

Entrepreneurship through apprenticeships: the need, practice and interim evaluation. Case Finland

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Background and drivers



- Towards more entrepreneurial society
- The nation is ageing
- Need for generation changes is escalating in small business community in Finland
- Small and medium-sized enterprises are increasing jobs, while the large ones are decreasing them
- The number of growth enterprises is low
- Entrepreneurial activities and intentions among adult and young population should be much higher than today (GEM and GUESS studies)

Qualifacation in entrepreneurship through apprenticeship



- Was launched in 2000
- Has grown rapidly during the decade
- Has typically attracted adult students
- Fits well in the current dominating process perspective in entrepreneurship theory
- Can adapt the important role of occasional learning and reflection needed in the path of becoming an entrepreneur helping to apply concepts into practice and discovering hidden norms, values and assumptions

Does it work: two studies



- An internet-based survey for persons who had achieved further or specialist qualification in entrepreneurship (N = 495) revealed that after the training:
 - 63 per cent worked as entrepreneurs and 37 per cent in other types of jobs (mostly as employees)
 - Out of those who started (or continued) an entrepreneurial career, 39 per cent worked as solo entrepreneurs, 46 per cent in micro firms and 15 per cent in small firms
 - There were only a few persons working for companies employing more than 50 people

A questionnaire-based survey on the initial experiences of people attending qualification studies in entrepreneurship (N = 108)



- Focus on how they chose this training and their motivations, scheduling, content of the training and mentoring during their studies
- Reasons for attending: developing one's competence (63 %), reasonable costs (44 %), changes in the enterprise (33 %)
- A factor analysis was conducted showing the following solution:
 - Factor I: Impacts of training
 - Factor II: Progress of studies
 - Factor III: Content of studies
 - Factor IV: Instruction arrangements and learning motivation

Three case studies

Generation change in a brickwork business – one of the daughters takes over



- The aging master mason planned to retire in the near future after 37 years in this business
- He had three daughters, but at the same time a good touch in apprenticeships having trained youngsters to become bricklayers
- A solution for the generation change: (a successor from the family was highly preferred) One of the daughters had a degree from a commercial college and she took over after having earned further qualification in entrepreneurship through apprenticeship training

Case study 2: Running a locking venture

- The entrepreneur moved to another position within the same industry sector
- A person outside the family was selected to continue the business
- This person had worked earlier in this firm in sales, but needed additional training in management and running an entrepreneurial business
- Qualification in entrepreneurship was a natural solution
- Typically, this firm had earlier exploited apprenticeship training to train locking experts



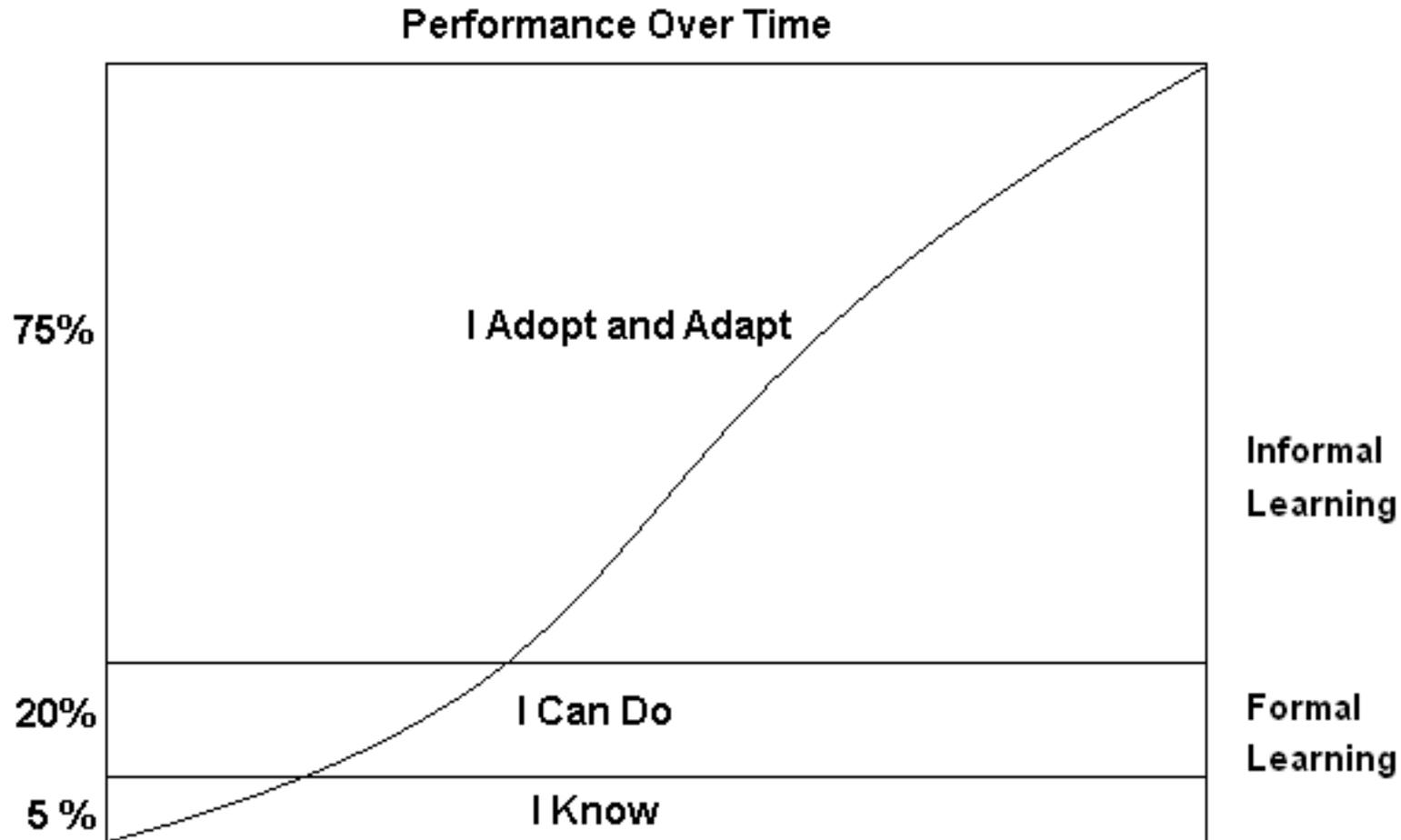
Case study 3: From a polytechnic degree to a special qualification in entrepreneurship



- A young male in his mid 20s had recently graduated from a polytechnic and got an idea to start up his own business
- He was not particularly satisfied with his earlier education focused on “learning for storage” but wanted to acquire more practical skills for his future entrepreneurial career
- Special qualification in entrepreneurship in 2006-2009 was his answer for becoming a successful entrepreneur

“Learning from others and facing daily solutions calling for immediate decisions and action strongly outperformed my earlier studies. I benefited greatly from opportunity recognition and self-reflection allowed by studies”.

The disparity between formal and informal learning



Study by Sally Anne Moore, Digital Equipment Corporation
"Time to Performance"



Conclusions and implications

- Entrepreneurship through apprenticeships responds to a societal need
- Represents a more socially shared approach compared to traditional entrepreneurship training
- Learning in the firms is contextual and occurs daily out of necessity
- For adult learners, allows critical reflectivity and “whole person learning”
- Informal and incidental learning play a major role, particularly in non-routine conditions with ill-defined opportunities and problems

Thank you!

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