

Promoting Entrepreneurship in Social and Health Care Sector - International Joint Development

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to describe joint development with some examples of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial way of learning among studies in social and health care in higher education.

The structures of social and health care are changing, there are more possibilities for services produced by private sector along public sector services. National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and European Qualifications Framework (EQF) define learning outcomes of bachelor level (knowledge, skills and competence). Learning in entrepreneurial way and working for positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship can support to reach those learning outcomes.

Entrepreneurs in social and health care highlight their professional identity more than entrepreneurial identity, they also are mostly women. Unlike male students, female students in higher education do not regard entrepreneurship as an attractive opinion. During social and health care studies the learning of entrepreneurship differs from other professions because of the functional environment and regulation. Special solutions for developing more positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship, for learning entrepreneurship and for working in an entrepreneurial way are needed. Forte project offers possibility to joint development of learning environments of entrepreneurship between Finnish and Swedish higher education teachers. Project is in it's half way, results are expected 2013.

Keywords: social and health care, entrepreneurship, learning

Tiivistelmä

Tämän artikkelin tarkoitus on esimerkkien avulla kuvata yrittäjyyttä ja yrittäjämäistä oppimista sosiaali- ja terveysalan opinnoissa korkeakouluopintojen aikana. Sosiaali- ja terveysalan rakenteet ovat muuttumassa, yksityisen sektorin palveluille on enemmän mahdollisuuksia julkisen sektorin rinnalla. Kansalliset ja eurooppalaiset korkeakoulututkintojen osaamisen kuvaukset NQF ja EQF määrittelevät ammattikorkeakoulusta valmistuneen osaamista tietojen, taitojen ja kompetenssin

osalta. Yritteliäs ja yrittäjämäinen oppiminen korkeakouluopintojen aikana voi saada aikaan positiivista suhtautumista yrittäjyyttä kohtaan ja auttaa osaamisen tavoitteisiin pääsemistä. Sosiaali- ja terveysalan yrittäjät identifioituvat ennemminkin omaan ammatilliseen osaamisalueeseensa kuin yrittäjyyteen. He ovat enimmäkseen naisia ja korkeakouluopintojen aikana naiset eivät näe yrittäjyyttä yhtä houkuttelevana uravaihtoehtona kuin miehet. Sosiaali- ja terveysalan opintojen aikana yrittäjyyden oppiminen eroaa muista aloista toimintaympäristön ja säätelyn osalta. Tämän vuoksi sosiaali- ja terveysalalla tarvitaan omia sovelluksia yrittäjyyden ja yritteliään toiminnan oppimiseen sekä asenteiden muokkaamiseen myönteisemmiksi yrittäjyyttä kohtaan. Forte-projekti tarjoaa mahdollisuuden kansainväliseen yhteistyöhön yrittäjyyden oppimisympäristöjen kehittämisessä. Projekti on puolessa välissä ja tuloksia saadaan 2013.

Asiasanat: sosiaali- ja terveysala, yrittäjyys, oppiminen

Introduction

Working life is changing, also in the social and health care sector. In the future, experts in working life need skills to learn quickly new things as well as the ability to adapt to different working environments. Core competences in special fields of social and health care are needed, but also extensive competencies. (Suomen Fysioterapeutit 2011.) There are differences between the enterprise habits of men and women, fewer women than men run businesses in Sweden. Women have a great potential for running businesses. Sweden needs more entrepreneurs. Innovation and creativity are needed within all sections of society, including within the public sector, associations and education. The entrepreneurial perspective should be given to areas such as the education sector, research and the public sector. The education sector plays an important role in promoting entrepreneurship and improving knowledge of enterprise. (The Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and communications 2007-2013, 2011.)

Finnish Ministry of Education (2007) supports entrepreneurial way of working and entrepreneurship during studies in higher education. Positive attitudes, will and a desire to act are connected to a high level of professional competencies while supporting the entrepreneurial way of working. (The Ministry of Education 2009.

<http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2009/liitteet/opm09.pdf?lang=fi>.)

European Qualifications Framework defines the requirements for competences in the end of studies at higher education. For example it is defined that students must be able to solve complex problems, lead complex professional tasks and work independently in expert tasks

(http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/general/eqf/leaflet_en.pdf). Finnish National Quality

Frameworks defines also basic prerequisite of entrepreneurship to be part of competencies (Arene 2010. http://www.haaga-helia.fi/fi/aokk/taeydennyskoulutus/index_html/ARENE_n_suositus.pdf).

In Forte project two entrepreneurs, who are running their own companies, in social and health care were interviewed about the recommendations of contents and implementation of entrepreneurship studies during higher education April and May 2011. Learning by doing was experienced to be a suitable way of learning entrepreneurial skills. Learning basic skills to do a business plan and learning about licensing practices were experienced as being an important part of studies. Different company forms and basic skills in business calculations were thought of as being important. Discussions about business plans were experienced as being important to widen students' own way of thinking. Tendering in social and health care sector should have an important role during studies in higher education from the point of view of entrepreneurs.

Learning entrepreneurship during studies of social and health care sector in higher education

Higher education can offer students a learning environment where they can feel a desire to learn in close connection with working life. Teachers become coaches of learning and the process of learning is owned by the students themselves. Entrepreneurial way of working in student enterprise and in development projects of working life can offer possibilities for this kind of learning. The learner is an active owner of her learning process, and the method of learning in student groups and teams, customer projects, networks and in an entrepreneurial way seems to be an effective model to learn entrepreneurship. (Taatala 2010, Leinonen, Partanen and Palviainen 2004.) The entrepreneurial way of learning requires a change in the traditional teacher centered way of working. Peltonen (2008) did found a positive relationship between the support of team and team members' efficacy beliefs, during the way to become an entrepreneurial teacher. Luukkainen (2004) presents a conception of future teacher: the teacher has ethical opinions and plays an active role in developing society. Content management, promotion of learning, future orientations, societal orientations, co-operation and continuous self and work development which means continuous learning are the constituents of teachership.

The aims of free and responsibly working students are a starting point. For teacher, the model requires an ability to take risks and indulge in the learning process together with students. (Peltonen 2008.) Dialogue is the process of thinking together. The possibilities of dialogue should be used in learning process. (Isaacs 2001.) Anttila (2003) says that dialogue is the way, maybe the only one, to educate so that the good of the learner can purely be promoted. Without dialogue it is

impossible to know what is good for the learner, so the direction of education and teaching must be solved through dialogue.

Among women who are studying in higher education, entrepreneurship is not believed to be as attractive an option as to men. Two out of three men think that they can manage as an entrepreneur, compared to one third of women. (OPM 2009.

<http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2009/liitteet/tr10.pdf?lang=fi.>)

In social and health care sector, entrepreneurs highlight more of their professional identity than their entrepreneurial identity (Österberg-Högstedt 2009, 24).

Faculty of Social and Health Care is participating 4-year long research project that measures the dynamics of entrepreneurial orientation within student population in several universities. Laurea University of Applied Sciences will do the research, but we have opportunity to explore our students' answers. The questionnaire studies both direct entrepreneurial orientation and general ethical competence of the students and students who started this autumn answered the questionnaire. Lahti joined the project this autumn 2011 and here we will present some early observations from answers. In the end of Year 2014 we will find out has there been any changes in students' entrepreneurial orientation during professional education. (Figure 1.)

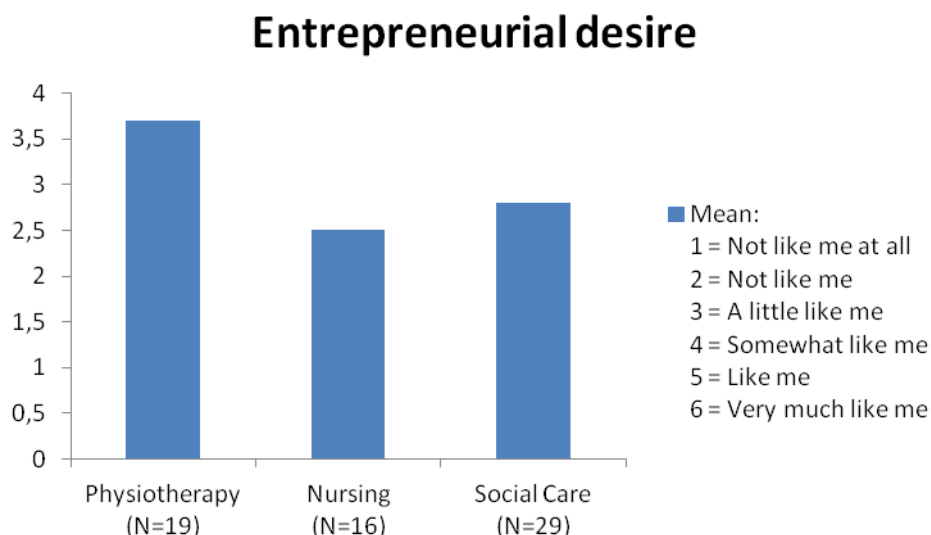


Figure 1. Students' entrepreneurial desire in the beginning of their studies.

Promoting entrepreneurship in the social and health care sector

The structures of social and health care are changing. Clients want to have services suited for their individual and special needs. There is more supply of private sector and clients can choose what services to use. The transmission from a public health care to a mix of public and private provides a wide range of new business opportunities, especially for women's entrepreneurship. It is also important to promote entrepreneurial skills in working life.

International co-operation in Forte- Promoting women's entrepreneurship in social and health care sector- project seeks to promote positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship and develop new models for entrepreneurial teaching in social and health care sector. Joint development offers possibilities to share good practices internationally. The partners in project are the County Administrative board of Östgötaland, Lahti University of Applied Sciences, Linköping University, Innovation office of Linköping University and Vårdförbundet.

Studies of entrepreneurship have been developed since 2004 in social and health of Lahti University of Applied Sciences. Teachers created the path for students to learn about entrepreneurship, during their studies of social and health care. All of the teachers in social and health care took part in education days about entrepreneurship, eight teachers in larger 8 ECTS education. The group of teachers have later been educated more about entrepreneurship training. The results of the teacher questionnaire made in Forte- project described that the experiences of teachers who had been coaching students learning entrepreneurship were positive. This way, they had more time to meet individual students and their needs. The teachers described enthusiastic feelings while training their own student group. They also noticed that students must have a concrete platform and knowledge of how entrepreneurship studies are part of professional studies and how they build knowledge and competencies of the student. The faculty of social and health care in Lahti University of Applied Sciences has arranged inspirational entrepreneurship days for students in the past four years and the aim has been to promote positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship among all students of social and health care.

Promoting entrepreneurship in social and health care - Examples from Lahti University of Applied Sciences and Linköping University

The aims of development during Forte project.

Joint development and modeling of entrepreneurship training models and entrepreneurial learning environments

Joint development and piloting of entrepreneurship e-learning course solution for social and

health care students is piloted and developed during project
Joint development and piloting models for awareness raising and more positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship

Innovative planning of services in social and health care

The students of social and health care can create innovative solutions for the challenges they meet during their studies and practical placements. Topical examples have been seen during compulsory 4 ECTS entrepreneurship studies in Lahti University of Applied Sciences. Studies are a special solution for students of social and health care sector. The most important aim in studies is to raise interest and positive attitude towards entrepreneurship. The basic understanding of entrepreneurship and business is also important. In future some of students can establish their own company, but entrepreneurial way of working is also needed when you work for someone else. Students did give feedback about the course in Spring 2011. Many students got interested or excited about the possibilities of entrepreneurship in the social and health care sector. They learned basic things what is required to be able to establish a company in social and health care sector. Some of them thought that it would be complicated. The experience of the course was that learning was implemented in an entrepreneurial way, which was mentioned to be important and useful.

Students as entrepreneurs in Lahti University of Applied Sciences

The group of students has established a student coop in the faculty of social and health at February 2011. It is the company owned by students and it offers the services of wellbeing. They can do customer projects in an entrepreneurial way and put their knowledge into practice during their studies. They have teacher coaches with whom they regularly discuss their projects and aims. Students negotiate contracts, plan the products, put them into the practice and do assessment together with clients, other students and coaches. The model of the role of the teacher as a coach of entrepreneurship is created and developed in Forte-project in close connection to students, teachers and networks, including Swedish partners working with the same subject.

Teacher coaches of students who work in the coop of students were interviewed at November 2011. The first experiences from the coaches of students is that the coach shouldn't be too active in coaching. The students are active and responsible of their projects, they are also the owners of

the projects. This kind of working is supporting the inner motivation of students. Pink defines motivation of learning so that the learner has a feel of mastery, purpose and autonomy about the things that she is learning (Pink 2011). Delivering different roles to students in projects was experienced to be positive solution, the responsibility of students was higher. Teacher coaches also described the coaching process to be empowering for themselves. The things to develop teacher coaches mentioned the regular weekly meetings with coop of students and the limited resources to work with clients. Students do have professional studies and practical placements parallel to working in coop, so the group of students don't have possibility to meet coaches every week or take different clients. The structures of learning environment are not supporting working in student coop, the solutions are under development.

Implementing entrepreneurship in the Occupational Therapy Programme Linköping University, Sweden.

During the fifth semester a collaboration between occupational therapy (OT) students from Faculty of Health Sciences and engineering students at the Institute of Technology (both at Linköping University) take place. The educational philosophy in the Faculty of Health Sciences is Problem Based Learning (PBL). The main idea behind PBL is the focus on learning and on the learner (Silén, 2004). The learning is based on real-situations, situations that students may face and have to deal with in their future profession. The supervisors' role is to encourage, challenge and support students' learning. The purpose with the collaboration is to design a product that can be used by people who experience different problems in activities of daily living. Throughout their work the students have to consider the aspect of Universal design (Design for all) focusing on the usability of the environment or products by all people, to the greatest degree possible, without adaptation (Christophersen, 2002). The students form small groups to work with a specific design project. The supervisors' provide examples of everyday problems that persons, with or without disability, in different ages experience and encourage the students to go out and meet these persons. Persons with disabilities who don't have the ability to use certain services, products and environments can feel excluded from the society (Letts, Rigby & Stewart, 2003).

By interviews and observations the students get the consumers point of view concerning the problem. In that way they analyze the problems closer to the reality based on the user's perspective. Some topics of investigation can be: mobility in the society, safety in the home, shopping and leisure. The OT students have the role of a consultant on human factors in relation to environmental problems within the chosen problem area. They also give suggestions to practical solutions to the problem. During this process the OT students endeavor the role of an entrepreneur

and are supported through literature within the field of entrepreneurship. Students are offered an opportunity to meet the University's Innovation Office to receive information about how to prepare business plans. The main responsibility for the engineer students' is to lead the project and to design a product concept in the technical sense. Good communication in the group and respect for each other is of utmost importance for a smooth development of the product concept. The role of the supervisor is to encourage and question the process of product development, in line of the PBL concept. A final oral report of the project is done at the end of the semester where the OT students contribute with both the OT and entrepreneurial perspective on the product concept developed.

To support the OT students learning about the entrepreneurial perspective a specific seminar "Design, consumer participation and entrepreneurship" takes place. In preparation for this seminar the students are provided with a work material about entrepreneurship and OT to enable the thinking about the design projects in an entrepreneurial way. For example the students make an analysis of strengths and weaknesses about the product and the role of the OT, competitors they have in that arena and how they can market the product in an appropriate way (Pattison, 2011). Based on the article "OT - Outstanding talent: An Entrepreneurial Approach to Practice" (Pattison, 2006) they will also reflect on how working with design and entrepreneurship could affect the OT profession and the ability to act in a changing society. Both design and entrepreneurship are still new areas for occupational therapists to work with making this reflection important for the student learning. For instance Pattison (2006) argue that even small changes in a product can be as important as an world changing idea.

Students' evaluations regarding the entrepreneurial part of the project reveal increased insight about the great value of the occupational therapy profession in other contexts and the close relationship between the methods, strategies and concepts used within the profession and the entrepreneurial approach to practice. Further, the students emphasize the importance of the interprofessional integration and the possibility to create solutions close to the consumer and in relation to real life situations. However, the students find the mutual collaboration sometimes difficult because of the different professional backgrounds. According to Letts, Rigby & Stewart, (2003) OT have the possibility to be an important team member when it comes to Design for all contributing with the knowledge about human functioning, disability, interaction between the person and environment and assistive technologies. It is suggested that OT have to engage in partnerships with professions like architects, constructors and designers for the possibility to develop mutual expertise. In summary, primary results of the entrepreneurial part of the project show that the students feel more prepared for a new and creative way of thinking within the profession, importance for evolving the profession for the future.

Conclusion

The entrepreneurial way of learning offers students a great possibility to personal and professional growth. Students learn to cope with the constant changes in the world as well as in working life. Students have fresh ideas and it is important to offer them real possibilities to develop their ideas in further and put them into the practice. Students can create even more innovative solutions if they network with other students from different professional fields. The models of learning in entrepreneurial way and in student enterprise are developed and also sharing good practices with partners. Topical discussions are how to make the whole learning environment able to support entrepreneurial way of learning and how to include it into the faculty structures.

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