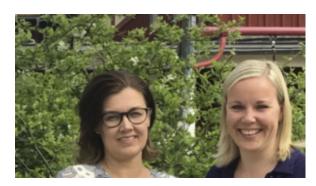# Value creation pedagogy in praxis — learning from a Swedish primary school

Ulrica Skålberg and Lina Gustavsson are primary school teachers in Björlandagården, a municipal primary school in Gothenburg. The school has 420 pupils aged 6 to 12. They tell us how they use the LoopMe social learning media tool in their school.

Tell us about applying the value creation pedagogy and using LoopMe in your school?

Ulrica Skålberg and Lina Gustavsson

Ulrica: We learnt about the value creation pedagogy through an EU-funded project that we took part in. It took us a while to understand what learning through value creation really means, that this way of learning is not a definitive goal in itself, but an ongoing process. A new approach has been developed among us teachers. We moved away from the need to keep an eye on everything to instead focussing on keeping the learning process alive and constantly ask the question "For whom, outside of this class or school, is this knowledge (or skills) valuable today?" and then focus on that. This is the core of value creation pedagogy: pupils do not learn for the teacher, the school or the grade. They also do not learn only for their

own personal development. Instead, we focus on using the knowledge in reality outside the classroom, thus creating value for other people.

Lina: Previously we had already reached the goal mentally before we even started working with our pupils. Now there is a completely different interaction where we develop the learning process together. Everyone finds their role and is allowed to be who they want to be. It enables learning based on each pupil's needs and level. When the pupils learn to use the knowledge outside the school in other contexts and create value for people outside the school, something new happens. Cohesion in the pupil group grows stronger. Another effect that has become clear over time is an increased parental involvement.

Ulrica: The pupils' value creation gives a great impact on the development inside and outside the school. Our teacher team are becoming more confident in our work developing entrepreneurial competencies among our pupils and are convinced that the value creation learning method is an important way for developing the school and the learning processes.

You are using LoopMe to support the value creation pedagogy. Tell us about how you benefit from the tool?

Ulrica: The best thing with LoopMe is that all pupils get heard. During ongoing work, we can take part in reflections, feelings, learning, analysis, opinions and knowledge by using the pupils to learn what they are experiencing and the process in progress, both in and around learning. Should disagreement or difficulties occur, this will be ventilated directly in the tool and we as teachers will then be able to coach and support where it is necessary. We can also highlight important discussion areas and topics that we may not have planned from the beginning, but as pupils express their needs around.

Lina: In large groups and messy classroom environments, not everyone is heard. Not everybody dares to speak up. Equally, time is a factor: some pupils do not want to claim the teacher's time. Then, LoopMe becomes a great channel that allows a space to communicate with a recipient. The pupils really care about this channel, they feel that LoopMe adds value. They take the work very serious and show great respect for this opportunity. Many vent via LoopMe and reflect on much more than just knowledge. The pupils think that this way to communicate is more natural for them and therefore they become more strengthened in themselves.

The use of LoopMe fosters good relationships, how so?

Lina: Good relationships where we feel affirmed are the basis for safe individuals. In order to focus on learning, we need to feel accepted and safe in the environment where this will happen. Our pupils have now really made looping a habit. Among other, we encourage them to reflect on friendships, relationships, teaching and lesson content. That way we can really capture frustrations of different kinds and at different levels. We get real-time input and can react quickly, sometimes instantly. If we had not worked with LoopMe, it could have been years without discovering conflicts, for example.

Ulrica: The pupils grow aware of how teachers and management are able to quickly access the data they produce, and then act on it. We see that trust and confidence among them grows. It also becomes easier to make changes when something is not working. Pupils take greater responsibility for actively influencing and changing when they have a communication channel that works.

A research team from Chalmers University of Technology has also followed you and your pupils during the last three years in order to measure impact in learning outcomes among the pupils. What effects did they see?

Lina: The research team confirmed our view that the motivation and in-depth learning increased significantly when working with value creation. For the researchers it was very clear that when the school work feels authentic for the pupils, both the motivation and subject knowledge are strengthened. In addition, the pupil's skills, such as communication, social interaction, courage and perseverance, are developed. The pupils, in parallel with the acquisition of knowledge, also achieve personal maturity and self-awareness.

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What is the next step for you?

Ulrica: During the first three years, it was only our teacher team that was working with value creation pedagogy, but since last year all teachers at Björlandagården are participating in a training programme to develop their teaching in value creation and the work is continuously evaluated and developed at the school's teacher conferences. In order for this development to continue, a supportive school management and teachers who dare to fail along the way is required. At Björlandagården we have both, so it feels very hopeful for the future.

Ulrica and Lina were originally interviewed for an article in Swedish by Annica Andersson, reporter and publisher at web magazine EdTech4 Change.

This blog post was edited and translated by Carin Sävetun, Me Analytics.

Developing and assessing entrepreneurial competences — interview with VET teacher Paz Fernandez de Vera

Paz Ferndandez de Vera is a VET teacher at IES El Batán, a government-funded Secondary School in Mieres (Asturias). Mieres is a former industrial and mining town of about 40.000 inhabitants located in the North of Spain. It can be considered an underprivileged area since there has been a drastic reduction in the number of jobs and some of students belong to families in which both parents are unemployed or the father has stopped working at a very young age as they became eligible for early retirement when coal mines were closed. The school educates 300 students at different levels ranging from Lower Secondary Education to VET tracks on Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy (ISCED 2 to 5). Paz teaches among other "Enterprise and Entrepreneurial Initiative", a compulsory subject in all VET tracks. The time allocation for this subject is 4 hours a week.

EntreAssess is keen to know existing approaches to assessment of the entrepreneurial competence. In your opinion, to what extent is this competence important in your teaching?

This competence is essential in my daily teaching. I always tell my students that this competence deals with the development of skills for life. I embrace a broad definition

of entrepreneurial competence, that is to say the ability to have a vision, dreams, goals, detect problems, see opportunities and to transform all of this in real and added value projects through action. The soft skills put into practice to develop this competence are always the same. It does not matter if the project is social, professional, personal or financial. I do believe that this competence should be developed from the early school levels as a cross-curricular competence.

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What's the best context to develop this sort of competences? Curricular, extracurricular? Projects?

Paz Fernandez de Vera, third from the left with the blue hat

I think that this competence can be developed in all the contexts you mention. I mostly do it through projects. When I present the subject I tell my students that as a group their

goal is to generate an idea that brings an added value (be it social, cultural or financial). They will have to transform this idea not in a simulated project but in a real one. This means that they will be interacting with different stakeholders such as institutions, clients, neighbours, associations, providers, experts or even students from other schools. On the first day of class I ask them to look through the window and write what they see so as to start spotting problems and opportunities. Then we go outside and I ask them to look at the same scenario in order to check how their answers to the same question change completely. I always tell them what defines "a real entrepreneur (understood as entrepreneur in life, not necessary in business), is a down-to-earth approach to problems and proper fieldwork". So that is why I try to develop this competence through real projects in a real context.

What do you exactly assess and how? What works for you?

From my point of view, assessment is a key factor in the teaching and learning process. If assessment fails, the rest of the process collapses. In that case we will not know if there is a real learning and personal progression and we will not be able to modify things accordingly. I consider assessment as an improvement instrument that should guide the whole process and help the student (and also the teacher) to improve progressively. I assess the process and the results. How? I use different kind of rubrics. The students have the same rubrics from the beginning to assess themselves and eventually other classmates.

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I think that assessment implies ongoing personalised support. I provide feedback through personal interviews in which I motivate and support the student but I also place high demands on them. Another key factor for me is the importance of high expectations according to the capacity they really have, even if at time they are not aware of it. I use different kind of evidences: learning diaries, graphic organisers, online evidences. All my students' projects are disseminated online through social media and a blog. An essential part of the entrepreneurial process is being able to communicate the project properly.

To what extent are students actively involved in the assessment?

I believe that our students should acquire the habit of assessing themselves, so they can be aware of their strengths and improvement areas. Therefore I have created a system of rubrics with colours that allow them to self-assess some of these skills on a daily basis in a visual and very easy way. As I mentioned before I conduct personal interviews with them to adjust and provide my feedback. They also assess their classmates.

What about feedback from other stakeholders?

Sometimes they get feedback from their collaborators or followers in their project but in a very informal way. It is an excellent idea, that would allow us to broaden the focus and get different and interesting perspectives.

Is this a way of assessing the entrepreneurial competence a widespread practice in your school? If not, what are the main barriers?

It is hard to tell. I would not like to make sweeping

generalisations. It depends on the school and on the individual teacher but I don't think it is widespread at all. The assessment of these competences is complex and closely linked to an specific methodology with which not all teachers are familiar with. I reckon it is also a question of the importance you attach to it in your teaching, your disposition if you wish, and last but not least, having access to training opportunities to tackle such a complicated matter with some confidence.

Progression, that is to say, envisaging a coherent and gradual acquisition of the competence, remains a big challenge. What's your opinion on EntreComp?

I like the framework, I consider it an excellent instrument for teachers and stakeholders. From my point of view these important competences have not been clearly explained yet. EntreComp does an important, necessary and timely pedagogical job here. I like its broad focus, not identifying the competence necessarily with setting up a business. Entrepreneurial Competence, as I mentioned before, deals with lot of important aspects of our lives that in my opinion should be developed from an early age.

What would you like to see happening next for the future?

Some time ago l was really impressed when I read a teacher quote that said something like "For a long time l pretended l was teaching and my students pretended they were learning." That statement struck me as being particularly accurate so, going back to your question, I wish we all become increasingly aware of the importance of having proper assessment systems in place and keep working and improving them. Although I know that this is easier said than done. However, that's the only way forward to ascertain if our students are really learning and developing this competence, guide them through the process and bring out the best of every single student.