Learning from: Social Innovation for Tertiary Education. An Experiment with Socionext

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Abstract

The rise of Mass Open Online Courses (MOOCs), budget cuts, and a slimmer job market for students to enter, should force universities in the EU to reconsider what they offer students. Competition with MOOCs would suggest alternative forms of in class interaction, while job applications mostly demand the need for hands-on experience; a dilemma faced with decreasing budgets that hardly leave room for universities to innovate. In the Netherlands, institutions called HBO already offer practice-oriented Bachelor and Master degrees, further limiting the space universities can manoeuvre in. However, using social innovation [Mulgan e.a., 2007] as the basis for a course and a tool for application, it is possible for students, universities, policymakers, and private partners to collectively find solutions to problems faced by multiple actors. This approach aims to offer a way forward for more than the educational system alone, acknowledging that all stakeholders in society are inextricably tied together, as are the problems they face. Over the past year and a half the organisation Socionext has offered a course called "the Socionext challenge", where, through co-creation [Pulford, 2011], these collective challenges are met in and outside of the university. Learning from this experience, with failings and unique successes, examples can be drawn that teach us valuable lessons on what might indeed be innovative education.

References

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