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To cite this Article: Kuhmonen, A., Kujanpää, O., & Pöyry-Lassila, P. (2015) Pedagogical experiment: Applying the P3P model for learning entrepreneurial mindset. AMK-lehti/UAS Journal, 2.

URL: https://arkisto.uasjournal.fi/uasjournal_2015-2/kuhmonen_ym.html

Pedagogical experiment: Applying the P3P model for learning entrepreneurial mindset

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Pedagogical experiments

Laurea's P3P learning environment offers an entrepreneur with strong business experience and an open-minded attitude towards developing business an opportunity of sharing expertise and co-creating with the students innovations and solutions to a company's actual business problems and development needs. The P3P model has been developed further from Laurea's Peer to Peer (P2P) learning environment by students, entrepreneurs and lecturer-coaches during several development projects, and it has proved to motivate all actors to develop their competences. (Kuhmonen & Pöyry-Lassila 2015) In SMEs, there is a demand for developing especially sales and marketing skills and competences (Teknologiateollisuus 2014). The P3P cases have included the development of marketing and sales of SMEs in digital and investment service businesses.

The 21st century workplaces call for an entrepreneurial attitude and spirit (Llopis 2013). In the P3P model, entrepreneurs, students, and lecturers all act, develop and learn together. The educational target of P3P is to facilitate the development of an entrepreneurial mindset. The students are mentored by an experienced entrepreneur and are integrated into the everyday business of the company. They participate in client meetings, negotiations, trade fairs, customer relationship management trainings, and sales trainings, which facilitates the building and maintaining of comprehensive and valuable contacts and networks. (Kuhmonen & Pöyry-Lassila 2015) At the same time, the students implement the development project in close interaction with the entrepreneur, guided by the lecturer-coaches, whose role is to act as facilitators, experts, preparers, implementors, evaluators, and networkers (Raij 2014, 113). By participating in the P3P projects, the lecturer-coaches are encouraged to redefine their roles as teachers and the pedagogical skills towards supporting the sharing of expertise and the co-creation of knowledge in a multi-actor collaboration.

The active interaction between the various actors during the projects facilitates and supports learning and the sharing of expertise. In the students' case the expertise might mean fresh business knowledge about marketing or sales. As for the entrepreneur, students create value to the company by sharing their ideas and innovative approaches to different aspects of the businesses. When thinking "out of the box" – or "no box" students give an entrepreneur an opportunity to smarten the ideas and boost the decision making. Also the lecturer-coaches both share their expertise and develop it further by participating in the innovative knowledge-creation processes.

The P3P model encourages an entrepreneur to test potential employees in a cost-efficient way without hiring a person. In P3P projects students act in 'kind of worker' roles while an entrepreneur acts in mentor's and supervisor's roles. Students are selected to the project via 'job interview', thus they have a chance to train their sales skills at the very beginning of the project by creating an elevator pitch including the description of the competencies or skills they use to perform their work. (Kuhmonen & Uusitalo 2014, 17.)

The goal of the cooperation is a *win more – win more* situation, which means either that the students get a traineeship or a permanent job at the company or that they start a company of their own and continue the cooperation as subcontractors. In any case, the students have learnt entrepreneurial attitudes and skills and the entrepreneur has received new ideas and extra resources for the business development. A positive effect is also the development of marketing and sales competences of both parties, and the professional development of the lecturer-coaches.

The innovative and modern P3P learning environment is borderless and provides students and entrepreneurs the opportunity to locate anywhere, for example, in the company's or Laurea's premises or they can choose to work in social media, at the entrepreneur client's premises, or in the networks of the company. Basically, they can build a learning environment suitable for a company's needs and choose the needed digital tools. (Kuhmonen & Pöyry-Lassila 2015.)

The cooperation in the P3P model is based on mutual trust, commitment, support, and taking responsibility. The fact that the responsibility and space for creativity is given to the students by the entrepreneur and the feeling that they are trusted, both increases the students' belief in their own capabilities and improves their self-confidence, which is important for their future careers and taking responsibility for the development of their own life.

The P3P model has been introduced by Laurea to the Police University College, and the recognised synergies have encouraged further cooperation. European higher education reforms and modernisation in the context of the Bologna Process have emphasized the importance of lifelong learning (The European Higher Education Area in 2012). Recently, the curriculum reform of the Police University College has been realised and new programmes for police education have been launched. To enable success of the reform and change implementation, boundary-crossing cooperation with educational and research organisations, working life and society is needed. Also the ongoing societal change challenges pedagogy: According to Esko Kilpi (2015), we have moved to the world of "on demand" learning, and we need to learn to "signalise" our competencies. As a result, the role of the universities of applied sciences is changing from the substance expert towards 'the bank of intellectual capital' which challenges us to start to estimate the market value of the intellectual capital that we have.

Pedagogical models

At Laurea we apply the Learning by Developing (LbD) Action Model which is based on the pragmatic learning theory and integrates competence producing learning and an innovative R&D project. The defining characteristics of the LbD are authenticity, partnership, trust, creativity and an investigative approach. (Raij 2014, 15, 103.) With regard to learning theories and pedagogical models, we have conceptualized the P3P learning environment and pedagogical model through the theory of dialogical learning. Dialogical learning can be described as expansive learning (e.g. Engeström, 2009) or innovative learning that requires constructing a shared space (common ground, context, or ba). In this shared space, knowledge is collaboratively created with the help of objects, whether conceptual or concrete, as well as practices that are collaboratively and systematically developed through collective intellectual action in which the individual members of the community participate actively. This action is mediated by nature, which means that it takes place through the shared objects, using them as mediators. (Paavola et al., 2004; Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005). Further, the group's epistemic agency emerges through participation in the shared activities, i.e. intentionally pursuing its epistemic goals (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005). In practice this can mean, for example, solving problems or creating a new product together.

To succeed trialogical learning requires four elements: (1) individuals with their ideas and personal knowledge and expertise, (2) a community consisting of individuals interested in participating in deliberate knowledge advancement, (3) a shared space for collaboration, and (4) shared objects (ideas, practices, and knowledge artifacts) that are developed collaboratively, and that mediate the knowledge-creation process of the community (Paavola & Hakkarainen, 2005). These four elements are present in the P3P learning environment and pedagogy and enable the trialogical learning process and learning the proactive entrepreneurial mindset.

At the Police University College, the pedagogical models framing education and research, development and innovation consist of problem-based learning, and the triangle of Engeström and Pawson & Tilley's realistic evaluations (see e.g. Kujanpää, O. 2008 & Pawson, R. & Tilley, J., 1997). Several similarities can be found in both organisations' pedagogical models. Independent of the pedagogical model utilised, modern digitalized work life requires us to build collaboration instead of maintaining old structures dominated by silos, borders and gaps. The mere pedagogical models themselves are not of importance but they are valuable in the sense that they enable individual learners' growth, open opportunities connect with other learners, and enable the learners to widen their identities.

Conclusions

Laurea's Learning by Developing (LbD) Action Model and Trialogical learning in the P3P environment improve both students, entrepreneurs, and lecturer-coaches competences. User-driven development of the peer-to-peer (P2P) environment has modified the project environment into a P3P entrepreneurial environment that nourishes entrepreneurial skills and mindsets and thus facilitates the employment of students, but also challenges the lecturer-coaches by requiring them to act in a variety of different roles and to become more entrepreneurial. Entrepreneurship is seen as a mindset and as a process. The P3P model invites also the lecturer-coaches to develop their entrepreneurial skills and to expand their own roles towards acting more like entrepreneurs. Having personal experience with entrepreneurship could even be recommended for the teachers in terms of advanced professional development. The P3P learning environment provides fruitful conditions for the formulation of innovative knowledge communities, the development of shared expertise, and co-creation of innovations. The P3P model responds to the challenge of the changing of the role of the universities of applied sciences in Finland as facilitators of learning and networkers that ensure individual career paths for students.

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