



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Teacher Change in Relation to Professional Development in Entrepreneurial Learning

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Fakultetsopponent: Dr Vanessa Kind, Senior Lecturer in Education at Durham University,
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Abstract

Compulsory school teachers' perceptions and change in relation to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in entrepreneurial learning are investigated in this thesis. The teacher level focus is based on evidence pointing to the teacher's strong impact on student interest and learning and the teacher as the single most influential actor on the implemented curriculum. All the distinct studies included are framed in a qualitative research approach, however from different perspectives.

Entrepreneurial learning can be rewarding, for students as well as for the teachers, and has been suggested as one possible way to increase student interest in science and technology. Teachers may need inspiration and support to provide entrepreneurial learning environments for their students. This support can be provided by CPD.

Collaboration with the surrounding world in the teaching practice is one of the components which may be included in entrepreneurial learning. The findings from this thesis show that teachers perceive requirements and barriers for integrating collaborations. The directions which are indicated to be of most concern; i.e. the main categories of requirements, are school management, the teacher's personal character traits and disposition, colleagues and time. The teachers' statements provide detailed information on what types of issues the teachers perceive as important to have addressed. These findings correspond with factors that other teachers seem to perceive as critical for teacher change and growth in relation to CPD in entrepreneurial learning. The categories of requirements illustrate strong interdependencies, as do the critical factors.

Narratives on five different teachers' individual paths of growth, from a longitudinal study, illustrate that teachers respond differently to external factors from their professional context. The individual responses may be explained by personally related factors. Teachers' perceptions, including the one of the CPD message (entrepreneurial learning in this thesis), are personally related factors which seem to have influence on the degree of teacher growth. Additionally the findings indicate that a high degree of collegial coherence in the teacher team may compensate for lack of school management support on an organizational level. However, moral support from the school management does not seem to compensate for lack of collegial coherence when organizational support is not provided. Findings from this thesis additionally illustrate the added variation and diversity in quality of outcome; i.e. different outcome types, from exploring two courses with different foci in relation to a teacher's professional knowledge. The course which focused on general teaching strategies inspired by entrepreneurial learning generated outcomes on a general level, whereas the course which focused on specific content, knowledge in an authentic learning environment, rendered outcomes which were more specifically related to content knowledge. Thus, transfer of teaching strategies, from a self-experienced learning in an authentic setting, to the teacher's own practice does not automatically occur, even though the experience results in strong affective as well as motivational and attitude outcomes.

Keywords: professional development, entrepreneurial learning, science and technology education, authentic learning

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