

Individuals learn in groups. Research-based learning creates opportunities to understand the practice.

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General

The University of Jyväskylä organized the adult trainer's pedagogical studies in 2013-2014. One option was the focus of pedagogical leadership. Topics were studied in research-based learning and working life by means of surveying. Different experiences were shared in groups. The course was implemented using blended learning. The main focus was on the students sharing their experiences, their collective dialogue and cooperation towards a shared pre-understanding. Students discussed the topic using their organization's activities.

The background theory of management was studied in the course using the "four corner" approach (by National Defence University): organizational culture, organizational structures, management and leadership. Students completed two group-specific presentations regarding the pedagogical leadership. Finally, they wrote their own article on how they themselves understand the pedagogical leadership.

The course was attended by 12 students: 9 students were from teaching establishments and 3 students from other organizations. The group consisted of 8 women and 4 men. Among them, 2 people worked as unit managers or supervisors, 2 people were planners or coordinators, 6 people were teachers, trainers or coaches and one person was an expert in their own organization. 5 students were postgraduates, and 7 students had master's degrees.

Research

At the end of the course, all 12 students answered a questionnaire. 50 % of the respondents were aged 30-39, and 33 % of them were 40-49 years of age. The students considered of great importance (Question 7): 1) the contact teaching presentations and discussions, 2) the fact that their course reports were to involve their working life experiences, 3) the contact teaching group discussion and 4) dialogue with other students.

The research is based on the application of the Grounded Theory method (Holton 2004) which places focus on the importance of grasping the essence of the material studied. The researcher analyses the answers using a coding method.

Students rated the discussions with the student group and the impact of the comments on their own thinking of pedagogical leadership (Question 9). Through the responses, coding and processing of information condensed into a theory (by Rentola H): "The group of students is seen as important for opening different perspectives, understanding, expanding thinking and examining their own perceptions. Common knowledge is built and expanded in the group through the help of discussions, arguments, and immersion of topics."

The basis for the course implementation was research-based learning, which was intended to allow examination of the world of work and their own experience (Question 10). Through the responses, coding and processing of information condensed into a theory (by Rentola H): "The research-based learning makes it possible to become familiar with the individual's own organization and working

community. Various valuable stimulus and at the same time be able to find something important. The individual's own thinking is structured theory lyrics through the world of work and their own experience."

Learning is always connected to a real situation, and emphasis should be put on the student's own role as an active learner. (Lindblom-Ylänne & Nevgi 2004, 83). The student builds upon their knowledge through previous skills and experience. Students process new information by reflecting on and analysing it. At best, the research process inherent in research-based learning generates new understanding and knowledge. (Lindblom-Ylänne & Nevgi 2004, 64). The goal of instruction is to link together thematic entities through the dialogue of theory and practice.

Summary

What can be learned from this military training? Research-based learning should be utilized. Students' experience will be appreciated. Their teamwork should be guided. They should read theory and consider its implementation in practice. A soldier's competence and identity is built on a group (see Toiskallio & Mäkinen 2009; Toiskallio 1998). The young soldiers will build the future. They already have the capability (see Kuhn 1994). Do we have the capacity to make it possible?

References

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