AN ACCOUNT OF THE PROGRESSION MODEL FOR INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION IN ESECD

UM REGISTRO DO MODELO DE PROGRESSÃO PARA A FORMAÇÃO INICIAL DE PROFESSORES NA ESECD
UN REGISTRO DEL MODELO DE PROGRESIÓN PARA LA FORMACIÓN INICIAL DEL DOCENTE EN ESECD

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ABSTRACT:

In this paper we draw on the concept of Entrepreneurship Education and describe ESECD completion of the Budapest Agenda and its Progression Model for Initial Teacher Education. The concept of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education is discussed. We also present the reference documents on Entrepreneurship Education, but the main issue of the paper is to give an overview account of ESECD performance regarding the Progression Model for Initial Teacher Education (PMITE). In a scale of four points for twenty one items and a maximum of eighty four points, ESECD scores thirty two points, which means ten points under the average.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, teacher education, progression models.

RESUMO:

Neste artigo partimos do conceito de educação para o empreendedorismo e descrevemos a concretização da ESECD dos princípios da Agenda Budapeste e do seu modelo de progressão para a formação inicial de professores. O conceito de empreendedorismo e educação para o empreendedorismo, é discutida. Apresentamos, também, os documentos de referência sobre o ensino do empreendedorismo, mas a questão principal do artigo é proporcionar uma visão geral do desempenho da ESECD relativamente ao modelo de progressão para o ensino inicial do professor (PMITE). Em uma escala de quatro pontos para vinte e um itens e um máximo
de oitenta e quatro pontos, a ESECD pontua trinta e dois pontos, o que significa dez pontos menor que a média.

Palavras Chave: Empreendedorismo, Formação de Professores, Modelo de regressão

RESUMEN:

En este artículo partimos desde el concepto de educación para el emprendimiento y describimos la aplicación de los principios de la Agenda Budapest y su modelo de progresión de la formación inicial de docentes en ESECD. El concepto de empreendedorismo y educación para el empreendedorismo, se discute. También presentamos los documentos de referencia sobre la enseñanza del empreendedorismo, pero el tema principal del artículo es proporcionar una visión general del funcionamiento de la ESECD respecto al modelo de progresión para la formación inicial docente (PMITE). En una escala de cuatro puntos para los 21 artículos y un máximo de ochenta y cuatro puntos, a ESECD puntos a treinta y dos puntos, que significa diez puntos menos que el promedio.

Palabras clave: Empreendedorismo, Formación de Profesores, Modelo de regresión

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The Lisbon Strategy (European Commission, 2000) acknowledged entrepreneurship contribution to the EU economy and recently Europe 2020 Strategy (European Commission, 2010) has also drawn on its development.

One could ask what are we mean when we refer to “entrepreneurship”. The Green Paper on Entrepreneurship in Europe (Commission of the European Communities, 2003), states that entrepreneurship is multi-dimensional and it can occur in different contexts, aside the business field, but it always involves the exploitation of creativity or innovation. “Entrepreneurship is first and foremost a mindset. It covers an individual’s motivation and capacity, independently or within an organization, to identify an opportunity and to pursue it in order to produce new value or economic success. It takes creativity or innovation to enter and compete in an existing market, to change or even to create a new market. To turn a business idea into success requires the ability to blend creativity or innovation with sound management and to adapt a business to optimise its development during all phases of its life cycle. This goes beyond daily management: it concerns a business’ ambitions and strategy” (Commission of the European Communities, 2003, 4).

Although entrepreneurship is a conditional asset required by competitive economies, we should keep in mind that the aim of the European Union doesn’t confine only to economy. The EU also aims to be an intelligent and sustainable society; issues that pertain social cohesion, employment, inclusion and sustainability, among other desiderata, like freedom, democracy and emancipation. Being these, in our point of view, the really aims our societies long for. Thus we should be aware of the priority that creativity takes over entrepreneurship. If it is rather consensual that the later requires creativity, education should not aim to it only for entrepreneurship sake, but because it is an intrinsic component of education central aim: human perfectibility (Pring, 2003). So we do not really aim to raise entrepreneurs at the age of ten, but to raise creative people that can be successful entrepreneurs in all areas of their lives. This mean we should be aware of not focus entrepreneurship in a narrow sense, as the European Commission very well states in the following quotation:
“Much debate surrounds the meaning of entrepreneurship education, and different definitions can apply in different countries and at different levels and phases of education. Recent thinking has shown that narrow definitions based around preparing learners for the world of business may place limitations on both learners and the teaching community. Instead a broader definition which sees entrepreneurship education as a process through which learners acquire a broad set of competencies can bring greater individual, social and economic benefits since the competences acquired lend themselves to application in every aspect of people’s lives. Entrepreneurship in this sense refers to an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation, showing initiative 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” (European Commission, 2011, 2).

This does not mean that we shouldn’t deepen our understanding about what entrepreneurship entails as a mind-set or a set of competences, attitudes and behaviours. Creativity is by all means a main feature required for being entrepreneur. “Yet there are certain common characteristics of entrepreneurial behaviour, including a readiness to take risk and a taste for independence and self-realization” (Commission of the European Communities, 2003, 5-6), among others, that should be mapped and taken into account.

The “Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning” states that competences are “a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfillment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment” (2006, 13). Among the eight key competences the “sense of initiative and entrepreneurship” is put forward as “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 individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace 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 those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical
values and promote good governance” (European Parliament and the Council, 2006, 17).

As it has happened before regarding several European issues, it became broadly recognize that teachers have a critical role to play in the development of entrepreneurship education. In fact, a study mapping “Teachers’ preparation for entrepreneurship education” has confirmed that successful implementation of entrepreneurship education is strongly dependent on teachers’ interventions in the classrooms (Gibb, 2005). Thus, it is very wise to focus in fostering EE among teachers educators as well as to give them the suited training on the subject and related fitted pedagogies. Besides, we also need to foster a new paradigm that envisages education institutions as entrepreneurial organizations, classrooms as entrepreneurial places and teachers as enterprising people.

Taking the above mentioned into special account, the European Commission has been making a strong effort to develop effective teacher education systems for entrepreneurship, since the High Level Symposium on “Entrepreneurship Education: Teacher Education as critical success factor” which took place in Budapest on 7-8 April 2011. The main concern of the Symposium was to determine “how best to equip teachers with the skills, knowledge and attitudes they need to foster the entrepreneurial mind-sets of young people”. The results of the Symposium came to be known as the Budapest Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education (EE).

Two workshops were then organized during 2012 aiming at: discussing the current state of the art; presenting the challenges; collecting and sharing good practice examples; inviting people to discuss new ideas; discussing and refining a progression model for implementation.

Accordingly to the former, the aim of the ‘Budapest Agenda’ is to provide a catalogue of measures to be drawn upon by stakeholders at all levels within the worlds of education, business and the wider community in order to take forward the development of teacher education in entrepreneurship. It draws on the work and experiences of practitioners and policy makers from across Europe, EU partner countries from the EU pre-accession and Mediterranean neighborhood regions, and is backed up by good practices, as evidenced by report of the “First workshop on enabling teachers for entrepreneurship education – initial teacher Education” (Baldassarri & Curavic, 2012).
2. THE BUDAPEST AGENDA AND THE PROGRESSING MODEL FOR INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

The Budapest Agenda is intended to be used by all those with an interest in the subject, who can select measures and tailor them to their own particular circumstances. Each action indicates the relevant actors. As a reference document it states the monitoring of the following strands: A) Initial Teacher Education (Entrepreneurship education for all; Curriculum content and pedagogy; Assessment; Selection of student Teachers; Partnerships); B) National Support (Strategies; Entrepreneurship education curricula; Assessment of the entrepreneurship key competence; Incentives; Resources; Communication; Communities of entrepreneurial Teachers); C) Continuing Professional Development (Curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment; Buy-in and ownership; Businesses and the wider community as a resource; Recruitment and promotion of teachers; Continuing professional development in national/regional strategies); D) Local School Support (Entrepreneurial school strategies; Entrepreneurial leadership; Resources; Community networks and partnerships).

The Progression Model for Initial Teacher Education (Annex 1) considers three domains: 1. Entrepreneurial teacher education institutions; 2. Entrepreneurial teacher educators; and 3. Entrepreneurial teacher education programmes. For each domain several subjects are displayed under a scale of four development levels: Baseline; Start-up; Development and consolidation phase; and Mainstreaming phase. The overall score gives an insight of the institution progress regarding Initial Teacher Education for Entrepreneurship.

3. AN OVERVIEW OF ESECD PERFORMANCE WITHIN THE PROGRESSION MODEL FOR INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

3.1. Institutionally, ESECD is progressing in order to become an entrepreneurial teacher education school. Concerning the subject “Strategy, vision and management”, we place ESECD in the Star-up phase. We are still developing a vision to become an entrepreneurial institution (porous, flexible institution, open to change). We are carrying out the revision of the existing strategic plan against entrepreneurial principles, establishing goals and milestones and determining roles and
responsibilities of senior managers for implementing the strategy. As to
the “Governance”, ESECD is also at the Start-up phase of ensuring buy-in from the governing body. Regarding the “Planning curricula, pedagogy, assessment” subject, ESECD is developing a plan of activities for the next 2 to 3 years in order to transform the institution into an entrepreneurial learning environment, namely by considering the most suitable approaches to incorporating EE into the curriculum (which content is best suited to modules and which embedded). A plan in detail of initial pilot activities to raise awareness of teacher educators is under development. Specially, will try to foster new curricula experimentation, as well as new pedagogies and suited assessment practices.

“Partnering with the community” is a main issue of EE and right now at ESECD we are developing the strategy for interaction with businesses and community (3rd sector) organizations. As to “Collaborating with the wider university”, it is time for exploring opportunities to draw on good practice and connect with opportunities elsewhere, e.g. business schools.

Under the current legal framework it is not possible to take into account entrepreneurial skills and attitudes for student recruitment. But we already have surpassed the baseline for resources allocation: methods in use which have been tuned to fit with cross curricular activities and project-based learning, which is the preferred method right now.

3.2. As to the development of the professional sense of entrepreneurial education spirit among teachers, we must recognize that few teachers educators are aware of entrepreneurial principals. In fact few teachers are actively involved in the institutional strategy. We are just starting to implement consultation with existing teacher educators as integral part of strategy development.

However, a considerable number of ESECD teachers educators have overcome the traditional subject-based curriculum. In a considerable number of subjects, several teachers are using cross curricula approaches and some of them did incorporated EE into the curriculum. A new module has been embedded in the Personal and Social Education programme that is imparted in the third semester of the Basic Education first cycle course. Even if this represents a small step towards a new paradigm, it is a relevant one, considering the fight for space within the curricula between the classical subjects, which are right now pushed as central priorities.
We may also say that an effort to progress is being undertaken for developing a new pedagogical paradigm. As we have mentioned project-based is now one of the preferred methods, but active learning methodologies are very well spread all over the curricula.

In so far as to the allocation of institutional resources, we should recognize that the legal framework and ESECD specific approach to recruitment does not ensures the support of EE or the experimentation and risk-taking, although we could say that ESECD policies are focused in identifying opportunities inside and outside the institution. Thus a review of current the rewards structure is needed.

Right now, ESECD’s teacher educators are encouraged and empowered to incorporate resources from community into teaching and learning. However a new step must be taken, we should start to propitiate that teacher educators periodically spend some time in a local entrepreneurial business or community organization.

3.3. Concerning the entrepreneurial teacher education programmes, it is now a fact that EE is embedded in curricula of student teachers, but it should be extended to more subjects. So we must recognize that there is little opportunity for experiential learning regarding entrepreneurship. However, even if traditional teaching and learning methods dominate, new pedagogies, like outdoor learning, problem-based learning, active learning, independent learning and collaborative learning are becoming popular in a wide range of subjects.

Aside the mentioned, right now there is no specific module on EE being imparted. Although we can find some adapted assessment methods for experiential and active learning, these assessment practices must be extended to more subjects within the curricula.

Regarding the integration of community resources, we must say that it is commonly done, but the exploration with local businesses/community organizations should be increased. As a drawback we must recognize that host schools have little or no awareness of ideas related to entrepreneurship.

Considering the above, we must say that overall ESECD scores very modestly. In a scale of four points for twenty one items and a maximum of eighty four points, ESECD scores thirty two points, which means ten points under the average.
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