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STUDENT'S FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY





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TEAMPRENEUR'S (STUDENT'S) POINT OF VIEW

During Academic Adventures International Week at Proakatemia we, me and coach Tarja Tittonen, held a training session about student's freedom and responsibility. I, as a teampreneur or student, prepared and led the training session and Tarja Tittonen, the coach, was present observing this training session.

Students' freedom and responsibility is a very important matter while studying in Proakatemia. Students are given so much freedom in their studies, but along the freedom, comes the responsibility as well. Students are free as birds to acquire projects that they want and pursue the dreams that they have. They are also free to do all this in their own way. Although the main goals in learning are set by Tampere University of Applied Sciences' study program, students in Proakatemia can find their own way of reaching the learning goals.

The training session was held mainly about our responsibilities as students, the coaches' roles in our learning process versus teachers' roles at the main campus, and what students' freedom in studies really means. There was about 15 of our international guests attending to this training session. Apparently, this is a very interesting matter to someone who is coming from outside of Proakatemia.

“In Proakatemia you will become a part of team and our inspiring community of entrepreneurs. The rest is up to you.”
(Proakatemia 2017).

Yes, we really are given a team, inspiring environment and a coach and that's pretty much it in the beginning. We really have to figure everything out by ourselves and our coach is probably not going to give us any straight answers. That is the absolute beauty of this learning method that makes us students learn and develop so much.

During the training session, there was a lot of discussion about topics given, and our guests naturally had many questions. We introduced them to our conventions about study planning, acquiring projects, marking down all done work hours, teamwork and feedback giving and receiving. Our guests had many questions especially about the hour-marking system. They wondered how it could possibly work that students really take care of their own studies and we did our best explaining how we make it work in Proakatemia.

Feedback giving and studying without grades delivered many questions as well and that is why I wanted to introduce the Motorola (Waterman 1994, 256 – 262), a feedback meth-

od that we commonly use at Proakatemia. Motorola consists of four questions:

1. What went well?
2. What could be improved?
3. What did I learn?
4. What am I going to exploit in practise?

After the training session, the participants of the Academic Adventures got to answer these questions as well and I got to have valuable feedback from their points of view.

Based on the feedback, our guests were impressed about a student taking the responsibility of the training session, as well, and it reflected the division of work and students' responsibility in their studies perfectly.

COACH'S POINT OF VIEW

Every student in Proakatemia has the freedom to act and perform according to his or her own aspirations. However, the great amount of freedom also means a strong responsibility for their performance and towards the enterprise of their team. Competence targets set for learning are equal to the other students aiming for the same degree, though the liberty and the responsibility for achieving the competence targets lay with the Proakatemia students themselves. Self-determination and motivation form the base for learning in Proakatemia.

Every student in Proakatemia compiles their own learning agreement biannually, in which they define their learning

targets, how they will measure these targets and how they will know the targets are accomplished, and are further willing to fight for these set targets. To study in Proakatemia, the student is required to have a strong self-determination, commitment and a brave attitude towards learning by doing. Moreover, the students are obliged to reflect their own performance and actions.

The core for Edward Dec's self-determination theory is based on the idea of humans as proactive actors aiming to fulfil themselves and the chosen targets. According to this theory, humans have three psychological basic need essential for their growth and well-being. These basic needs are:

Autonomy. The urge of having the liberty to decide on one's own actions. The motivation for action is inherent.

Competence. The experience of knowing one's own capabilities, being able to concur challenges and achieving something.

Relatedness. The universal need of being in interaction with others. We care for others and want in return be cared for.

Motivation is the acting force that directs and tunes into performance. The success, however, is then based on one's capabilities. The level of motivation varies greatly in different situations and over time. Additionally, it can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation derives from the humans themselves and leads them further to seek to do the things they are inspired by.

As Peter Senge has stated:

“The most powerful learning comes from direct experience by taking an action and seeing the consequences of that action.”

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