

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN FINLAND

Case Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre

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Abstract <p>The purpose of this thesis is to observe the stage of entrepreneurship education in vocational education in Finland. The research problem is how entrepreneurship education is realized in vocational schools compared to the goals that are set in the official programmes. The final output is to introduce the central practices how entrepreneurship education could be developed the best in Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre where the empiric part of the thesis was implemented.</p> <p>The theory part includes citations of the official programmes, the European Commission's Green Paper Entrepreneurship in Europe and the Policy for Entrepreneurship Education of the Ministry of Education in Finland. The thesis also takes a glance to the history and the present state of entrepreneurship in Finnish society and the stages of entrepreneurship education in Finland.</p> <p>There are various kinds of methods to be used in entrepreneurship education of which two are introduced more deeply in this thesis. The chosen methods represent extremities of the methods, the other one concentrates more on external entrepreneurship and the other one on internal entrepreneurship. The practices used in entrepreneurship education in Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre are also introduced in this thesis.</p> <p>The best practices of entrepreneurship education seems to be the ones that are developed locally because they respond to needs of the education organization but also the needs of the local business world. The thesis as a whole and the results of it hopefully assists the development work of entrepreneurship education also in other education organizations besides Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre.</p>		
Keywords Entrepreneurship education, teaching, entrepreneurship, creativity		
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Tiivistelmä <p>Opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena on tutkia yrittäjyyskasvatuksen tilaa Suomen ammatillisessa koulutuksessa. Tutkimusongelma on kuinka yrittäjyyskasvatus toteutuu ammatillisessa koulutuksessa verrattuna virallisissa ohjelmissa määriteltyihin tavoitteisiin. Lopullisena tuotoksena on esitelty keskeiset käytännöt, jotka tehokkaimmin edistävät yrittäjyyskasvatusta Mäntän seudun koulutuskeskuksessa, jossa opinnäytetyön empiirinen osuus toteutettiin.</p> <p>Teoriaosuus sisältää otteita Euroopan Komission julkaisusta Yrittäjyys Euroopassa ja Suomen Opetusministeriön julkaisusta Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen linjaukset. Työssä katsahdetaan myös suomalaisen yhteiskunnan yrittäjyyden historiaan ja nykytilaan sekä yrittäjyyskasvatuksen vaiheisiin Suomessa.</p> <p>Yrittäjyyskasvatuksessa on käytössä erilaisia malleja, joista kaksi on esitelty tarkemmin tässä lopputyössä. Valitut kaksi mallia edustavat mallien ääripäitä; toinen niistä keskittyy ulkoiseen yrittäjyyteen ja toinen sisäiseen yrittäjyyteen. Opinnäytetyössä on esitelty myös Mäntän seudun koulutuskeskuksessa käytössä olevat yrittäjyyskasvatuksen käytännöt.</p> <p>Parhaita yrittäjyyskasvatuksen käytäntöjä näyttävät olevan paikallisesti kehitetyt mallit, koska ne vastaavat sekä paikallisen yritysmaailman että koulutusorganisaation tarpeisiin. Opinnäytetyö kokonaisuudessaan ja sen tulokset toivon mukaan edistävät yrittäjyyskasvatuksen kehittämistyötä Mäntän seudun koulutuskeskuksessa sekä muissa vastaavissa koulutusorganisaatioissa.</p>		
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Muut tiedot		

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INTRODUCTION

Through the education we create a base for the entrepreneurial behaviour or suffocate the natural passion of a person to make an attempt. A child learns to eat, stand and walk after several attempts. His own attempts can be supported or they can be suffocated by going for help every time. The child gets passive quickly if he learns to trust that there is always someone picking up. His own attempts shall be encouraged and admired even in small things. (Hynninen 2006, 7.)

There is not any particular right model to teach entrepreneurship. The way of realising it is bound both on the level of education and the objectives of teaching. The younger the learner is the less the contents of entrepreneurship appear in teaching. It is not sensible to take planning a business plan and setting up a business as a part of teaching until the secondary or higher education level. (Hytti 2009.)

The European Commission's Green Paper Entrepreneurship in Europe, which was published in January 2003, states that education should contribute to encouraging entrepreneurship by fostering the right mindset, entrepreneurship skills and awareness of career opportunities as an entrepreneur (Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen linjaukset ja toimenpideohjelma 2004, 14).

According to the Policy for Entrepreneurship Education of the Ministry of Education in Finland, measures will be taken to promote entrepreneurship at different levels of education, to enhance the attractiveness of entrepreneurship as a career, to take account of the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in education policy projects, to develop advisory services geared to entrepreneurs who hire employees and to improve business owners' opportunities for apprenticeship training" (Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen linjaukset ja toimenpideohjelma 2004, 14).

My own interest is to find and share aspects of teaching entrepreneurship through this thesis. I have worked as a business economy teacher in a vocational school for a year now and I have taught entrepreneurship from the beginning of the school year 2009 – 2010. I am one of the seven teachers that are responsible of entrepreneurship education and development of it in

Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre. Before my current job I worked for six years for a development company that offers services for entrepreneurs. During those years I got pretty good touch on the business world and especially the people who wanted to start up their very first business.

During this year as a teacher I have realized that I have been thinking and observing entrepreneurship education, its´ meaning and the ways to develop it a long before I started in my current job. The needs of the business world, at first hand new innovations and new entrepreneurs were concerning me in my previous job. There is a great need for those in Finnish society and a lot of work has to be done to fulfil that need. There is no any particular group of occupation that can handle that work on its´ own, but teachers play quite a big role in the network of developing entrepreneurship education.

My background of a business service manager, a mother of five children of ages 16 to 22, a wife and a mother of entrepreneurs and education of entrepreneurship in bachelor's and master's degree in university of applied sciences, have increased my knowledge of the issues I deal in this thesis.

My desire is to be able to utilize my knowledge, learning and experience of the business world I gained during my previous work while I am teaching entrepreneurship. By doing that, I hopefully will not loose the touch I have had a privilege to get in the real business world and its´ needs in my current job.

After completing this thesis I am one step closer being qualified and able to apply to the school of vocational teacher education.

2 THE OBJECTIVES

Entrepreneurship education has brought up intensely for several years. There are many ways to teach entrepreneurship and a lot of material that support it. The purpose of this study is to find out how entrepreneurship

education realizes in vocational education at the moment and how it should be realized.

The steps I use to reach the objective are going through

- the official programmes,
- the models used in entrepreneurship education,
- the practices of entrepreneurship education that are used in Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre and
- the enquiry (appendix, 38) that was implemented among the teachers that are responsible of entrepreneurship education and its´ development work in Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre.

The objectives are to gather the goals of entrepreneurship education that are defined in the official documents, what kind of models there are to teach entrepreneurship, how entrepreneurship education is realized in Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre, and finally take bearings all those issues to the opinions of the teachers that execute entrepreneurship education in practise. The final output of this thesis is to introduce the central practices how entrepreneurship education could be developed the best in Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre. This thesis and the introduced practices can hopefully benefit also other vocational education organizations to improve their entrepreneurship education.

2.1 Terminology of this thesis

First of all it is important to understand the content of the terms of entrepreneurship, internal and external entrepreneurship, teaching entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education.

European parliament has defined entrepreneurship as follows:

Entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports everyone in day to day life at home and in society, employees in being aware of the context of

their work and being able to seize opportunities, and is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by entrepreneurs establishing social or commercial activity.
(Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen suuntaviivat 2009, 27.)

In this thesis I consider entrepreneurship as action of doing business in every level. I do not limit it like for example Peter F. Drucker does, that “being legitimated to be called as an entrepreneur, it requires the person to come up with some totally new idea, way of doing things, something that can be called innovative” (Drucker 1993, 21).

“Initiative, conscientiousness, courage, ingenuity and creativity: opening the terminology of entrepreneurship in contact of education is broadening. The before mentioned features are not first associated on entrepreneurship”.

According to the counsellor of education Marjo Hollo those are the central characteristics of voluntary entrepreneurship which she calls yrittävyys (not entrepreneurship, rather something like a feature of endeavour).

Entrepreneurship as internal and external voluntary entrepreneurship is included in the vocational basic examinations that are being updated during 2007 – 2010. Internal entrepreneurship is manifested in the way of act and work in specific working environment according to Hollo, who works for government of education. External entrepreneurship means operating as an entrepreneur and practicing an own business. (Lammi-Rajapuro, 2009.)

Entrepreneurship education as a term covers also teaching entrepreneurship. It includes both the active and spontaneous individual, entrepreneurial learning environment, education and the cooperation of the network that supports entrepreneurship and also the active and entrepreneurial supportive policy of the society. As a result of entrepreneurship education, there arises entrepreneurial activities in all levels of society and it also strengths and springs new entrepreneurship.
(Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen suuntaviivat 2009, 6.)

Teaching is the verb that is used of the teacher’s activity that is mainly done in the classroom. By teaching entrepreneurship the teacher contributes entrepreneurship education on her/his behalf.

All these terms are included in entrepreneurship education, as well as in this thesis that observes entrepreneurship education and its stage in vocational education in Finland.

2.2 What is entrepreneurship education?

Entrepreneurship education integrated into the education system and a mindset favourable to entrepreneurship create a basis for entrepreneurship. Interaction between education and the world of work will be promoted, teachers' and guidance counsellors' knowledge about entrepreneurship will be enhanced and teaching content and methods will be developed in all education and training. As a concept, entrepreneurship education is interdisciplinary and has not been studied as widely as its social and economic significance would warrant. This is why the Ministry of Education stresses the significance and need of new research for widening the knowledge base of learning processes and pedagogy conducive to entrepreneurial action.

(Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen linjaukset ja toimenpideohjelma 2004, 15.)

The aim is that schools, together with other stakeholders, raise pupils' awareness of the significance and potential of entrepreneurship. At the same time, measures are taken to enable students to get hands-on experience of setting up and running a business, to enhance teachers' competence and to promote external experts' contribution to teaching.

(Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen linjaukset ja toimenpideohjelma 2004, 16.)

Entrepreneurship education can be perceived as separate courses that focus on offering the basic knowledge and skills of starting up or running a business. I think that is the most common and simple way of perceiving entrepreneurship education and is connected to the education that is got through teaching or counselling.

One and more extended way considering it is to relate it to many subjects. That way of thinking would be the desirable way in the schools and other institutions to perceive entrepreneurship education. These two levels still connect entrepreneurship education tightly as a matter of teaching. The most advanced way of perceiving entrepreneurship education is broaden it to

concern all the stakeholders, that are a part of and responsible of entrepreneurship education.

In the guidelines of entrepreneurship education is being emphasized the co-operation of the network of different levels of education, working and economic life, trusts, administrative and political decision makers and also homes (Figure 1, 9). In these networks the objectives and contents of teaching and education, learning environments and culture of activity are being developed where the entrepreneurial readiness and control of life of the learner will be strengthened. In that way the readiness of intellectual, skilled and attitude of a learner are being developed, as well as the way of work so that she/he is able to work entrepreneurial way in her/his own personal life together with others. With all this we can strengthen the learner's ability to operate on the future labour market, either as an entrepreneur or an employee. (Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen suuntaviivat 2009, 7.)

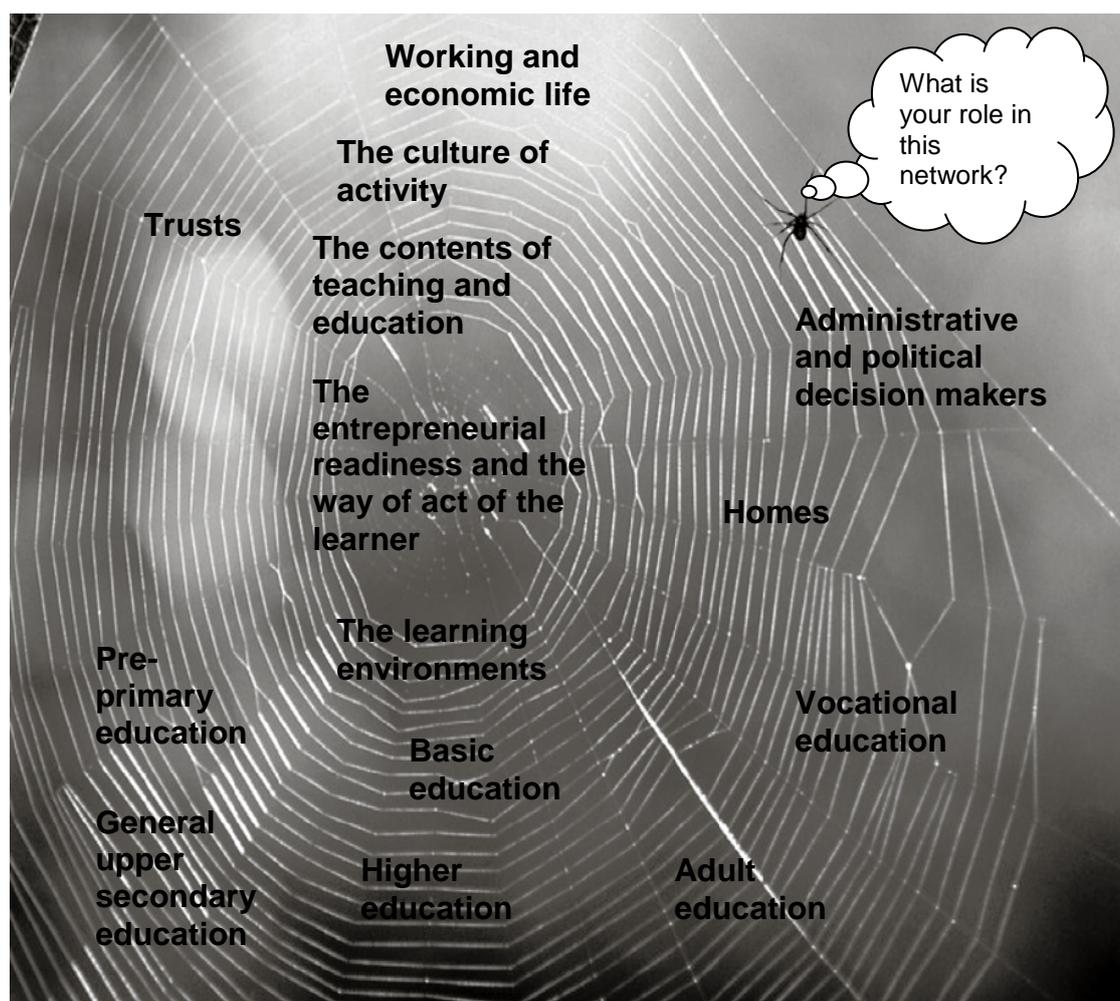


Figure 1. The network of developing entrepreneurship education (Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen suuntaviivat 2009, 8).

The baseline of entrepreneurship education is that one can learn entrepreneurship and it is not supposed to be as an inner characteristic that a person carries from the birth to grave. In the contexts of entrepreneurship education is not a synonym for commercialism nor business activity or trade. It is a way of thinking and acting that can be practiced, says Ulla Hytti, the manager of research, assistant professor from Turku School of Economics. (Hytti, 2009.)

Entrepreneurship development is often regarded as something that can be achieved mainly through the introduction of policies to stimulate and structure new venture creation. Handbook of Research of Entrepreneurship Education suggests in its´ chapter 2, that one of the most powerful means of developing entrepreneurship in a society is through educational programmes that incorporate entrepreneurial thinking at every level of the educational system, starting with elementary school (Filion & Dolabela 2007, 13).

After all it is very important to know and understand the cultural, geographical, ethical and political structures and the history of the society you are operating in, before you are able to develop its´ structures. Like the old phrase says: you have to know where you are coming from that you are able to know where you are going to.

3 ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE FINNISH SOCIETY

The positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship have increased among Finnish people. The rapid change of the society and the favourable trends that support entrepreneurship have influenced on the attitudes. Long-span and logical entrepreneurship education related to the teachers´ training has had remarkable significance on that also. (Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen suuntaviivat 2009, 12.)

In the end of 2007 the amount of entrepreneurs in Finland was bigger than ever. Over 258 000 enterprises and 228 300 entrepreneurs cover 9 % of the employees. (Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen suuntaviivat 2009, 13.)

The share of the small and medium sized enterprises was 99,7 % of all the enterprises in Finland and 93 % of them were so called micro enterprises that have less than 10 employees (Chart 1. Yrittäjyyskatsaus 2009, 31).

Enterprises by vicinities of personnel 2007 excluding the primary production branches				
The size of an enterprise	Enterprises amount	Part of the enterprises %	Part of the personnel %	Part of the revenue %
Small enterprises:				
less than 50 employees	249 621	98,7	44,4	32,1
less than 2 employees	164 911	65,2	6,9	4,4
2 - 9 employees	70 135	27,8	17,5	11,7
10 - 49 employees	14 575	5,7	20	16
Medium sized enterprises:				
50 - 249 employees	2 396	1	17,1	17,3
Large enterprises:				
at least 250 employees	641	0,3	38,5	50,6
In all	252 658	100	100	100

Chart 1. Enterprises by vicinities of personnel 2007 excluding the primary production branches (Yrittäjyyskatsaus 2009, 31).

The most of the enterprises that offer personal services belong to the group of small businesses. Personal services include for example barbers, hairdressers and beauty saloons. (Diagram 1. Yrittäjyyskatsaus 2009, 32.)

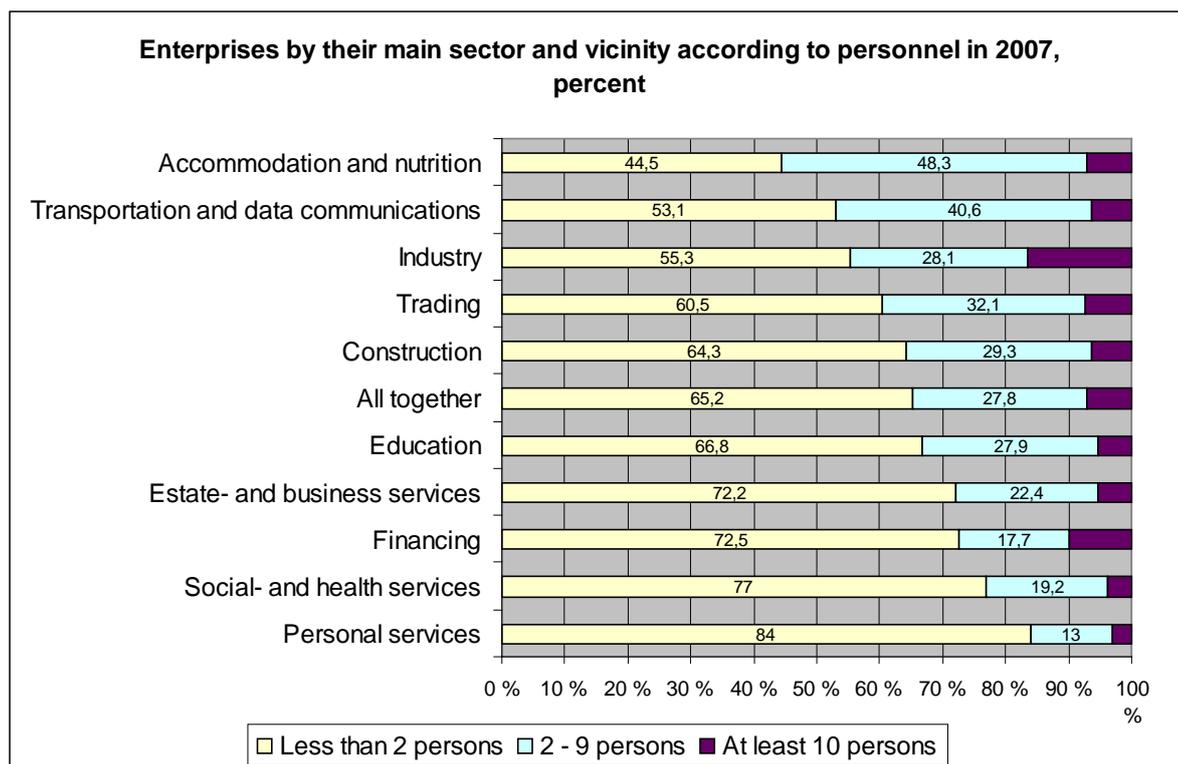


Diagram 1. Enterprises by their main sector and vicinity according to personnel in 2007, percent (Yrittäjyyskatsaus 2009, 33).

It seems that entrepreneurship and teaching entrepreneurship are quite unique and new terms in the Finnish society. Agriculture has played very strong part in the Finnish society as a way of earning a living. In 1994 we had over 100 000 agriculture enterprises (Maatalousyrittäminen kovassa laskussa) but in the end of 2007 only 45 681, which is still almost 15 % of all the enterprises (308 917) in Finland (Pallari 2009, 4). Agriculture has not perceived as entrepreneurship for long and actually the farms were not even included in the statistics of enterprises in Finland until 2007 (Yritysten määrä kasvoi merkittävästi vuonna 2007, 2008).

That has affected on the teaching as well. Entrepreneurship education was not called entrepreneurship education, but it included very strongly in teaching. Even the teachers got educated the way they could teach and give support to the entrepreneurs of those days (mostly farmers).

Entrepreneurship bloomed in the education of teachers´ from the early days of independence of Finland till 1970. There were many subjects that supported entrepreneurship (of those days): natural science, civics, social studies, practical training etc. After

the wars the activity and entrepreneurship were emphasized in the name of the interest of the nation. Teaching included raising the activity of a student, and interest towards work and through that further to social responsibility. In the 70's The Finnish society started to industrialize and the need of employees started to increase. The need of entrepreneurship education seemed to be decreasing. (Käsmä 2007, 2 – 3.)

Now we live in a situation in Finland as well as the whole world, that there is a great need of entrepreneurial activity and new enterprises, as well as new entrepreneurs. The large enterprises have cut down their work staff tremendously in Finland. For example the forest industry that has been very strong in Finland has decreased its' workforce 40 % in this decade. The three forest companies UPM, Stora Enso and M-Real have 19 000 less people working for them nowadays than in the beginning of this decade. 17 000 of those jobs were lost in Finland. (Lukkari, 2009.)

The other reason for the need of strengthen entrepreneurial activity is the age structure of Finnish entrepreneurs. In the end of 2007 about 14 % (32 800) of the Finnish entrepreneurs were 60 years or older and 28 % (66 600) of them were 50 to 59 years old (Pallari 2009, 10). The big generations are retiring soon and there are tens of thousands of entrepreneurs among them, who are considering handing over their enterprise to someone.

As a conclusion, the history of development work of entrepreneurship education is very young in Finland. The first stage of improving entrepreneurship in Finland can be considered the period of economical growth in 1950 – 60's, the second stage entrepreneurship education in 1980's and the third stage the period of teaching entrepreneurship in 1990's. Teaching entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education as terms started to become more common. Teaching entrepreneurship as it is considered nowadays, started in the middle of 1990's. (Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen suuntaviivat 2009, 25.)

In 1997 41 % of the Finnish entrepreneurs had secondary schooling, which vocational education belongs to and their amount even rose in proportion to all the entrepreneurs to be 44 % in 2006 (Pallari 2009, 11). There is a trend that the rate of the entrepreneurs that have a background of higher

education, is on the increase. About 3 % of all the entrepreneurs have a background of university of applied sciences and their slice of the new entrepreneurs is even higher. This originates for example from the reason the University of Applied Sciences system is only 15 years old.

(Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen suuntaviivat 2009, 13.)

The development of vocational education in order to develop the different sectors, started actually not until after the Second World War in Finland. It was not necessary before that because two third of the working population worked in agriculture and forest industry still in 1940. Not until 1950's the amount of population working in agriculture and forest industry dropped off below half of the working population. (Hentilä, 2002.)

4 REALIZATION ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN VOCATIONAL LEVEL

4.1 The models used in entrepreneurship education

There are many models of teaching entrepreneurship, and Suomen Yrittäjät ry, the organization of Finnish Entrepreneurs have collected them on their web pages (Sata mallia yrittäjyysopetukseen, 2008). There are 100 different models to use in different grades in education of teaching entrepreneurship.

The models that are targeted to the pre-primary education, concentrate on supporting creativity and encouraging cooperation of the students. The last objective seems to be in the centre also in the models that are intended to be used in basic education. (Sata mallia yrittäjyysopetukseen, 2008.)

There are even 18 models developed for entrepreneurship education taught in the upper secondary school, but only 5 models that are listed to be used in vocational level. But in the competition of Taitaja 2008 and 2009 altogether, 15 models were introduced for the purpose of vocational level. In these two levels the models are pretty close to each other, which is understandable because the students represent the same age group. (Sata mallia yrittäjyysopetukseen, 2008.)

Most of the 5 models that are meant to be used in the vocational level, concentrate on developing a business plan or setting up a rehearsal company during the studies. The central content of the model used in Helsinki Business College is studying entrepreneurship integrated in a rehearsal company (Sata mallia yrittäjyysopetukseen, Harjoitusyritystoiminta, 2008).

The model used in vocational institute of Pohjois-Karjala called Yrittäjyyspolku, offers the students a possibility to practice running a business through a pre-incubator. The incubator is connected to the school and it also offers contacts to the entrepreneurs. (Sata mallia yrittäjyysopetukseen, Yrittäjyyspolku PKKY, 2008.)

The goal of the model used in vocational institute of Lappi in Rovaniemi, is that the students have a business plan of their own in the end of the studies (Sata mallia yrittäjyysopetukseen, Yrittäjyyskoulu Lapin ammattiopistossa, 2009).

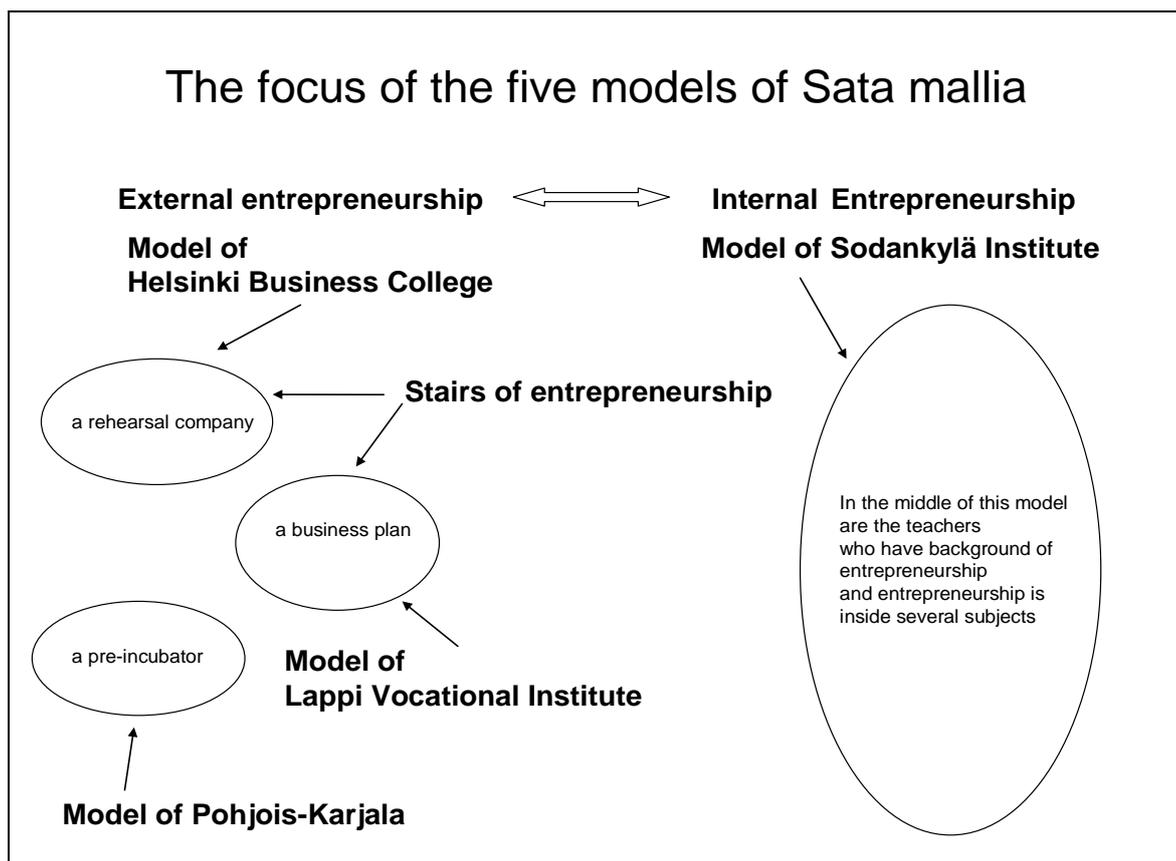


Figure 2. The focus of the five models of Sata mallia.

I chose two of the models for closer inspection because they represent the extremities of the models. The first one, Stairs of entrepreneurship, concentrates more on external entrepreneurship and the second one, Model of Sodankylä Institute, on internal entrepreneurship. It seems that these two different focuses divide opinions and actions of teachers, when it comes to entrepreneurship education.

The amount of the models is grate, which points at a strong investment on the issue among the education organizations. Besides the great amount, the contents of some of those models undoubtedly impress at least the students with their fine variety, like the stairs of entrepreneurship.

4.1.1 Stairs of entrepreneurship

The model of entrepreneurship education called Stairs of entrepreneurship was awarded as the best pattern in Finland of teaching entrepreneurship in

the competition of Taitaja 2009. It is a method used in the unit of Nummentie in the training centre of Länsi – Uusimaa. (Lohjalla on Suomen paras yrittäjyysopetuksen toimintamalli, 2009.) The patterns of Young Enterprise Finland called YE 24h-camp and YE-Year as an entrepreneur are an essential part of the model of Yrittäjyyden Portaat (Nuori Yrittäjyys, 2008).

Junior Achievement - Young Enterprise Finland is a Finnish branch of JA Worldwide. JA-YE Finland is dedicated to educating students about workforce readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy through experiential, hands-on programs. (Nuori Yrittäjyys, 2008.)

This is also an opportunity to get to the more international level on entrepreneurship: “Junior Achievement Europe is organizing Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2009 competition. The competition is meant to the students that have gone through the program of YE Year as an Entrepreneur and have set up their own business after the YE year and ran it at least for a year.” (Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2009- kilpailu, 2008.)

The skills of entrepreneurship and innovative being together in a day and night power camp

YE 24h- camp is a day and night project, planned for the vocational level and during it the youngsters set up their own imaginary business on the base of their own idea. The practical teaching of YE 24h- camp is done by the principal of “Learning by doing”. The structured schedule of the camp is made of lectures for everyone, and information / bulletins and so called small and large cross assignments of which the whole core of the camp is consisted. (NY 24h- leiri, 2008.)

“Learning by doing fun!” in other words the content of the camp is among other things

- searching the idea and developing it to a business concept
- the swot- analysis of the group – different strengths and skills on sight
- creating a business plan
- using 4P- model as a tool for marketing
- interaction, performance and co-operation
- team spirit and good humor
- achieving objectives
- presentation of the business

- writing a business plan according to the idea (after the camp)

(NY 24h- leiri, 2008).

Spontaneous and innovative activity for a school year

In the program YE- Year as an entrepreneur, the students from 14 to 20 set up rehearsal businesses that offer services or products with the real money for a school year. The youngsters plan the business idea themselves and run the mini business according to the plan for a school year. The practice enterprise works as a learning path, while the students learn by doing entrepreneurship, spontaneous, skills of interaction, taking the responsibility, skills of solving problems, team work and the other skills needed in the working life. (NY Vuosi Yrittäjänä, 2008.)

Each of the rehearsal enterprise has a counsellor in business life, whose job is to support the youngsters when they have questions according to the business. The counsellor works on the basis of her/his experience and view and gives feedback of the ideas of the students. This is a convenient way for students to get to know the business life and their own entrepreneurship. Learning by practical action, offers the students a realistic view of things and furthers to identify their own strengths. Testing their own skills and innovative approaches are a gate to their decisions in their own life in the future challenges. (NY Vuosi Yrittäjänä, 2008.)

4.1.2 The model used in Sodankylä-Institute

The other model that I want to take a deeper look in this thesis is the method the Sodankylä-Institute uses in entrepreneurship education. They do not use any ready made patterns, like the training centre of Länsi-Uusimaa does.

Entrepreneurship is included in the periods of studies in Sodankylä-Institute. Entrepreneurship is emphasised for example in such subjects as accountancy, marketing, product development in tourism and food production. Entrepreneurship is included among others in teaching mathematics, languages (trading correspondence), gymnastics and national economy. Teaching is favourable towards entrepreneurial thinking because a

part of the teachers in the Institute are part-time entrepreneurs. (Lapin ammattiopisto - Sodankylä-Instituutti, Sodankylä, 2009.)

Entrepreneurship appears also in different projects, fairs and campaigns in the cafeteria and discos ran and arranged by the students' association. Besides the visits to enterprises, the practical training periods are tried to arrange to the firms. Connections to the enterprises of the local environment are good and the teachers have attended to the practical training periods. In the middle of this model are the teachers, who has background of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship is inside several subjects. (Lapin ammattiopisto - Sodankylä-Instituutti, Sodankylä, 2009.)

4.2 Supporting creativity in entrepreneurship education

Finland needs more new innovative enterprises. Finland is coping pretty well on the activity on entrepreneurship globally, because the amount of entrepreneurs is quite big among adult population, and the new enterprises are surviving well. Instead of that there, are fewer enterprises that are innovative, searching growth and heading off to the international markets than in other Nordic countries, tells the Global Monitor survey of entrepreneurship activity. So the experts recommend Finnish to pay attention to developing the content of entrepreneurship instead of raising the amount of enterprises. (Hallikainen, 2008.)

That has noticed not only in Finland but also in Europe as a whole. The European Commission has proposed that 2009 is the 'European Year of Creativity and Innovation'. "Both are essential elements for the future success of Europe and its long-term economic competitiveness. The European Year aims to raise public awareness, spread information and promote public debate on creativity and the capacity for innovation. It should also stimulate research into how to develop creativity and innovative attitudes." (The European Year of Creativity and Innovation, 2009.)

Europe needs to boost its capacity for creativity and innovation for both social and economic reasons. The European Council has repeatedly recognised innovation as crucial to Europe's ability to respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities of globalisation. In December 2006, for example, it noted that "Europe needs a strategic approach aimed at creating an innovation-friendly environment where knowledge is converted

into innovative products and services". Innovative capacity is closely linked with creativity as a personal attribute based on cultural and interpersonal skills and values. To be harnessed to full advantage, it needs to be widely disseminated throughout the population. The role of education and training as a determining factor in enhancing creativity, innovation performance and competitiveness was again emphasised by the European Council in March 2007. (Decision of the European parliament and of the council concerning the European Year of Creativity and Innovation (2009) 2008, 2).

A fundamental quality underpinning creative and innovative capacity is motivation and a sense of initiative. The foundations of such qualities are laid in the early phases of personal development. Creativity occupies a significant share of the curriculum in early school years, but its share diminishes drastically in the course of pupils' education. One major challenge facing education systems is, therefore, how to keep the spark of creativity alive in children and young people. The responses have included, for instance, putting greater emphasis on creative subjects, developing new approaches to learning and fostering various extra-curricular activities. (Decision of the European parliament and of the council concerning the European Year of Creativity and Innovation (2009) 2008, 4.)

The mounting pressure to develop creative, innovative and critical skills implies that traditional teaching approaches based on direct instruction or lecturing are no longer adequate. They are being replaced by more learner-focused models that are based on the learner's active involvement in the process of reflection and interpretation. Learning is achieved together with others, creatively changing social practices and habits. An organisational culture supporting openness and creativity is a vital precondition for successful learning and innovation. (Decision of the European parliament and of the council concerning the European Year of Creativity and Innovation (2009) 2008, 4.)

After all it was encouraging to read the results of the barometer of youth 2008, where the students that studied in vocational schools estimated the ability of their school to teach target-oriented working, creativity and economical skills higher than the students that studied in upper secondary school. The differences were extremely big. 13 % of the students of vocational schools but only 3 % of the students of upper secondary schools said they learn very much creativity at school. (Myllyniemi 2008, 19.)

4.3 The practices used in entrepreneurship education in Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre

In the common section of curriculum in Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre, entrepreneurship education is one of the educational objectives of education that are integrated in all education. Furthering entrepreneurship is a central area of development in the institution. The objective is to support the students' growth to self-guided and responsible professionals that develop themselves and their work. The curriculums of each degree include more precise plans of the rehearsal companies and projects for each area. All the students that study the vocational basic examination, study 1 – 2 study weeks of entrepreneurship that is placed in the common studies. (Opetussuunnitelman yhteinen osa MSKK, 35 – 36.)

The compulsory part of the examinations includes the subject of 1 study week that is called society-, entrepreneurship and working life science. The central content of this subject of entrepreneurship is to bring forth the significance of entrepreneurship in the society. Besides that there is a course of two study weeks of entrepreneurship which is an optional subject. (Opetussuunnitelman yhteinen osa MSKK, 35 – 36.) In practice almost all the students have studied that optional course so far.

Vocational basic examinations are updated during 2007 – 2010.

Entrepreneurship in vocational basic examinations is included in the components of vocational examination. The components are

- entrepreneurship 5 study weeks, inside or separately in the components of vocational examinations
- entrepreneurship 10 study weeks, optional part of the examination
- entrepreneurship 10 study weeks, part of the examination that deepens vocational expertise individually. That part of the studies is optional and can not be counted in the compulsory 120 study weeks, which means that it raises the amount of them to 130. (Kinnunen 2008, 5 – 12.)

Besides the five study weeks, entrepreneurship is included in the subject of 1 study week that is called society-, entrepreneurship and working life science. These 6 study weeks are compulsory for every student and they emphasize the internal entrepreneurship in the basis of examinations. The rest 20 study weeks emphasize the external entrepreneurship and one of the teaching methods in these studies can be a rehearsal company. (Kinnunen 2008, 8 - 11.)

Part of the curriculums of the different departments in Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre is recently renewed and the rest of them are in the middle of that process. In addition to the compulsory study weeks of entrepreneurship, the different departments have included the optional study weeks of entrepreneurship in their curriculums.

The department of hairdressing and beauty care has taken the new curriculum that includes 10 study weeks of entrepreneurship, in use in the beginning of this school year. Those weeks include internal entrepreneurship, sales of services and products and marketing of an enterprise (Hius- ja kauneudenhoitoalan opetussuunnitelma MSKK, 2009).

The department of business economics has also taken in use the new curriculum that includes 12 optional study weeks of entrepreneurship (Liiketalouden perustutkinnon opetussuunnitelma MSKK, 2009). The contents of the entrepreneurship studies are still under more precise consideration. Knowhow of the four study weeks of entrepreneurship education that is included in the old curriculum is estimated through a business plan (Liiketalouden perustutkinnon opetussuunnitelma MSKK, 2006).

The curriculum used in the department of data processing, as well as in the department of engineering and transportation, includes 2 study weeks of entrepreneurship at the moment, but the amount of the study weeks will be increased in the new curriculum. The current studies concentrate on productization, the financial issues, business idea, business plan and

foundation of an enterprise. (Tekniikan alan opetussuunnitelma and tietojenkäsittelyn perustutkinnon opetussuunnitelma MSKK, 2006.)

In the department of restaurant and catering, the curriculum includes 2 study weeks of entrepreneurship but will be increased in the new curriculum. At the moment the central content of the two study weeks is personnel management and monitoring profitability and finances (Hotelli- ja ravintola-alan opetussuunnitelma MSKK 2006.)

The part of the examination of 10 study weeks that deepens vocational expertise individually is under development. All the departments offer also an opportunity and encourage the students to set up a YE- enterprise through the program Year as an entrepreneur.

Through Kasvu Yrittäjyyteen- project in January 2009, there was arranged a training day of entrepreneurship for the teachers of Manttä Regional Vocational Education Centre. According to the memo that was written during that day, the teachers have many ideas and plans for developing entrepreneurship education.

Examples of the ideas and plans for developing:

- visiting companies
- supporting YE- entrepreneurship
- more attitude education
- entrepreneurship as a part of daily vocational subjects
- more cooperation and partnering with enterprises and corporate chains (“godfather companies”)
- developing problem solving
- developing cooperation between teachers

(The memo of Veso- training 5.1.2009)

Part of the plans and ideas are under execution already, like cooperation and partnering with a corporate chain in the department of hairdressing and beauty care. The students get to realize a campaign in a big hairdresser

chain, which includes different tasks and responsibilities. The department of business economics is developing its´ learning environment of entrepreneurship by expanding the product range of the school café that is ran by the students. The department of data processing is planning to build an online store for the purpose of trading for students´ use, and the development work of learning environment in a restaurant, is under its´ way in the restaurant and catering department.

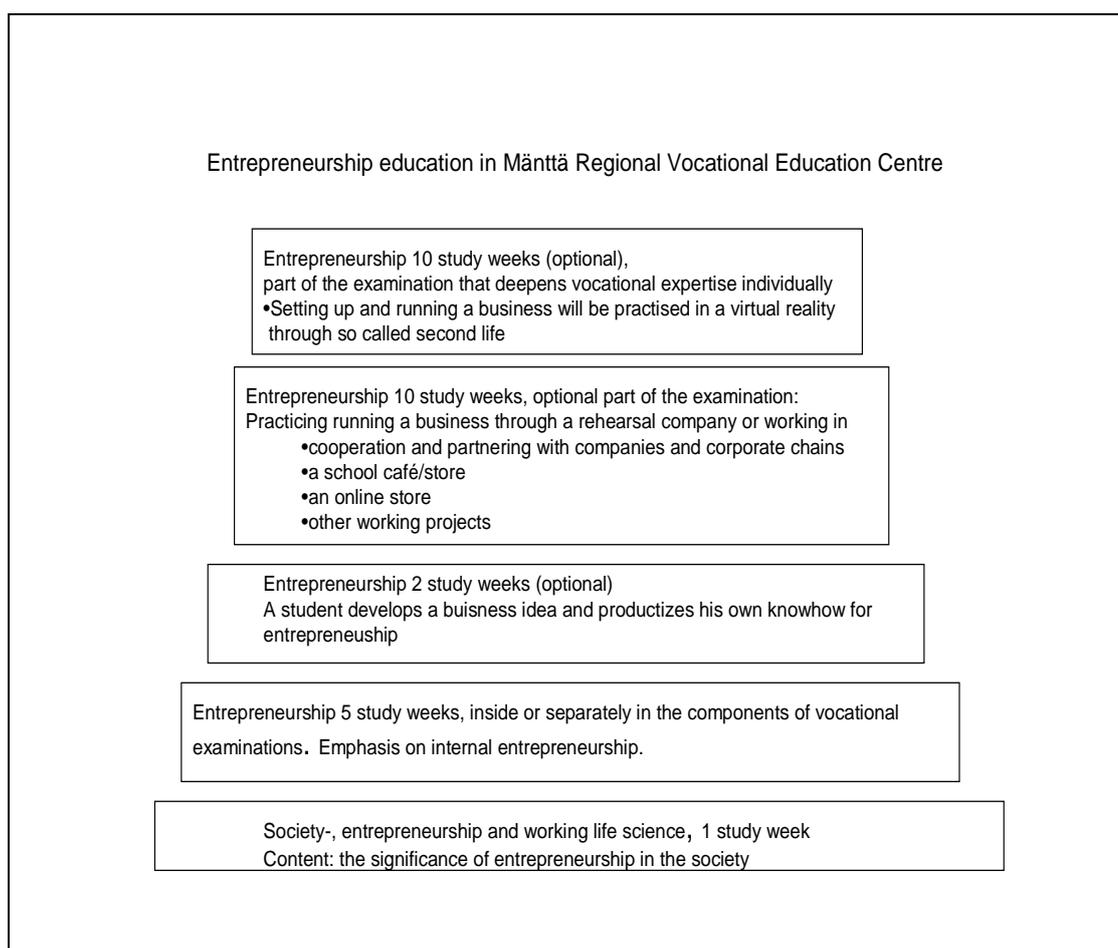


Figure 3. Entrepreneurship education in Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre

5 THE EMPIRIC PART OF THE THESIS

5.1 The basis and objectives of the research

The primary objective of the research was to find out how entrepreneurship education realizes in vocational education compared to the goals that are aligned in the official documents in Europe and Finland. I decided to

implement the empiric part by an enquiry in Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre where I work.

At Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre education is arranged in the fields of metalwork and machinery, vehicle mechanics, electrical engineering, wood processing, construction, hairdressing, customer services and marketing, information technology services and marketing and beauty care (MSKK International, Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre). There are about 600 students studying daily and 800 students in adult education (Mäntän seudun koulutuskeskus).

Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre participates the Kasvu Yrittäjyyteen (Growth to Entrepreneurship) - project in which the teachers develop rousing methods of teaching entrepreneurship (Vaske, Kasvu Yrittäjyyteen.) In general level and during the meetings of the teachers who are responsible of entrepreneurship education in my school, I got the feeling that entrepreneurship education is considered very important but implementing it includes many problems.

Through the inquiry (appendix, 38) I wanted to survey the main problems that complicate entrepreneurship education, but also the main practices that should be developed and the most crucial resources of which availability should be ensured, that entrepreneurship education could be realized as well as possible according the official policies.

5.2 The research method and collecting the research material

The research method I use is based on the observations of entrepreneurship education I began to make when I started my job as a teacher.

Hanna Vilka has divided observing into three levels that are observing by watching, committed observing and activate observing. Observing by watching as a term means that the researcher is not taking a part of the activities, he is some kind of outsider. Committed observing means that the researcher is taking part of the activities and he is trying to understand them. In activate observing the researcher is trying to change the object of the

research besides understanding it. According to Vilkkä activate observing is in other words action research. (Vilkkä 2006, 43 – 46.)

I have gone through all those steps before I started the actual action research. First I was observing by only watching how entrepreneurship education was realized in my working place. I did not have the position to get involved, but I had a strong interest towards it because of my background. When I started teaching entrepreneurship my role changed and I started observing by taking part. Right after that I was chosen one of the teachers' responsible developing entrepreneurship education and I started observing actively.

Action research has to reach ordinary people and their every-day activities. Research offers new kind of understanding and at the same time it strives to develop the policies of the working life. To action research is strongly attached the demand of integration in to working and activity situations, practicality, systematic problem solving that combines theory and practice and increasing theoretical understanding associated to the problem. (Toimintatutkimus).

According to Vilkkä, activity researcher realizes committed observation during in his active actions and interviews the members of the object of the research. Besides that the researcher collects other material of the object of the research that helps him to understand it. Vilkkä emphasizes the responsible role of the activity researcher who always participates the public discussion of the object of the research, society and the direction of its' development with his research report. The objective of activity research is change, both in the object of the research and in the social discussion. (Vilkkä 2006, 70, 123).

That is exactly what I have done in my thesis.

I decided to direct the enquiry to that group of teachers' that are responsible entrepreneurship education, because they really have passion to further entrepreneurship education and they also seemed to have experience and

vision how it is realized at the moment and how it should be developed. The teachers represent all the departments of the school and they participate the regular meetings, where the methods of teaching entrepreneurship are developed.

The enquiry was made short purposely, but at the same time the questions were clear but wide enough that they would not restrict too much of the opinions and thoughts of the respondents. The questions were approved by my foreman and they were sent to the six teachers by e-mail on 29th of October 2009. The teachers represent the following departments: hairdressing and beauty care, business economics, data processing, engineering and transportation and restaurant and catering. I gave them response time till 10th of October which I had to continue with a week to get enough answers. Three of the six teachers answered the enquiry, so the response rate was 50.

6 THE RESULTS OF THE EMPIRIC PART

6.1 Realization of entrepreneurship education

The first part of the enquiry dealt the realization of entrepreneurship education, through the questions how well the objective of entrepreneurship education is realized according to each one of the teachers' opinions, and how well they can aim that objective in their own work at the moment. The questions were really close to each other, but I wanted them to consider the possibilities both in general level in their school but also in their own work. As a preface, I included in the enquiry the following two phrases from the Policy for Entrepreneurship Education of the Ministry of Education in Finland.

In the law of vocational education there is defined as the objective of vocational education to give the students the essential knowledge, skills and readiness for achieving the expertise for independent entrepreneurship. In the basics of curriculum of vocational education entrepreneurship stands for

both internal and external entrepreneurship. (Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen linjaukset ja toimenpideohjelma 2004, 20.)

In general level the opinion was, that the objectives of internal entrepreneurship are realized more easily than external entrepreneurship. One of the respondents seemed it this way: "I think internal entrepreneurship is emphasized more, although that term is not necessarily pointed out for the student very often, but rather the qualities the internal entrepreneur has". She continues by referring to the opinion of other teachers of the issue "I use that term to some extent, but I have got the feeling that many teachers think it is related only to the lessons of entrepreneurship." But one of the respondents thinks that "in some departments entrepreneurship education does not work neither appears".

Other respondent raises the importance of the attitude, which was also touched in the previous quotation, but he widens it from the sender to the receiver. "Realization of the objective is primarily dependent on the teacher's attitude towards entrepreneurship and secondarily on the student's background related to entrepreneurship."

The background of the teacher is seen very important. In one department almost all the teachers have acted as entrepreneurs, and one of the respondents even states that the teachers that teach entrepreneurship, have to have personal experience of entrepreneurship. One of the teacher states that part of the students has been involved in the YE- activity, but sees that the method does not give the readiness to act as independent entrepreneur directly, although it gives "good provisions" for that and might act as an inspirer for acting as entrepreneur.

The possibilities to realize entrepreneurship education is seen tightly related to the amount of lessons that are reserved for entrepreneurship education. In the department where 10 study weeks were reserved for entrepreneurship education, the respondent was really satisfied on realization because of enough time recourse. In other department the time resource was only 2 study weeks. The teacher of that department really thinks that the students

can not get that kind of readiness during that time to be able to act as independent entrepreneurs. She notes “This really is not enough for realizing the big objective”.

She hopes that this grievance will be withdrawn when the new curriculums are exercised next spring. In the new curriculum the amount of entrepreneurship education is increased significantly, and at least all the willing students have the opportunity for very board entrepreneurship education.

Besides the time resource, the room or freedom to develop is seen very important, as well as the support of the group that is furthering entrepreneurship education. “Very innovative group developing things and a foreman that lets bustle are making it possible to realize the objective” states one of the respondents.

6.2 Developing entrepreneurship education

The other part of the enquiry concentrated on the issues that are needed to develop, that the goals of entrepreneurship education would be reached better. First of all the respondents were asked how the teaching should be developed and what concrete actions would support that development work best.

Developing the cooperation between the teachers of different areas, associations and entrepreneurs is seen very important. The respondents ask more practical teaching with more examples and experiences of entrepreneurship. Some concrete actions suggested to develop teaching more practical was arranging more visits to enterprises and sharing experiences of entrepreneurship, also failed cases.

One of the respondents thinks that along the new curriculums teaching moves towards managing larger cases instead of executing single tasks. That will tighten the bond between enterprises and schools because she thinks “the learning tasks will be linked as often as possible to the real

situations, that can be either in our school attached to the practical working days or during the practical training in enterprises”.

Developing the practical part and the cooperation between different parties are seen very important but the respondents all agree that the participants of this development work should be willing to do that. This part brings up the attitude issue, as the first part of the enquiry did. But it is very clear, that no one can develop these things alone and the development work requires time. The following quotation of the respondent tells a lot about that.

The commitment of the entire staff (at least own department) to entrepreneurship education is crucial. It is at least in our department such “some thing” that I alone dabble. Now we should get more time as a group (all the teachers of different departments) to think over these things, neither the way that I try to bring out these things in some meeting and all forget them as soon as they step out from the door.

The last thing the respondents considered was the resources they need for the development work. In general they were quite satisfied on the resources they have at the moment. One problem is the lack of money which they noted to be a continuous state and pretty hard to influence on. The other need was the lack of time, and especially the problem to fit meetings the way they would match on everyone’s schedule. Cooperation seems to suffer from the lack of time. The possibilities to educate oneself are seen very good, which means developing entrepreneurship knowledge is up to every teacher’s own will.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The development work of entrepreneurship education is paid attention very strongly regarding the official programmes and the numerous models that are developed for the purpose. The resources targeted in entrepreneurship education and its development work are not small, but are those spent

resources gaining the desirable outputs and are those resources targeted right?

The programmes emphasize among other things the right mindset, entrepreneurship skills, the real needs of enterprises and the co-operation of the network of developing entrepreneurship education. That network consists of different levels of education, working and economic life, trusts, administrative and political decision makers and also homes. The respondents of the enquiry still ask after more cooperation with enterprises and associations, and bring up the importance of the attitude towards entrepreneurship.

The models used in entrepreneurship education offer different kinds of ways to realize it, and the amount of those models as well as their contents indicates the rate of resources that are spent in that work. Stairs of entrepreneurship seems to include many fancy parts that inevitably interests and tempts the students to attend it. The part of it, year as an entrepreneurship, has got a good foothold in many education organizations, as well in Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre.

The danger of copying the models that are developed in other organizations and executed in different environments is that they are not necessarily suitable in a different organization and its' environment. The other issue that stands out here is that are those ready made models really supporting initiative, conscientiousness, courage, ingenuity and creativity that Marjo Hollo calls the central characteristics of voluntary entrepreneurship.

Most of the models concentrate very strongly on creating a business plan, which I understand as a former advisory officer of entrepreneurship. Business plan offers a tool for going through the central issues entrepreneur needs to consider when planning a business. Business plan is also usually required if there is a need for external financing. The ready made models and business plan forms do not require much preparations and that is the

reason they can tempt teachers to use them, even if they would not be the most suitable ones for the purpose.

The amount of entrepreneurship education is increasing in vocational education when counting the amount of the study weeks in the new curriculums. The compulsory five study weeks that emphasize internal entrepreneurship are integrated in vocational subjects. The implementation of this model requires careful planning and committed teachers that the goals of entrepreneurship education can be reached. Entrepreneurship studies that are optional offer knowledge of external entrepreneurship, but the impressiveness of them is dependent on the interest of the students' to choose those subjects.

In Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre the teachers developing entrepreneurship education have taken the right steps, by creating their own models for the purpose. Especially the work done in developing the learning environments with companies, is offering the students great possibilities to get in real touch with the business world. That also serves the businesses and brings forth their real needs, concerning the needed qualities of employees. Internal entrepreneurship is definitely among the desired qualities. These actions take entrepreneurship education towards more practical, as it was needed to be according to the results of the enquiry.

But it seems that the responsibility of the development work and realization of the actions rest on the shoulders of only few teachers. The commitment level seems to be quite mild in general and only few of the teachers are really committed to it.

The lack of willingness of participating in this research made me really think the commitment issue. The enquiry was short on purpose but half of the target group did not participate in it. That tells undoubtedly about the lack of time but it can also reflect the lack of deeper interest or belief towards the development work.

There are departments, like hairdressing and beauty care that train students to work in the service sector, where entrepreneurship is likely the most natural way of employing themselves. Both the teachers and the students are aware of that fact and it certainly motivates them to improve entrepreneurship studies and skills.

But there is a great need for entrepreneurs in different fields in Finland and that need is increasing in the near future. The large enterprises do not offer working places like they used to do and the Finnish entrepreneurs are aging. That is why entrepreneurship as a real possibility should be emphasized more in education in general.

The practices that will further entrepreneurship in education in Mänttä Regional Vocational Education Centre are

- Creating the own models of entrepreneurship education that support the need of the local business world and creativity of the students.
- Including entrepreneurial way of thinking throughout the whole education in every subject, which requires commitment on the issue of the whole personnel.
- Assuring the students really understand entrepreneurship is a real option and nothing overwhelming; hundreds of thousands Finnish ordinary people are entrepreneurs.
- Developing genuine cooperation with the network that is responsible of entrepreneurship education.
- Taking into account the entrepreneurship background of the applicants when recruiting new teachers.
- And finally: taking care of the needed resources and supporting teachers to use their own creativity in teaching.

Entrepreneurship education is developed with the consideration of the goals of the official programmes by the teachers that are doing that development work. But realization of entrepreneurship education is not on the desired level according to the results of the empiric part of this thesis. That is why

entrepreneurship education needs to be developed and taken into account and even emphasized in education.

The official programmes of entrepreneurship education are fairly new and the results of development work of entrepreneurship education can be seen not until in the near future. The most important thing is that all the parties of the network of developing entrepreneurship education are genuinely dedicated to furthering entrepreneurship. Dedication requires understanding the importance of entrepreneurship in the society but also real knowledge of entrepreneurship. That is the real challenge for the parties of the network and especially for the teachers.

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APPENDIX

COVERING NOTE

Hello,

I am making a master's thesis related to my MBA high tech entrepreneurship studies in JAMK University of applied sciences. The subject of the thesis is entrepreneurship education in vocational education in Finland. My research problem is how entrepreneurship education realizes in vocational education at the moment and how it should be realized. The objectives of the education are defined in definition of policy and guidelines of entrepreneurship education written by the ministry of education.

I hope you participate in my research by answering the few questions of entrepreneurship education attached to this message. Your answers hopefully will illuminate the reality of entrepreneurship education in vocational education. The questions are purposely quite open and I hope you will tell about the subject as honestly and widely as possible based on your own experience of teaching.

I hope you are able to answer the questions by 10.11.2009.

Yours sincerely, and thanking of your answers already in advance.

Sinikka Jokela

QUESTIONNAIRE

"In the law of vocational education there is defined as the objective of vocational education to give the students the essential knowledge, skills and readiness for achieving the expertise for independent entrepreneurship. In the basics of curriculum of vocational education entrepreneurship stands for both internal and external entrepreneurship." (Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen linjaukset ja toimenpideohjelma, OM 2004, p.20)

1. How well the objective of entrepreneurship education is realized according to your opinion?
2. How well can you aim that objective in your own work at the moment?
3. How should teaching be developed that the objective would be realized better?
4. What are the concrete actions that would support the development of entrepreneurship education the most effectively from your point of view?
5. What resources you wish the most for developing entrepreneurship education (money, knowhow...)?
6. Your own thoughts of entrepreneurship education: