideas about the whole situation in the middle east. At the beginning it was really about

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helping me find uh the right topic, right literature and the sources of the problems. Also the essential part was how to support my argument. Because I very soon realized that It is almost impossible to go the path I choose because it is so time consuming, it is more for like PhD thesis or something so I had to rephrase it in a way. So in this case my supervisor was very helpful so more on the basis of theory, how to argue for my cause and how to structure my argument, yes.

I: What facilities did BISLA provide. Which facilities did you use?

P: printer (laugh). And of course the access to all the databases with all the articles, journals and books, and that is it and yeah like the premises where I was studying and writing besides yeah that's all.

I: To clarify and be specific, which room or place did you spend your time in? kitchen or Spitzer room?

P: not really, I would say, well reading yes. Spitzer for reading but writing, (knock on table) in here, kitchen.

I: Are the facilities of BISLA sufficient enough for conducting research in your opinion?

P: I mean that's quite silly question because you can conduct research from your grandma's basement but I mean it's a good start but there is a way to improve.

I: What would you improve?

P: Well uh, for example it would be great to have some books in hard copies at least the most relevant ones in political science, IR or something like that, also to have yeah basically also more BISLA, more student friendly computers because those down there it's really hard to study there because the smell and stuff. It's terrible and Spitzer is not very comfortable at least for me so maybe change the environment. Yeas that's it.

Participant 7 (male, entering the workforce)

I: How would you define undergraduate research?

P: Well, I didn't expect that kind of a tough question. Well, I would define it as work on some papers, let's say, that you can do in school that you are encouraged to by teachers, by the academics at let's say BISLA or whatever. The end product should be a paper that you can publish in some journal.

I: What do you think would be the effect of conducting undergraduate research?

P: Well the effect would be the effect would be two-fold I would say. The first thing I would say is, it would improve the chances of the student. It might look interesting on a CV, that you worked on a paper and published that and could help you further on. It could also help the student to hone his academic skills, analytical thinking and stuff like that and the second effect would be improvement of the reputation of the school. Other people will see that there is actually some research conducting by the students, that there are, even on an undergraduate level, that they are able to work academically and publish good stuff I would say.

I: Do you think BISLA is giving you necessary skills for conducting research?

P: Sure thing. It stands from the (inaudible), how we are told that BISLA. That we are also writing a lot over the courses we have to learn a lot so that's pretty much it, when you are conducting research you should just work on literature review, or something like that. Then use the arguments, use the data. You might also get new data by either qualitative or quantitative methods, depends on you. So, I would say yeah, it gives you the tools.

I: What problems, or lacking of preparation did you encounter or are encountering in relations of conducting research at BISLA?

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P: I would say there... there are like some encouragement from professors... when for example we have written some really long project or something like that, research paper in the end of the class, the students should be explicitly told that yeah, if you want to, you can work on it well and then it can get published and it would be cool. So yeah, maybe more involvement of the academics in the process I would say.

I: If you could start BISLA all over again, what would you want to be taught in order to help you with conducting your research?

P: There is severe lack of methodological subjects at BISLA. I would be really glad if there were... there would be straight on some methodological course in the first year, maybe two of them. That's something I also missed when I did my bachelor thesis. That's one thing, so more methodological courses, so we actually know how to do that stuff. Other than having the skills of reading and writing, you need to know how to scientifically conduct the research. Also, maybe some course on basic statistics. That's something you need to have when you want to conduct good research, using good data and not only interviews. It's something you need in political science or sociology. You need to know how to analyze and work with the data, that's something I would also add to that. You also need statistics later in your employment. When you do research, I don't know, in economics or something like that. So more methodological courses and some statistics.

I: Do you believe undergraduate research requires supervision? Why or why not.

P: I believe it does. And it does because undergrads are not yet so accustomed to doing research all by themselves and they need a guiding hand because everything is new for them and I guess when you are undergraduate student you are just getting used to doing academic stuff and research, so you need a guiding hand.

I: Please describe the supervision you received.

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P: Can I also ask some questions to further explain the question?

I: Yes.

P: What do you mean by supervision? Supervision of my thesis or something else?

I: Supervision of undergraduate research that you would consider undergraduate research, so technically in your position it would be bachelor's thesis, if that's what you imply as your research.

P: Sure, I got supervision of my supervisor, that's kind of a [totalogy]. It was pretty good I would say. I mean, my supervisor was always there for me, when I needed some help. Also, I got plenty of useful tips on how to write the thesis so it was pretty good I would say.

I: Thank you. While conducting research, what facilities did BISLA provide?

P: BISLA has an IT room, where you can work on computers and just use the Word there. Then also BISLA has the library where you can work. Then you have common room or something like that where we are right now, so yeah. Facilities like that.

I: Do you think the facilities of BISLA are sufficient enough for conducting undergraduate research?

P: I would say yes, yeah.

Participant 8 (female, continuing in an MA program)

I: How would you define undergraduate research?

P: Uh. How would I define undergraduate research? Ohm. Well, I don't know actually (laugh). It is an interesting question. Well it's a research that's uh, maybe not that huge. It's not so detailed as you might think at the beginning. It's a research that you might change lots of times actually when u start doing it. So you will have to maybe many times actually formulate your question, and I mean, it takes lots of time to realize what you are being... researching. Well yeah I think that's it.

I: What is the effect of conducting research?

P: So the effect. For who. The researcher?

I: For you as a researcher.

P: For... first of all, you got to realize what does it mean conducting research, and what this job really obtains. Since it's really hard to imagine unless you actually have to do it. If you are doing research in the area that you are interested, you will really soon find out if you are really interested in that area. Or if the topic is something that you don't really want to research in such details so you will kind of find yourself ...better...? Last but not least, you will realize your responsibility as a researcher which is a. often or many times while doing let's say small research or writing a research paper lots of time you don't realize because you are being supervised by your professor or a supervisor. But like once you are doing your undergraduate research and you are really conducting it by yourself, you realize the responsibility that's there for you as a researcher to do your job properly. I would say.

I: Does BISLA provide necessary skills for conducting research?

P: IN MY OPINION, yes of course. I think that BISLA is giving me... UH... the opportunity to develop those skills and is providing me with the people who have experiences and are

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skillful in those areas. So if ever happened to me while conducting research that I needed some kind of advice or help there were always people that were available, or that were able to give me some advice or help me with research. So for me it's clear yes.

I: What problems, lacking of preparation did you encounter while conducting research at BISLA?

P: Ohm... Ok... Well at the beginning, I had a problem with accessing, not really accessing but maybe that is related to the area of my research since I was researching topic related to China and Hong Kong and lots of writings were written in Chinese. I mean maybe it's not about BISLA itself but it's general problem you will encounter while doing your research that if you are doing some research on specifically related topic to some country or some place you will struggle with understanding the topic as people understand it there. So it might be difficult to conduct research about let's say Israel or Palestine from Slovakia or some other country, but there is still possibility to have skype calls or anything else which might help you to overcome these obstacles but actually BISLA provided me with the opportunity or HELPED me travel to the place where I was conducting the research. If there hadn't been BISLA, I wouldn't have been able to go there, so for me BISLA actually met all of my requirements or helped me overcome the obstacles.

No obstacles, I don't think so. I think all the obstacles were just lack of my experience or maybe writing in English in relation to research.

I: If you could start BISLA all over again. What would you teach yourself in relation to research?

P: (Sigh). Ok. So. Maybe more academic English would be a bonus at the beginning. We had uh... We were lucky, because some of you had taken classes with professor uh Šimon. She was teaching a class on global terrorism so she gave us really like two or three classes on really specific writing. We had some classes with Dagmar and Dana H., maybe something that is

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more focused and more specific since, like if you continue to other universities, the language they are using is really different and especially if you are applying to I don't know for example Oxford or to some higher universities, not necessarily Oxford or Harvard or Cambridge, but even like better universities, They are often going to ask you for a sample of writing which many times has to be really really good and professionally well written. So that might be the only thing where maybe I would have preferred focus more at the beginning of my studies but ohm I don't know nothing else comes to my mind.

I: and that would help you with research, knowing how to write better English and other aspects of the language.

P: yeah like writing research for sure, maybe not conducting it because I think that you, for conducting ... well if you pay attention I don't think you will have a problem conducting it, but the form is very important.

I: Do you believe undergraduate research requires supervision. Why? Why not?

P: I believe yes, really really strong yes. So I had two supervisors and I needed both of them. Like a lot. The first supervisor helped me with actually understanding the topic itself, because he is specialized in the area where I was conducting the research, and he lives there in Hong Kong, so he is in touch with the topic every day. And he helped me to understand the basic arguments and he kind of helped me to actually narrow it down, my focus and to like know what I should be focusing at. While, the like the official supervisor at BISLA really really helped me with my argument because the thing with theory many times it is tricky let's say and you don't really know what you are really talking about or how you are really applying theory to what you are researching and this kind of supervision will often point out the logical phallacies especially. Because many times you don't see the long term, like the argument, the very basic form of the argument, so he will help you not come down to this end of the road.

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But on the other hand, I think that the supervision should be limited. Only when you have a problem, like your supervisor should be there for you to help you, but he is not there as your nanny who is gonna tell you step by step what you should do because that is your responsibility, so he shouldn't be some strict authority. He should be there just to help you if you need something but the basic responsibility is up to you.

I: Please describe the supervision you received?

P: Ok. I will focus on the supervision I received here, at BISLA. My supervision was good and it was very challenging, but I believe people should, by the time people are choosing their supervision, supervisor, they should at least know what kind of personality or what kind of supervision they are choosing and I also believe different people require different supervision. It is up to you first of all, what kind of supervision you would like to receive, you should inform yourself. Because I don't believe there is one universal supervision for anyone, I mean there are maybe some basic features all supervisors should meet, be viable or not be rude. Just basic things. I would say I have chosen right supervision for me. I think I had no problems whatsoever. I think it was the right amount of supervision.

I: While conducting research, what facilities did BISLA provide?

P: Computers, printers. Of course. a Lot of printing. I would say premises. For me, I would not say it is a facility, but I would say they provided me... they were the contact between me and the university where I went to conduct my research. I used every major sources I printed out in Hong Kong. All came back to BISLA.

I: Are the facilities of BISLA sufficient for conducting UR?

P: Well I would say generally yes. Ohm, yes, I think yes. If you have any problems, there are people who are going to help you. When it comes to facilities, well I think it is sufficient.

I: Would you improve anything?

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P: yeah so as I believe it has been mentioned, the computers, which, I mean BISLA is really great with providing you with premises from which you can study if you bring your computer, but if you don't, you have to study down there, in the second building which is not very pleasant place to study. So yeah that might be the only thing, computers and. Yeah that's it.

Appendix D: Alumni Interviews

Participant 9 (male, currently studying for an MA degree)

I: How would you define undergraduate research?

P: I don't know. It's a research done by undergraduate students and it's probably... I don't want to say of lower standards but it is probably not as complex as like normal research. yeah that's it.

I: What is the effect of conducting undergraduate research?

P: Well, the students probably can learn how to do research, experiencing it, doing some methodology, overall the experience of doing the research might be helpful for the future career, future education or you know their own interest.

I: Did BISLA give you necessary skills for conducting research?

P: Yes, it DID, well I first desegregated into conferences where I had to do research one was about Hungary and Slovakia, and relations between them and the question of Hungarians in Slovakia. The second was about far right parties. In Slovakia and Hungary. And for the skills I got various...what... (inaudible). I learnt how to do research I knew how to collect data and information and collect literature to conduct the research.

I: What problems, lacking of preparation did you encounter while conducting research at BISLA?

P: Well, that probably the only thing I can recall now is that I didn't have a specific course on methodology, so methodology was part of different courses, but it was not like research based course but I wouldn't take it as a negative thing.

I: If you could return to BISLA, what would you teach yourself?

P: concerning all studies? Or just research?

I: in relation to research.

P: ohm... I would demand a course of methodology! (laugh), or maybe even more seminars for some courses or extended courses like like, if there was a course, then it would continue the next semester mainly because in some courses even though it is general, we for each course like in midway doing research or reading something. We did not complete it. And the next semester we could uh. if we got the chance I think. Uh. And I would probably read all the assign texts. I would probably read more of them and more seriously Reading duties.

I: Supervision. Why or why not?

P: (inaudible) It certainly does, but on the other hand, if a student makes a research by himself and then like he submits it, and then he gets a review of the research without any supervision beforehand, I think it can be reliable because some people can learn from their own mistakes but certainly at the point, at the beginning it should be supervised especially for like bachelor thesis and more serious stuff but making students more free without supervision might be actually better for them because they can focus on things they thing its more important and give them more freedom on supervisors like on professors might actually guide them in a way professors want to ,.. uh... they want to... like uh see their work according to them, according to their views, teaching methods or whatever.

I: Please describe the supervision you received.

P: ohm, for my research paper I got supervision, LIKE I have a peer review and then I had a supervision ... (inaudible) but like partially probably professor and for my bachelor thesis I met a ... professor which kind of supervised it one with like picking the question, research topic and the second actually supervised the whole work, like all the chapter, all the logic of the bachelor thesis and that's probably it. I remember after the research paper for the conference I had a review of the paper. Afterwards and I brought it but I WASN'T pleased with what I

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produced so I didn't submit it for the final review for publishing it. Because I didn't think it was that good I think it goes back to the previous question. uuhh. (what did I want to say)

I: previous question, whether supervision is important

P: yeah! with the supervision. I didn't have any supervision for that only the peer review and It was different and I learnt from my own mistakes like how to conduct research like uh. (Sigh) Maybe overall the research was not that bad but the outcome of the paper wasn't that good as the political situation in Slovakia has changed since I wrote the paper and my, predictions didn't come true. (laugh)

I: While conducting research what BISLA facilities did you use?

P: Probably only the library and the what is it like, the living room or whatever it is called, the room for students to write (inaudible). Or the city library, or café or at home. That's it. The main reason why I stayed at BISLA, it was quiet here, mostly in the evenings and I could focus more on. but (sigh). That's ohm... It wouldn't matter where I would write ... for example my thesis ohm. *It wouldn't matter* because like most of my sources I had things like data, I got either from the internet or from other libraries or... I only used limited sources from BISLA library which probably I could find somewhere else. It was just convenient for me to write here. That's it.

I: What facilities are sufficient for research at BISLA?

P: I could imagine that since the computer is only situated in the basement and its dark, and it's smelly there. I have never used it in my life in BISLA. Maybe if there was a computer lab somewhere in a pleasant environment it would be better to write it there but as I said the living room is fine. Students can focus there without any disturbances. You can close yourself somewhere like the libraries or even in like small offices like this one. OH I actually wrote my thesis in that one. (laugh).

Participant 10 (female, currently in a PhD program)

I: How would you define undergraduate research?

P: So, uhm, I think that undergraduate research in humanities like which is obviously what BISLA focuses on like to me just that just corresponds to like knowing how to work with literature relevant literature from the corresponding from the corresponding field and how to basically like enjoy, engage with like current scholarship and hopefully like produce some meaningful contribution. Yes, it's I think that I don't know like the research methods at such I don't know if they would like differ very much from what you do in graduate level so (pause). (laugh).

I: Okay, great.

P: So, yes I think, I think like basically I'm trying to like compare what I did at BISLA, for example for my thesis with my master's thesis obviously like there was a difference in like (inaudible) and depth of my research and hopefully like I was improving but I think that like the basic principles remain the same. Right, which is that being able to like work with relevant databases, with relevant literature and knowing how to analyze arguments and etc. So. I don't know like you know, I do like philosophy and political philosophy so I don't do data collection, usually. So obviously, I'm not I'm not in a position to like pick to that too much you know [laughing]. Cause there are like the methods are different when you do when you do qualitative or quantitative yes collections so.

I: Okay, thank you. Moving to the second question, what do you think would be the effect of conducting undergraduate research?

P: Okay, so I think that, I think that it's especially advantageous like if you moving on to so once again if you do like research as it stands for example in like philosophy, politics theory etc. you really have to be good researcher in order to be able to move on to graduate program

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right? Whereas like when you do when you already on the on like the college level things like work with some like create your own like collect your own data either like qualitative or quantitative but I think like at BISLA it's going to be mostly qualitative then I think that you potentially will be able to move one to like work at for example like nonprofit sector or government sector because there you'll have to do a lot of that analysis so yes. So I think that beneficial either as a preparation for like future career I would say primarily like in governmental or nongovernmental sector or it's a very exciting that you need to be very strong at when you want to move on to master's or PhD level so.

I: Okay, awesome. So it's beneficial for advancing in the academia itself right?

P: Yes, yes. I do think that it is definitely beneficial because you will need to be able to like do (inaudible) research when you're doing your masters. Not to mention PhD obviously. (laugh)

I: Okay. Number three. Did BISLA give you necessary skills for conducting research?

P: So, once again like I would differentiate between like the case of research where I have to work with a data versus research as it stands in like philosophy. So definitely I was very well prepared to do research on a Master's level. (Inaudible) working with literature and like knowing how to formulate good thesis and like how to get there right? How to like support it and like construct just construct like good methods. But then I would say that when it comes to like working with data I only actually learn that after BISLA when I was working as a back office in politics in Slovakia. So and I think that this is not this is not in depth. I know at least 1 person from who graduates from BISLA who also greed that there should be more time spend on methodology when it comes to qualitative and quantitative methods. So I think that this is (inaudible) that I learned like as I was going, you know through my job. So but like for me you know I am currently doing PhD and like that work in politics was kind of like a gap year so like what was the priority for me? There I think I was very well prepared by BISLA. So.

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I: Okay, number 4. What problems or lacking of preparation did you encounter on BISLA in relations to conducting research?

P: Yes, so I would say I think I already hinted on my previous answers so we only had like six you how BISLA has those like trainings or like courses between the semesters.

I: (inaudible)

P: [laughing] so we only had I don't know how is it like now because I graduated like four years ago I would say, I can't remember right now but at that point you only has like one methodology course it was like five or six-week intense course and I don't think it was enough. I think that I learned how to like some basic things when it comes to working with qualitative data but I think it would be extremely beneficial for us to like be able to like learn how to work with like quantitative data as well and I think that it's possible that some of my former classmates learned that while they were working on their bachelors thesis but it wasn't part of any you know course so it definitely wasn't covered (inaudible) that was covered for everyone at that point and I think that that's something I had to like you know catch up on later so yes so. (laugh)

I: Number five is kind of related. If you could return to BISLA what sort of skills would you teach yourselves yourself in order to help you with research?

P: Yes, so this would be the first thing I guess, first thing would be yes working with data and the second thing would be probably so obviously like when you're doing research the like the final output usually comes in a form of paper right? And I think that how to like structure paper well. That's also going to differ I guess from like field to field which is it's tricky like in liberal arts but maybe like emphasis on like academic writing, I don't know this is I am sorry I'm getting little lost because we did have a course like writing on politics but I don't think that it was showing you it was teaching like how to write like a bit I don't think in terms of in terms

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of structure of an academic paper I guess I something that I (inaudible) like I didn't have that figured out like by the end of a first year or something like that and I think I should have you know. So yes but I also think that you know BISLA is like young institution and it's improving itself like by each year so I think that some of these things that were like common concern at my, at my times there might already be not. They might already have disappeared so yes. So these two things I guess.

I: Okay. Well hopefully [laughing] it did improve. Number six, do you believe undergraduate research require supervision? Why or why not?

P: So I think that it does because it does require supervision like even on like higher level like you know like I'm doing PhD and I am supervised and when I was doing masters I was supervised so I think that you always need to have that guidance and I think that especially like on BA level when you're still learning like the core methods right? That you'll be like using either in your career or like as you gone to like you know postgraduate studies I think that the supervision there should be quite intense I guess. So yes I think that is should be supervised definitely.

I: Okay, please describe the supervision you received.

P: So at BISLA right? Yes, so I as I said like I was in you know how like people in BISLA like they sort of like everyone can like write their BA thesis on you know there's like this difference themes right? So I was like in my year I was like one of the few people (inaudible) philosophy and I received the professor is no longer at BISLA but I received very good supervision and so basically like he imposed few deadlines on me and was like checking on me as I was progressing with my thesis making sure that my arguments are set up and that I have appropriate sources and also he recommended sources to me. I think that especially when you're a bachelor student, you might not be able to you know to you might not have like the

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orientation like the current literatures yet which is I think normal because you're like at the beginning of like becoming an expert on something so yes so I would say literature recommendations and also checking my arguments against possible objections and things like this.

I: Okay, awesome. While conducting research, what facilities that BISLA provides did you use?

P: So once again like in you know in like in humanities I guess you mostly just need well equipped library so I was just using (inaudible) library and also obviously like online journal databases. So in my case it's not you know I don't need much you know in order to like be able to work well so yes.

I: Okay and did you did you think that these facilities were sufficient? Were you lacking anything?

P: So I think that I don't know like I think that (pause) the core books on my thesis I just yes I had to get them on my own but when it comes to like database of like the subscription to like databases where I was getting my articles that that was covered so but some primarily literature I had to yes I had to get it on my own but I think that that's very common even when you're at like much bigger institution you know so yes.

I: Okay great. Those were all the questions [laughing]. Thank you for answering.

Participant 11 (female, completed MA program, currently working full-time for a multinational NGO)

I: So, the first question is, how would you define undergraduate research?

P: Well from my own experience undergraduate research is rather descriptive research than some, well serious analytical work, because as an undergraduate student you don't still have enough, maybe even materials, even not enough skills or your skills are not developed enough to do like the serious, serious analytical research that would eventually have some effect or some further work. I mean you can provide very good basis and then in the future build it up, but I wouldn't call it like some bachelor thesis real research, but rather something that can be build up into research.

I: Continue on word, what would you think would be the effect of conducting undergraduate research?

P: Well as I said. You can still build it up and you can (pause). If you, depends on also on a methodology you use of course, if you conduct some poll or survey that can have a really huge impact on any on political sphere, on sociological sphere or any other, but it has to be done right, but I am not really persuaded 100% that undergrads are capable of doing it on their own. You still need to have some some supervisor, that can help, so which is I guess you have the professor for that but but that's the effect I would see.

I: Number three is, did BISLA specifically give you necessary skills for conducting research?

P: Well yeah of course BISLA give you, gives you really lot of space for developing your skills and then see actually who you are, what your (inaudible) weak and strong characteristic are, so definitely yes and BISLA also I mean, you have so, you have plenty of opportunities to. But it depends on you, of course it's not just BISLA. BISLA gives you all the necessary things, all

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the support you need but it depends on you if you are willing to develop your skills and then you can do really good research. BISLA will help always.

I: What problems or lacking of preparation did you encounter on BISLA in relation to conducting research?

P: Well I think (pause). I think methodology was always something BISLA students lack and that's maybe something they should start with even (inaudible) with a first year students like it should be definitely involved in one semester for a good methodology approaches so student can see how they can start because without that you cannot have a good research of course.

I: If you could return to BISLA, what sort of skills would you teach yourself in order to help you with research?

P: Well I think you need to have at least basic level in each skill like, you know, critical thinking, analytical thinking. You need to organize your time, you need to prioritize and maybe BISLA can really help in telling you like these are the skills you really should work on. And you have individual approach. Every single professor looks at you as individual person, not as on some number or some you know, you're not like 200 people in class, it's just couple. I don't know like 20, 15, depends and I think what I would do and what would help me would be that, okay you are this kind of person, you have these and these skills you can build on and you can do a good research. I don't know these are your weak points, maybe you should focus more on prioritizing things, on your time management and then you can. So maybe not the skill itself or skills themselves, but rather you know, to teach you how to use what you have and how to improve what you don't have or you should have.

I: So focus on personal improvement would be the key?

P: Yes.

I: Do you believe undergraduate research require supervision? Why or why not?

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P: Yeah definitely. I mean you as an undergrad you basically just come from the high school, you don't know what research is, you were just learning things by (inaudible) because professors told you, but here at BISLA it's mostly up to you, how you look at things and this in a very first years of your like university life, you need some supervision, definitely. So you know how to look at things. No one is gonna tell you if your opinion is right or wrong, but you still need to know how to argue, how to support your argument and that needs definitely supervision. You cannot have that without it.

I: Would you please describe a supervision you received?

P: Well, can I also name a person? [laughing] So I received most of like supervision or supervising time from Dagmar Kusá and we were actually working on a research together and she was my supervisor on my bachelor thesis, so how I received it? So, she was a great in terms of teaching me methodology, methodological approach, then to look at the theoretical backgrounds and that's actually a supervision I received. Because then analytical part or the practical part that can be written by you, that's not a big deal that much. But rather really using the right methodology, having the right background, having the right theoretical background for your research is much more important, so and that's. I think everybody in BISLA could receive this and I think you still have a chance; they are still doing it so. Yeah, that was what I got.

I: While conducting research, what facilities did BISLA provides you that you use?

P: So you mean like technical things?

I: Yeah.

P: So of course, like computers and then a lot of like library. That's the most important thing. Access to some databases you need to use and magazines, I mean that's actually all you need as undergrad. So that what I got also.

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I: Did you find any of these facilities lacking or would you welcome something more at BISLA?

P: I mean in terms of library you can also like make it bigger, receive some more books, some more, I don't know, some more materials to use but I think BISLA's library and BISLA's material were sufficient for me as an undergrad. Maybe it wouldn't be sufficient on higher level of meaning, doctoral studies or masters but for undergrads I think it's sufficient.