TAKING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION TO THE NEXT LEVEL – A CASE STUDY OF A TEACHING AND LEARNING PROJECT AT THE UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL

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Abstract

This is a case study about student centered course re-design in the context of an undergraduate interdisciplinary program. As part of their program students complete a mandatory course on social entrepreneurship.

In this teaching and learning project we have first systematically evaluated the existing data for the course on learner satisfaction, learner success, and learner feedback. Second, interviews and focus groups with graduates did provide additional data. All data have been analyzed in December 2016 to inform the comprehensive and systematic evidence-based redesign of the course for the offering in the winter of 2017. Finally, targeted surveys at the end of the course have provided data on the achieved level of success of the course redesign.

Background

Since its new introduction in 2007 the course “RCLP 4002: Change Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship” always somewhat was a problem child due to its perceived business mindset. In 2014 – the baseline for substantial redesign – the challenge had shifted towards a dichotomy of pro- vs. contra-business mindsets between business minor and non-business minor students. The 2014 syllabus was still “traditional” (directive, textbook, mixed but fixed assignments).

In 2015 various Social Entrepreneurship Education (SEE) projects informed this study: RCLP 4002 participated in the Global Entrepreneurship Education Evaluation Project resulting in relevant data in Winter 2015 demonstrating grown confidence of students in management skills acquisition and business plan creation. Further, our team collaborated on researching adult learning in the context of SEE; we used Fornaciari and Lund Dean’s (2014) framework and criteria to assess course syllabi. We found that syllabi are underutilized as adult learning collaboration tools (Mengel, Tantawy, & McNally, 2015). Finally, in 2016 we received funding for this study.

Teaching and Learning Project 2016/17

In our methodology, we focused on Fornaciari and Lund Dean (2014; “The 21st-Century Syllabus: From Pedagogy to Andragogy”). We further built on Nomme and Birol (2014; “Course Redesign: An evidence based approach”).

In our first data collection and analysis phase (Fall 2016), we used existing data from other projects/activities, conducted a survey of Winter 2016 students, and facilitated a focus group with a research assistant and a Winter 2016 student. Based on this, we redesigned the course for Winter 2017. Finally, we did another survey of Winter 2017 students to evaluate the effects of the redesign.

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