A-14. INNOVATIVE LEARNING, PEER TO PEER (P2P)

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This paper seeks to examine a specific Peer to Peer (P2P) degree programme of business management within a new learning by development initiative (LbD) in a university setting. Laurea University of Applied Sciences Finland introduced LbD in 2006 as a pedagogical framework for learning in all its degree programmes based on authenticity, partnership, experimentation, research orientation and creativity. There are 5 competences within this pedagogical framework to be acquired by the learner. They are: ethical, global, networking, innovative and reflecting. Within this framework Laurea Hyvinkaa campus has developed a P2P learning model since 2008.

This degree programme of business management model has been based on business projects which are rooted in the reality of working life. The students learning is directly linked to these development projects from the very beginning of their studies. In this unique programme there are no lectures or exams, the students work in teams to solve business problems. Teachers are regarded as "elder colleagues" whose role is to supervise the "younger colleagues" in their development projects. The goal is, however, let students become more independent during their studies and to raise future professionals that will not hesitate to start identifying and solving a problem they are faced with. The themes and contents of the projects vary, but they are all related to business operations, marketing, management, communications or finance. All students participate in international projects as well, and these projects are related to Russia or in some cases to the Baltic or European countries. The main emphasis lies, however, in Russia and very common themes are those of export/import, creating marketing plans to a new market, finding new target groups or possibilities to use social media in business operations.

Projects are implemented in very different organizations: small and large enterprises, associations or even governmental bodies, but they share one similar characteristics, they are all development projects aimed at solving a problem that is important for the organization, which the organization itself has neither time nor knowledge to solve. The goal of the P2P model is to fill the gap between traditional education and companies' expectations. Companies are encouraged to participate actively in the process and their feedback is valued through the whole process. A P2P project starts with negotiations with a possible partner company or organization. The projects are usually planned by the teachers and company representatives together, but when possible, the students are encouraged to participate in these meetings. A clear motivational factor for the students in the projects is the project briefing at the beginning of the project and the assignment is given to them by the company representative, not by the teacher. The projects are free of charge to the companies, but quite many company representatives participate actively in the process, and thus give their time and expertise. This participation increases both: motivation of the students, as they see that the project and its success is important to the company and helps the students to create networks and relationships to promote their future careers. Usually the assignment, given by the company at the beginning of the project is quite vague and in some cases the companies do not even know, what they want. A typical case is a very abstract problem like, for instance, "we need a PR plan". In these cases when students (and teachers) start asking questions, it becomes clear quite soon, that the company itself does not have a clear or defined idea, what should be included?

Thus, the very first step for the students is to draw a mind map that clearly presents the theoretical parts included in the project. In order to do this, they have to familiarize themselves with the theme in question and read books, academic articles and other research materials. A well-built mind map that is approved by the supervising teachers forms a basis at least for the theoretical part of the project, but quite often it helps to define the table of contents for the final project report. The main challenge for the students lies in combining wit the theoretical and practical parts of the project. The students not only search for relevant materials mainly in books and academic journals, but they also do research on the Internet. All the theory has to be clearly linked to the project and all the sources need to be clearly marked. The final result of a project is a large report consisting of theoretical and practical parts of the project, as well as conclusions and further recommendations.

The project results will be presented to the company representative at the end of the project either at P2P office, in the company or by using a negotiation programme on the Internet. Thus, the nature of some projects are more practice oriented, for example, developing business processes by looking for practical solutions, building Internet-sites. Some other projects are based more on finding information about target groups, new markets, marketing channels or creating handbooks for a company's use.

At the end of each project a discussion is held during which the process and results are evaluated. Special attention is to be paid on co-operation with team and also with company representatives and teachers during the project as well as the quality of the sources used. Evaluation is based on students' self-evaluation, evaluation and teachers' evaluations.

The core objective of this paper is to assess some quantitative empirical findings from the P2P model and to evaluate the reality of the presence of the LbD competences. Four specific projects involving real businesses by using this unique P2P programme are described and assessed applying evaluation criteria. An anonymous questionnaire was given to participants within the P2P model. The investigation shows that this particular P2P

educational model is a good example of the LbD initiative, and that the LbD's 5 competences are present in reality based on empirical evidence. Competences of the P2P model are innovative, reflective and networking effective and these are strongly incorporated. The global and ethical competences are present in reality to a far lesser extent. This paper demonstrates addi-tionally that this P2P educational model fills the gap between traditional teaching methods and pure research based learning. It highlights the successful reality of collaborative learning and the development of knowledge for those involved in the process (mentors, students and businesses).