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# Learning in networks
# Community of Practice: a new approach to entrepreneurial learning

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# Preface

*Our lectors of "knowledge-intensive and innovative entrepreneurship" assigned me to assess the concept of the new Small Business and Retail Management (SB&RM) institute in Deventer. They were especially interested in it as a tool for entrepreneurial learning. Looking at a concept from a more theoretical kind of view was new to me, as it was to the institute I am working at. Normally evaluations take place at a smaller scale an in a much shorter time. Research was rather time-consuming but the results are very valuable to SB&RM.*

*Doing research in your own backyard and amongst your own colleagues is a doubtful opportunity. You are evaluating the work of people you know and a process they believe in. They allow you to let others make critical remarks. But they were confident in the result of the evaluation. Even though I told them focus lies on improvements, so critical remarks were inevitable. I admire the way they cooperated, being in a position that vulnerable. That means a lot of trust. I thank them for giving me that faith.*

*As a bonus I experienced what the Germans call "ein Aha-Erlebnis". By which is meant a situation in which a person suddenly gains new insights and has a (slight) shock of recognition or remembrance. Both, recognition and insight are the two things I certainly will keep in mind for years. As a professional teacher I now myself sensed all emotions students feel and copied the characteristic behaviour they present during the time of my graduation. This insight will surely improve my coaching ability. I made the same mistakes and showed the same characteristic behaviour like underestimating the job, handling my own standards, lack of communication, weariness on the demands of the job. But in re-experiencing this process so many years after my first graduation it brings something new. Experiencing it is painful to get critical feedback, directs you to professional reflection. You sense differences in getting feedback and the way it makes you react. Obviously these differences matter. One way of giving feedback leads to meaningful communication and mutual understanding, the other makes all systems shut down. Quite a remarkable experience. As a result I now try to give feedback and keep in contact with students with much greater care and attention than before. It is an important part of your work but now I am more aware of the impact it has on students.*

*Another experience is the depth of the emotions. For more than a year this graduation project was always present in my mind, for good and for bad. The energy it took surprised me, let alone the impact on one's mood. Therefore I thank all people I could moan and groan with. I often used colleagues as a sounding-board; I think they do not know how important that was. But there are a few persons that really mattered. Halfway the process a serious writer's block struck me. Without my dear colleague Petra Manders I would not have found the right track. She urged me to tell my story and helped me to rearrange theories and models and made it a story rather than plate spaghetti. I thank her a lot. I also thank Jan Kwast who carefully dealt with all mistakes made in English and sometimes told me I'm talking nonsense.*

*As said, I learned giving feedback in a way the message comes through is important . Ariane van Raesfelt and Jeroen Kraaijenbrink were able to make me rewrite the story several times, even though I thought it was ready. Their feedback, though sometimes painful, led to big improvements. I thank them for this learning experience. People near to me felt when things did not go that well sometimes. Being in the neighbourhood they had to deal with it. Cohort '05, Harriet, Hans, Ferdie and Jacques were able to take over during three years of study in cases it was needed. I owe them a lot. Others, even closer to me, were my family. They did what had to be done. They supported me, sometimes ignored me, and amazingly they could cope with someone who is not always reasonable. They showed me it is important not to take yourself too seriously and took over things I should have taken care of.*

*All in all we learned a lot and I think we, our institute and my colleagues fully subscribe the recommendations. As always, also in education innovation means changing day to day practice. We innovated, but luckily we underestimated the effort it takes to roll out the concept fully and to provide the proper preconditions. Surely now further efforts will be made. But if we had known what it would take, I think my colleagues would have thought twice, and probably rejected the idea. I admire them for what*

*they accomplished and what makes it even more remarkable, at first only on gut feeling. At the moment we are working on the recommendations based on the evaluation of the process and what partners think of it in Deventer.*

# Abstract

Educational programs teaching entrepreneurial behaviour and knowledge are crucial to a vital and healthy economy. The concept of building a Communities of Practice (CoP) could be very promising. CoP's are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002). They consist of a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Normally CoP's are rather homogeneous. Saxion institute Small Business & Retail Management (SB&RM) started a CoP with entrepreneurs September 2007. Typical in the this community, are the d*ifferences* between the partners. The Community consists of students, entrepreneurs and members of an institution for higher education. They have different characteristics and they don't share the same knowledge. Thus, building long-lasting relations can be complicated. Solid relations for longer periods are nevertheless inevitable in using CoP as a mean in an educational concept that takes approximately 4 years.

After one year an evaluation took place on the main aspects of a lasting partnership. The central problem SB&RM in Deventer faces is to design the CoP in a way possible members will join and stay for a longer period and in a way it ensures entrepreneurial learning. This means important design characteristics have to be identified, and the CoP in Deventer has to be evaluated to assess whether it meets those design characteristics in an effective and efficient way. The main target of the evaluation is to determine which key factors are important to make sure continuity in partnership is assured and entrepreneurial learning is best supported. To solve the problem, an investigation on how a CoP works, what group dynamics take place, and how this can be measured has to be conducted. Furthermore using the CoP as a tool for entrepreneurship means key aspects of entrepreneurial learning have to be identified. After that the CoP in Deventer has to be examined on both aspects.

According to literature CoP's define themselves along three dimensions: domain (indicating what is it about), community (defining how it functions), and practice (indicating what capabilities it has produced) (Wenger, 1998). This leads to meaningful, shared and coordinated activities (Akkerman et al, 2007): Key aspects of a successful CoP lie in both hard and soft sides of creating a partnership. It means on one hand a CoP has to deal with defining their own overall vision, formulating long term goals and targets on the short term. They have to formulate how to achieve those targets and create meaningful activities (reification). On the other hand a CoP has to deal with relations, trust, norms and values (participation). Reification and participation as design characteristic can provide indicators on which the CoP in Deventer can be evaluated. A lasting partnership means joining the CoP and staying. Weick provides us with a suitable model that enables us to do research and evaluate whether the CoP in Deventer is successful or not, Weick's model of means convergence.

To effectively ensure entrepreneurial learning the process in the CoP has to provide or enable action-oriented forms through Project-based activity, accompanied by reflection, with high emotional exposure (or cognitive affection) preferably caused by discontinuities to be suitable as a tool in entrepreneurial learning. Furthermore it should be accompanied by the right preconditions to work effectively and efficiently.

The evaluation of the present CoP in Deventer is done by interviewing all participants at the end of the first year of the partnership. In a structured interview, based on literature studies, all participants were separately questioned on their experiences during the first year of the CoP. Based on this interview reasons to join, stay or leave have been identified, Based on the answers a closer look on the process (reification and participation) and entrepreneurial learning is possible.

The heterogeneity of the members does play a role. Different cultures and background as well as the way members are involved in the process is leading to a number of problems that can be identified. Entrepreneurs and students are much more operating in a mutual relation in concrete activities Saxion has a much more indirect relation in the process. Saxion is focused on coordination and upholding and

expanding the network. In not organising a platform that allowed members to communicate over shared targets and goals and how to achieve them, partners will have difficulties to identify a common identity, identify meaningful activities and preferred working methods. In this way the differences between the partners prevent the CoP from growing to a self guiding CoP. The main conclusions are common ends and common means aren't articulated yet and there is no common identity.Lack of focus on meaningful activities (reification) makes it difficult to communicate and build meaningful relations (participation)

Even though improvements can be made, at the moment Adoption learning already meets the criteria for successful education on entrepreneurship. Action orientation, Interdisciplinarity, reflection and emotional exposure is an important part of the didactic concept in the CoP in Deventer.

At the moment one can state there is enough reason to join and stay in the CoP, there is enough common ground, but problem is things are not proper organised and there is a lack of vision and communication. Together with a lack of concrete results this can especially cause entrepreneurs to leave.

Designing a common identity and thereby common means and ends means to ensure reification, this is the first thing that has to be done. Partners join in because vision, goal and targets appeal to them and they expect advantage in participation. Next to that it has to be communicated in an efficient and effective way. The internet can provide a useful platform. Furthermore you need a tool that enables partners to communicate on targets and process. Based on mass customization individual agreements on what has to be done in the one on one situation can easily be made. Individual agreements between student, entrepreneur and Saxion can help to level quality and focus, but what is the biggest advantage, it directs meaningful communication and in that way it reinforces the relation between students, entrepreneur and Saxion.

Contribution to theory lays in the distinct notion that in bringing in others than teaching professionals on a regular base the nature of work also changes. More flexibility is needed than in the traditional situations as we see in dual trajectories and internship. Mass customization is a promising concept that enables parties to cooperate without disturbing teaching methods too much. All parties are in control. Furthermore working in a CoP changes business as usual for teaching professionals. Relation management becomes an important quality. Teaching professionals do have to be competent in it.

Adoption Learning as a pilot is promising, it can and will work if the above mentioned recommendations are institutionalized.

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# 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial education

Entrepreneurs and the businesses they create and run are important to economic society: they stimulate new jobs, new products and therefore new growth. Educational programs teaching entrepreneurial behaviour and knowledge are therefore crucial to a vital and healthy economy. The department of education therefore formulates the ambition to stimulate more interest on entrepreneurship in institutes for education. It means subsidizing activities that enable institutes for education together with business to organize projects that lead to a lasting interest on entrepreneurship. (Plasterk, 2008). How an institute for education, in this case Small Business & Retail Management (SB&RM), can build a lasting partnership with entrepreneurs and their business on voluntary base is subject of this project. Entrepreneurial education is not new: it comes in all shapes and sizes. Saxion University of Applied Sciences, the Business Engineering and Entrepreneurship Institute has offered the study of Small Business and Retail Management (henceforth SB&RM) in Enschede since 1996 and since September 2007 in Deventer. Main goal is to prepare students for entrepreneurship or for an entrepreneurial attitude in their later (management) function.

### 1.2 Saxion and entrepreneurial education

In short the main characteristics of the didactic concept of Small Business & Retail management (from now on SB&RM) will be explained, starting with a brief historic outline of SB&RM, which includes a definition of this concept and an explanation how it is implemented.

#### 1.2.1 The teaching philosophy

How to be(come) an successful entrepreneur or to adopt an entrepreneurial attitude is translated into 12 competences[1]. SB&RM prefers to train students in becoming entrepreneurial by coaching them on these competences in practical situations. Uncertainty, risk taking, problem orientation, opportunity recognition and problem-solving are important in these situations. Furthermore there is a strong emphasis on student reflection on their behaviour in those situations. So building in practice orientation and a multitude of real business situations are a necessity in the education. In that way students have to show entrepreneurial behaviour in situations that force them to act entrepreneurially. Being competence-driven does not necessarily make this education advanced. Other institutes do the same. What is really different is the way students are measured with respect to competence growth on and the choices students make during their education. Two conceptions that characterize the model are rather advanced:

1. Assessment-driven education: Education is based on the preparing the students on assessments. The assessments are based on situations where competences that are assessed are critical in being successful or not. The behaviour students have to show, and the results they have to obtain are operationalised. Education is based on how to train students to become successful in mastering these situations. Students are trained individually and in groups to master the assessments. Assessments are business problem oriented, and thus multi-disciplinary. Education in different disciplines is thus focused on mastering the business problems in the assessments.
2. Dialogue-driven education: Students choose their own focus within the domain of“Entrepreneurship”. When to participate in the assessments and how to prepare is partly an individual choice of the student himself. Apart from preparation in the obligatory assessments students can specialise in different areas. Some have more affinity with sales and marketing, others have their focus on internal operations, or are interested in a certain branch and in the specific qualities they need to start a business or to get a job. This is called “persoonlijke leerweg” (PLW / personal learning programme). But choices always have to be made in dialogue with their personal mentor. So in dialogue an

[1] These competences can be found in appendix 1

individual student has to choose an individual program that enables them to pass the assessments and to specialize in their specific needs.

In order to perform these activities entrepreneurial behaviour is needed. As has been said learning in practice is an important precondition. Doing real life projects that really matter in practice is one of the most important things that support learning about entrepreneurship. Knowledge about entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behaviour consists of models and theories about entrepreneurship; a lot of it is explicit knowledge. But there also is a lot of tacit knowledge about entrepreneurship; knowledge that can only be acquired by learning from practitioners. Therefore, in Enschede as well as in Deventer, the decision was made to involve entrepreneurs in the training process.

### 1.2.2 Adoption as a way of connecting education and entrepreneurs

Deventer decided to work together with real entrepreneurs from year one, which provides 2 very important issues. Entrepreneurs can provide the necessary real-life business environment and projects to work on (1), and they were asked to participate in education and function as a master scholar relation for the coming years (2).

Entrepreneurs and students 'adopt each other' as partners in education. Central theme in this relationship is '*growth in entrepreneurship*'. The adoption is mutual: entrepreneurs adopt a student for the time of their course and students adopt an entrepreneur. SB&RM calls this type of learning 'Adoption Learning'. Saxion wants to use this partnership in Adoption Learning as a feasible and effective concept for education on entrepreneurship. Saxion expects it to provide students with a more profound insight in entrepreneurship and to provide them with knowledge and skills beyond what can be achieved in a more traditional educational approach. This means a long-lasting relationship has to be established where all parties, student and entrepreneur, but also Saxion employees, have to grow in their relations. Not only students but also entrepreneurs and SME's and SB&RM as a Saxion institute can grow in entrepreneurship and gain knowledge and skills by learning from their mutual practice and the projects done by students. So all parties can profit, but they also have to invest in their relation to make 'growth in entrepreneurship' possible. This is a relatively new, but potentially fertile method of developing entrepreneurial learning by introducing the so-called community of practice (CoP) as a teaching method. The aim of this project is to clarify potential problems in organizing a long lasting partnership with entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs join in on voluntary base.

The main problem is Adoption Learning can only be successful when Saxion is able to design a partnership in which all members, but especially entrepreneurs have reasons to join and stay and if this partnership is supporting entrepreneurial learning. Important question is whether Saxion has designed a CoP that is ensuring a long lasting partnership with entrepreneurs that effectively supports entrepreneurial learning.

In order to assess the possibilities of Adoption Learning as a feasible concept and to evaluate the way Saxion has organized the CoP in Deventer this research is done. It is focused on a number of important issues. At first the design characteristics of a successful CoP have to be identified. Second, being a partnership on voluntary base, it is important to clarify group dynamics in the process of building and maintaining a CoP. Important is to identify what makes members to join and stay in a CoP and what prevents them from leaving. Based on literature study the CoP in Deventer will be evaluated on those aspects in order to assess whether Saxion has designed the CoP thus effective it will lead to a long lasting partnership. And last but not least we have to take a closer look on entrepreneurial learning to investigate whether the CoP is in fact supporting this on an effective way.

## 1.3 Communities of Practice

Communities of Practice (CoP) are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002). They consist of a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

### 1.3.1 Short history

Previously, communities came into being during work, during social events or simply by getting to know each other. They arose in different areas: business, education and social sector. First it was adopted by people in *business areas.* They recognized that knowledge is a critical asset that needs to be managed strategically. Prior efforts at managing knowledge had focused on information systems, with disappointing results. Communities of practice provided a new approach, which focused on people and on the social structures that enable them to learn with and from each other. (Wenger, 1998) In a CoP practitioners are collectively responsible for attaining and distributing the proper knowledge they need, because they know best what is important in their day to day practice. They also are in the best position to judge how this is best done. A CoP among practitioners proved to be a better way to link needs in learning on practice. It worked best simply by the fact that participants were often members of the same team or business units so they all knew the shared practice, and what could lead to improving on their performances.

Also in *education* CoP's as a method of collective learning arose, at first as peer-to-peer consultancy and peer-to-peer professional-development activities like teacher training. But there is more in education: an institute has to connect the experience of students to actual practice if possible through outside school participation. Long-lasting cooperation with outside institutes that bring in practice through year-to-year real-life business cases is one of the examples.

Also in the *social sector*, the civic domain, practitioners increasingly learn from another. Practitioners are seeking peer-to-peer connections and learning opportunities with or without the support of institutions. This includes regional economic development, with intra-regional communities in various domains, as well as inter-regional learning with communities gathering practitioners from various regions. (Wenger 1998)

Nowadays, a virtual platform where people can meet and exchange information is frequently used. Obvious advantages are accessibility, the instant availability of information and the convenience of not having to meet each other. Another advantage is the fact that discussions are registered and stored: others can read and join or learn from them.

### 1.3.2 Common Points of CoPs

As said, some CoPs are located in the same business unit, others go beyond and members are located in different business units or even different organisations. These groups can be formed by all kinds of people, provided they are interested in the same subject: employees in the same function or being confronted with the same difficulties, customers and suppliers interested in improving services or products, students, shareholders. There are three common points for a CoP.

1. ***The domain:*** It has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. Membership therefore implies a *commitment to the domain*, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people.
2. ***The community:*** In pursuing their interest in their domain, *members engage in joint activities* and discussions, help each other and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other.
3. ***The practice***: Members of a community of practice are *practitioners*. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short a *shared practice*. Sharing the practice takes time and sustained interaction.

As a result members engage in joint activities, they help each other, share knowledge and information. The relations they build are long-lasting and enable them to learn from each other. All members are practitioners in a shared domain: they share experiences in how things can be done. Growing in practice takes time and interaction to share experiences and develop ways of best practice in different settings. One of the main characteristics of a CoP is the fact that members are more or less a homogeneous group due to the common points.

### 1.4 Communities of Practice as a teaching method in entrepreneurial teaching

The opportunity of testing CoP as a teaching method arose when Saxion started the study of SB&RM Deventer. The competences in which the students at each location are being trained do not differ, the way they are being trained, however, does. The difference mainly lies in the way entrepreneurs, practitioners and best practice are introduced into education. This introduction is achieved by ensuring a close coupling between students and entrepreneurs for the full length of their course. As already mentioned, the method they chose was 'Adoption learning',

Saxion tutors, entrepreneurs and students 'adopt each other' as partners in education. Students learn best practices and are able to connect theory to practice, entrepreneurs are able to bring in their projects and take advantage of gaining professional knowledge Saxion, students and also other practitioners can provide. They also can take advantage in having students working on projects that otherwise would not have been executed due to lack of time or money. Saxion gains access to real life entrepreneurial settings and thus keeps their knowledge on entrepreneurial education up-to-date. As a result they can grow in entrepreneurship and learn from best practice.

Adoption learning shows all the characteristics as mentioned above: shared central domain: (practice in) *'entrepreneurship'*, *joint activities*, and all members are *practitioners in the shared domain*. Therefore from now on I refer to Adoption Learning as a CoP.

#### 1.4.1 Partners in the CoP[2].

Starting up the partnership with all participants, tutors of Saxion institute SB&RM, students and entrepreneurs can be seen as starting up a network (Hildreth et al, 2002, Kidwell et al, 2000). Partnership is open to new entrants, and members can act in different relations: students can work together for one or more entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs can seek students and colleague-entrepreneurs in projects. The common body of knowledge is built on practice in entrepreneurship. Partners in the adoption trajectory which lasts for at least three years are:

**Entrepreneur / practitioners**: The entrepreneur / practitioners that participated in the first year differ a lot from each other in size and type of organization but they all are located near Deventer. 14 of 16 entrepreneurs continued in year 2.

**Students SB&RM in Deventer**: 17 students have their own adoption organization. Two of them switched to other, better matching, organisations and entrepreneurs, one during the year, one at the end of the year. They are more similar than the entrepreneurs and their organizations. These students have been interviewed. 16 of 17 students took active part in the research.

**Tutors and mentors of SB&RM in Deventer:** 4 colleagues (2 male and 2 female with a total amount of 2,5 full time equivalent) from Enschede started up in Deventer. They are all familiar with the didactic concept in Enschede and started preparations in January 2007. They had to face several problems. One of the biggest problems they had to master was to find enough entrepreneurs / practitioners to make a one-on-one match with students. The second problem was to find students, as this course started in Deventer for the first year. And last but not least, how to construct the new curriculum, how to design and fit in the different tasks that could prepare students for assessments they had to pass during their propaedeutics.

#### 1.4.2 Characteristics of Adoption Learning

Education on entrepreneurship in Deventer has the following characteristics:

- Students come into contact with entrepreneurship in their adoption organization. In the adoption organization students shape their individual trajectory in getting to know entrepreneurship, the organisation and the processes that take place.
- In the adoption organization students can study theory in real life. The entrepreneur or other employees should act as sounding boards: "Why does the theory, the model, in that case lead to this solution or process flow?" So students have to reflect on what they are doing and learning. An important part is reflection on their personal growth. (nieuwe zin:) The competence model

[2] See appendix 2 for a complete overview

describes entrepreneurial behaviour. In that way entrepreneurs should function as their personal advisor or coach.

- Students work on real life projects in the adoption organization. These projects can be brought in by SB&RM, by the entrepreneur, the student, or in dialogue with all three. Entrepreneurs and organizations can benefit from projects that possibly would not have been conducted if there had been no student available.
- For several bigger projects students perform in groups (3 – 4 persons). Different projects mean different groups. These groups can perform projects in one adoption organization (one organization gets more students to accomplish the project) or even in an outside organization. Full-time students have to experience entrepreneurship and the way organizations work in different situations.
- Adoption organizations are not bound only to their own student to accommodate their projects. Projects, organizations and students can be seen in different combinations. Through these projects students and entrepreneurs / organizations can learn from each other.
- Participants operate in a network, new entrants have access, and participation in the network is voluntary.

According to its characteristics, using Adoption Learning as a tool and working closely with entrepreneurs in real life projects, Saxion should expect it to be a promising concept for education on entrepreneurship. Students can expect it to give insight in entrepreneurship and to provide them with knowledge and skills, and entrepreneurs can expect business development.

But in order to be a successful concept some preconditions have to be met. First the CoP has to be outlined in a way a long-lasting partnership with the three parties is possible. Second, there are expectations about advantages to parties; all parties have to grow in entrepreneurship, in knowledge, in practice, in results on projects. Furthermore, the process and activities have to provide an environment in which entrepreneurial learning is assured.

### 1.5 Relevance of the project and the research.

As mentioned earlier, entrepreneurs and the businesses they initiate and run are vital to a strong and growing economy. Finding ways of teaching young entrepreneurs to be best prepared for the challenges facing them is important. So It is relevant to investigate whether the concept is promising as a successful and effective way to educate students on entrepreneurship on one hand and if it will it lead to more entrepreneurship in the end on the other hand. The other aspect of interest is whether SB&RM is able to organize this concept effectively and efficiently within their means.
At the moment Adoption Learning in Deventer is only one year in practice. Starting up was at the end of a creative process due to the fact it has to be done differently but within the concept. Saxion employees worked it out without any model as an example, also without any theoretical concept or design. After one year SB&RM is anxious to get insight in the results of Adoption Learning and how it can be best organized. Main contributions in this research to theory and empiric field lay in doing research on problems that occur when partners are rather heterogeneous and on how the CoP can be used as a tool in entrepreneurial education. In that way it not only extends knowledge on CoPs and its usefulness in general, it also leads to insights in a field in which CoPs previously did not function, namely as a teaching method.

The research covers several problems SB&RM has to cope with:
Problem in knowledge and background: A CoP works in homogeneous groups: here the partners are rather different. Furthermore, the CoP should have the characteristics that effectively support entrepreneurial learning. It is important to know if the CoP is effective under these conditions and how it can even be improved.
Practical problem: to use Adoption Learning as a tool to organise learning activities, an institute for higher education has to build a long-lasting relationship with entrepreneurs on a voluntary base. So the process has to ensure a long-lasting relation that not only attracts new members but also keeps them active and cooperative for several years.

Just as relevant are the expected gains for both the entrepreneurs taking part, and for Saxion, who strives to be leading in entrepreneurial education. By tapping into this new entrepreneurial teaching philosophy they might be able to develop entrepreneurial teaching even further.

### 1.6 Problem Formulation

As stated earlier, in most Communities of Practice partners are very similar. Partners mostly share a common knowledge and background. Cooperation and contribution to the community is the effect of the common interest of all partners. Only in that way long-lasting relations make sense for members of the community. (Wenger 1998, 2001, 2002 Storck and Hill, 2000)

Typical in the SB&RM-community, are the *differences* between the partners. The Community consists of students, entrepreneurs and members of an institution for higher education. They have different characteristics and they do not share the same knowledge. Different partners can have different objectives and motivation. Differences in knowledge and background can lead to severe problems in cooperation. As said heterogeneity can lead to differences in targets the members want to achieve. Furthermore it can lead to distinct differences in how to execute activities and the desired results. It is therefore very important to adjust individual and group targets. Another important issue is the recognition professional inside and outside the institute for higher education have to cooperate to ensure entrepreneurial learning. Something teaching professionals are not used to do. Therefore it is important to identify possible factors that can influence teaching processes and/or results. In doing so Saxion hopes to get insight in the management actions to reinforce the CoP as a possible cornerstone to future entrepreneurship education

Thus, building long-lasting relations can be very complicated. Solid relations for longer periods are nevertheless inevitable in using CoP as a means in an educational concept that takes approximately 4 years.

#### 1.6.1 Research objective

Starting a CoP as a teaching method can be promising, but can it be done with partners with personal differences, differences in knowledge and maybe differences in goals and how they want to achieve them? In Deventer the concept has been in use as of September 2007. The research is based on the experiences of the different members during the first year. The pilot started on a small scale with a relatively small number of students and entrepreneurs. But it also has to work on a larger scale and for more years. Feelings are mixed at the moment. Results tend to be promising but the concept of a CoP as a tool in entrepreneurial education has to work on larger scale and for a longer period.
To deal with the problems as posed in paragraph 1.5 SB&RM has to get a clear insight on:

- Design characteristics of an effective and efficient operating CoP in order to redesign or optimize this CoP when necessary. These characteristics have to be clear (participants, activities, cooperation) and also what preconditions make them optimally function.
- Important group dynamics that take place in building and maintaining a CoP to assure results on cooperation.
- Ways to assess a CoP on the process.
- The characteristics of the CoP SB&RM designed, and in what way this CoP is different from other CoPs.
- The main characteristics of entrepreneurial learning and what processes provide sufficient support; do we find these characteristics in the process of the CoP?

To make sure this is possible, Saxion SB&RM wants to evaluate the concept of Adoption Learning and to formulate ways to optimize preconditions that enable a long-lasting partnership, which provides sufficient value for all partners, thereby determining whether ‘Adoption Learning’ as a leading concept is useful[3] in education on entrepreneurship

[3] Useful is defined as: (1) the actual outcome has to support students in obtaining knowledge, skills and competences and (2) it has to be a concept that ensures stable relations with entrepreneurs that can be managed in an efficient en effective way.

Figure 1.1 provides an overview of how research on the CoP is done. It is important to identify what design characteristics are crucial in a CoP. Starting up a partnership organizing it is all about dealing with group dynamics. How group dynamics affect in starting and maintaining a CoP has to be investigated. Participants will be questioned on how they experience these characteristics and how they assess the group dynamics. Based on research on literature and the comparison with research on the process in Deventer the design characteristics SB&RM uses in Deventer thus can be evaluated. These characteristics will provide reasons to join and to stay in the CoP and have to prevent members from leaving. Only if they do, it can lead to a lasting cooperation. Based on this outcome the process in Deventer can be evaluated, and eventually recommendations can be made on how to improve the process. Furthermore, main purpose of the CoP is to be a tool in education in entrepreneurship. Research on literature has to identify important characteristics in entrepreneurial learning. Based on the outcome in learning activities and on how different members value them it can be concluded whether the design characteristics in the process support entrepreneurial learning sufficiently and whether improvement is needed.

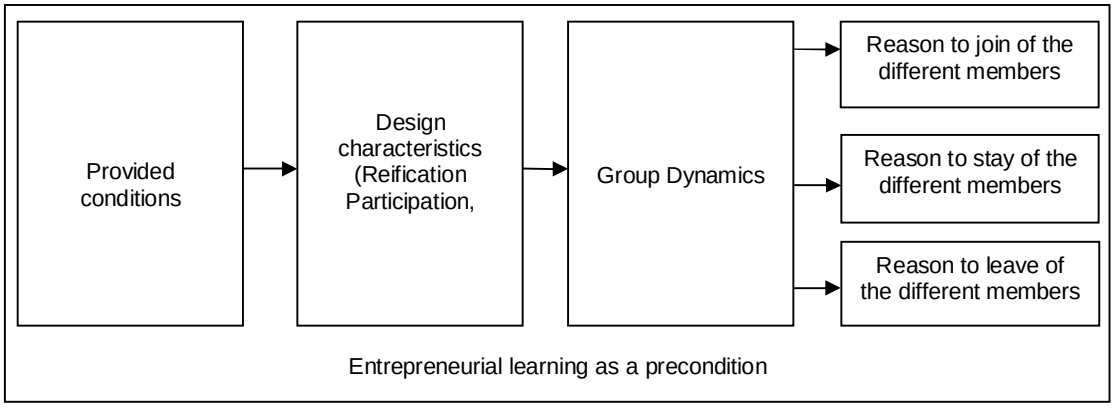


Fig. 1.1 Research on the CoP.

In chapter 2 we have to design the theoretical framework that makes it possible to do research on the process, and the effect the process has on participation (reasons to join, reasons to stay and even reasons to leave) and entrepreneurial learning.

### 1.6.2 Problem formulation and research questions

Key issue is to determine to which extent long term and short term objectives of all partners in the CoP participation in Deventer are being reached and which key factors are important to make sure continuity in partnership is assured. Long-lasting partnership is essential. Adjusting the process to optimise entrepreneurial learning is probably not that difficult.

In order to solve this problem, several steps have to be taken, as said. First of all, an investigation into how a CoP works and how its efficiency and effectiveness can be measured. Secondly there has to be an evaluation of the present CoP in Deventer in order to determine its usefulness.

There are 2 main aspects to this evaluation.
Aspect 1: Apparently a CoP has to be organised in a way participants have reasons to join the CoP and reasons to stay and to meet the expectations of the different participants.
Aspect 2: The process and activities have to provide an environment in which entrepreneurial learning is assured

**Research questions**

1. What design characteristics define a successful CoP?
2. What group dynamics take place in starting up and maintaining a CoP and in what way do different design characteristics have an effect on the decision to join and to stay in the CoP?
3. What are the main characteristics of entrepreneurial learning and how can be measured the CoP is effectively supporting those characteristics?
4. Does the process in the CoP in Deventer actually meet the design characteristics that characterizes successful CoP's and in a way it effectively supports entrepreneurial learning?
5. In what way Saxion institute SB&RM can effectively provide, and if necessary improve on preconditions in the CoP?

**General outline of the report**

In general the outline of the report is as follows. In Chapter 2, the theory and relevant notions are presented in order to deliver a model in which relevant variables are accommodated. Chapter 3 outlines the research method, type of research, action plan, population, collection and processing of the data and the analysis procedure. In the following chapters conclusions and recommendations are presented.

# 2. Theoretical Framework

Main target of this chapter, as said in the introduction is first to provide insight in a CoP and the design characteristics that are crucial. Second it is important to describe the dynamics in a CoP. Individuals have their reasons to join and stay. But in a CoP individuals have to cooperate with others. This means individual targets and working methods have to match with group targets, and common agreements in how targets can best be achieved. Important is to identify how a CoP cooperates and what dynamics affect its performance and thereby give individuals reasons to join, stay or leave the CoP. Third, to evaluate the CoP as a tool for education in entrepreneurship, it is important to identify the main characteristics of entrepreneurial learning.

In the first part of this chapter the questions dealing with providing a successful partnership will be addressed. In order to conclude how this partnership looks like we have to look at key aspects of a successful CoP and what makes them work. Main target is to assess how the CoP in Deventer can be evaluated on design characteristics and partnership. After that a short outline on entrepreneurial learning is presented. It explains how the design characteristics in a process and the activities that take place can be evaluated in order to assess the quality of entrepreneurial learning. It also has to explain how processes and activities can lead to business and entrepreneurial development. This theory also deals with the reasons why Saxion embraced Adoption Learning. Main target is to provide indicators on which the process can be evaluated as a tool for education on entrepreneurship.

## 2.1 Aspects of a successful Community of Practice

This section has to lead to identification of design characteristics and indicators that enable the evaluation of the design characteristics in Deventer. Furthermore it has to lead to a model in which Adoption Learning as a CoP can be evaluated after 1 year of practice.
A CoP is a group activity. Individuals have to meet with other individuals and together they have to start and maintain a meaningful relationship. This leads to the following discussion on collaborating in a CoP. Why individuals join and stay a CoP has to be evaluated (in other words: how can the CoP prevent them from leaving). Research has to give insight in the experiences of the different participants, particularly considering the way results are to be assessed after 1 year and the way the CoP is acting[4].

### 2.1.1 The nature of collaboration

How do professional learning communities get started and how do they survive? Key to this concept is the ongoing interplay between the notion of the community and its demand for a shared perspective, and the community's focus on professional growth and the inherent need to consider individual needs (Dooner et al 2008).

There are two different kinds of CoPs (Julius 2007). The first can be seen as a community that originates spontaneously and is self-regulating. The second type is sponsored and / or regulated, mostly within organisations. Especially in organized CoPs, as in this case, a sense of ownership is needed to lead members to meaningful activities. Simply organizing it around activities does not lead to a sustainable CoP. If there is no clear reason felt by the participants to collaborate, there is no point in organizing a shared platform and proposing concrete activities. A balance in outside initiation and self-emergence is very important. The time given for and attention paid to formulating needs and aims of the group is precondition to a successful sustainable partnership. (Akkerman et al, 2007).

Joining and staying in a CoP is an individual action. Members have individual motives and expectations. But joining a CoP means to become part of a group. *Individual motives* have to fit in *group motives. Individual activities and ways of working* have to fit in *joined activities and group perspectives on how things are best done*. A clear *group identity* according to goals and targets, norms and values is of utmost importance, especially in attracting potential members.

[4] the terms used in the model will be clarified in paragraph 2.1.3 an 2.1.4 The model itself will be presented in fig 2.2

Research on collaboration in a CoP made clear:
Although people join with their own expectations (of group work), they also have to *define each others' action* so they can fit in and thus create a shared practice (Hildreth et al 2000, Weick et al 2005, Cohen and Pruzak, 2001).
A group's *shared history and culture* can provide stability and predictability (Selsznick, 1992).
*Mutual understanding* is needed, a sense of belonging built on trust. However, interpersonal tension often makes people uncomfortable. This is mostly caused by opposing and divergent interests, often identified as either cognitive or affective. (Dooner, 2008, Amason, Schweiger, 1997 and others) state: Cognitive conflict is related to problem-solving, and alternative viewpoints enhancing the group's collective ideas. They turn to more destructive affective conflicts when they lead to feelings of friction, frustration and personality clashes. So it can be stated that the source of a strong community, *shared identity* and *meaningful relationships*, eventually become source of tension for its members. A strong common identity can thus be reason to join a CoP, on the other hand it can also become a reason to leave when in time differences in ideas appear; for instance in goals to reach, norm and values, and how to act as a member, and members grow apart.
A first conclusion tells: people start to collaborate or join a community with certain expectations; their expectations will be derived from the common identity of the community and what the community communicates. When expectations are met, participants will stay. But they only stay when the relational structure and culture does not lead to tensions. This includes the way they think the community has to accomplish its activities. But the most important question at this moment is how can be measured whether people will join or stay.

### 2.1.2 Sense making as a precondition for meaningful collaboration

First we have to look at what makes it possible to start up and to stay in a meaningful collaboration. A successful collaboration in a CoP has to provide the creation of a shared practice, the building of a stable and predictable environment and the avoiding of tension. How to assess a CoP on preconditions that assure a smooth long-lasting collaboration is the next step.

In new loosely formed organizations people who engage with each other have to make sense about what it is they are involved in. Without making sense meaningful actions won't take place. Sense making involves the ongoing retrospective development of plausible images that rationalize what people are doing. Sense making functions as a station that turns circumstances into situations that can be comprehended, and serves as springboard to action. (Weick et al, 2005)

As Weick et al (2005) state, the operative image of every organization (in this sense a CoP is an organization) is one in which operations emerge through sense making, not one in which organization precedes sense making or one in which sense making is produced by the organization. So not only organizational means / resources / structures are important to act effectively, but also an *image* of the organization that acts as a common identity that supports sense making. It is important to find a balance between initiation and the emergence of a CoP. Initiating a CoP is not about organizing activities but about organizing participation and ownership of that participation. Avoid focussing on coordination of activities and instead, start from the domain, in terms of crating space and time for the group to determine themselves why and how it is meaningful for them to collaborate (Akkerman et al, 2007).

However, it is important to notice that
- The environment and its social and cultural context is also playing a big role in sense making: we have to take into account that it directs attention and focus.
- Sense making is not always done in great harmony, members can think differently about what is best to do in different situations, especially when information is not equally distributed along members.
- People in organizations do not always have the same power; the way power in organizations is distributed and used, affects voting and voting power and thus sense making and how and why actions are taken.

- The more people feel connected, the more they feel familiar, the more they have common expectations. Acting as can be expected generates strong positive emotions, and vice versa. Violating important expectations leads to less familiar less safe partnerships.

So joining and staying depends very much on satisfaction: First partners have to subscribe community visions, targets and methods, (reason to join) and secondly participation in the community has to be as expected and also provide individual satisfaction results and participation, which means relational aspects (reason to stay). This means every CoP has to develop artefacts, tools, procedures, history and language, which reify some aspect of its practice. Without this potential participants do not know what can be expected and whether individual targets can be achieved in joining the CoP. Participation and reification are indivisible. As shown in fig 2.2, Wenger (1998) emphasises that participation and reification are analytically separable, but in reality are a single duality - one cannot replace the other. Both sides have to be in balance and in proportion. Hildreth and Kimble (2002) state : "*If participation prevails - if most of what matters is left unreified - then there may not be enough material to anchor the specifities of coordination and to uncover diverging assumptions. While, if reification prevails - if everything is reified but with little opportunity for shared experience and interactive negotiation - then there may not be enough overlap in participation to recover a coordinated relevant or generative meaning. This helps explain why putting everything in writing does not seem to solve all our problems*".

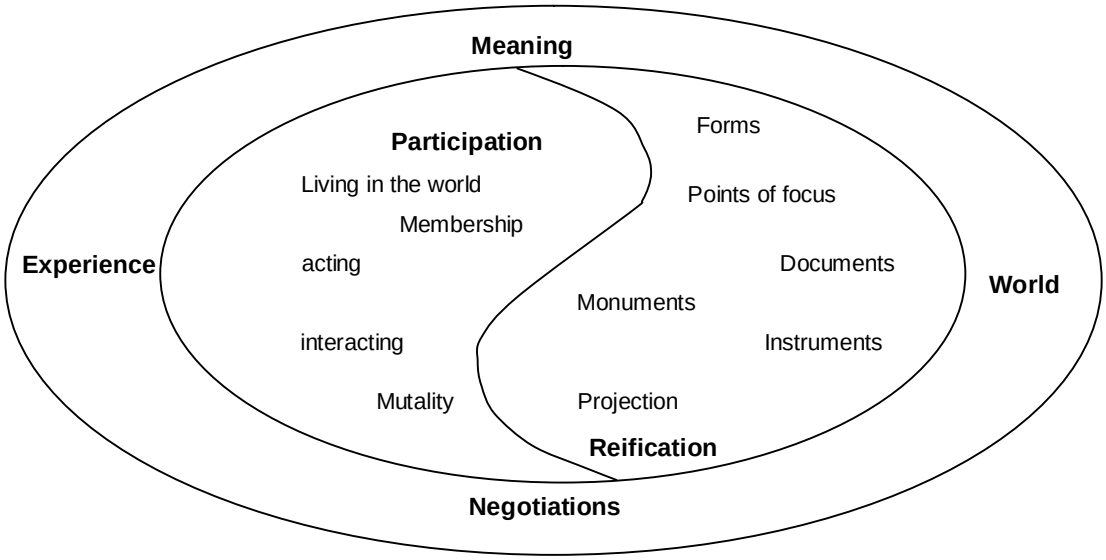


Figure 2.1. The duality of participation and reification (from Wenger, 1998)

So success of the CoP lies in the way it ensures the creation of both hard and soft sides of the partnership. In the next paragraph Weick's model of mean convergence will be used to reveal how both, hard and soft side, provide reasons to join and reasons to stay or leave. As will be shown the way a CoP acts in the process by using both aspects makes the CoP bind participants effectively or not. Whether a CoP comes into existence and is successful or not depends on a number of conditions. Evaluations and literature show that successful CoPs differ from less or non-successful CoPs. The way certain key-factors are valued by the different participants indicates whether a CoP is successful or not. Indicators based on research and assembled to both aspects can be found in the next section (Filius, Schoenmaker. 2007, Cohen and Prusak, 2001). Reification and participation are the variables that lead us to indicators on which a CoP can be evaluated:

**Reification.** Overall goals and long– and short-term targets define the success of the CoP. The success of a CoP is very dependent on the targets of the organisations and the participants. Because results define the success of the CoP it is crucial to formulate targets transparent for all parties (Filius, 2007).

Furthermore meaningful activities and common methods have to be clear and communicated in an effective and efficient way

**Participation.** Relational aspects and their durability: Functioning as a community depends very much on the fact whether members of the community share the same values and the same common organization –identity between the different members and networks (Schoenmaker, 2007). First in relations a sense of trust, mutual understanding, shared values and standard are precondition to attract and keep new members.

The design characteristics of a successful CoP have to meet reification and participation as described above. They lead to a *common identity*. In developing (new) CoPs a shared common identity is very important. Joining and staying is all about transparent communication about; (1) goals and targets that are important to all members, (2) projects and procedures, (3) mutual contribution. It has to communicate the common advantage in joining the CoP and this depends on the quality of the members and their problem-solving capacity.

Furthermore Filius (2007) identifies indicators that are crucial in facilitating a starting CoP. Facilitation heavily depends on the support of the organization that initiates it and whether the resources needed are provided and the CoP is properly supported. Especially in starting up a CoP, facilitation is crucial. After research and presenting the results recommendations on facilitation based on the findings will complete the results.

### 2.1.3 Connecting individual and common needs in a CoP

Having identified the design characteristics of the process, the next step is to connect the individual and his needs to the community. Reasons to join and stay are partly due to individual choices but also due to evaluation on community behaviour. Congruence between the individual and the group is important.

The development of a community is a continuous struggle between 'collective obligation' and 'individual preference'. But according to Weick (1979) group members' interdependence has to be centred on their needs to get the job done rather than on individual preferences. 'Weick offers a model of the stages in the collaborative process. Using this model can evaluate the starting phase of a CoP. (Weicks model of means convergence):

1. Individuals motivated by their personal expectations, unite on a common interest or a shared passion; meaningful collaboration stems from initial overlapping of values. They try to find out whether they share enough common ground to potentially work together although their *diverse ends* (expectations, own targets etc) remain private.
2. If a shared group interest can be derived and identified, members' interdependence becomes centred on the development of their *common means* or their practice to achieve the groups' goals. But consider that, while collaborating, the personal intentions and expectations remain disconnected. These differences can eventually create conflicts.
3. When the group begins to reflect an overriding concern for its own survival, the groups' practice now develops *common ends*. (Including different roles of the members, sanctions etc.) This can work both ways, it can energize the group or do the opposite, drain its energy.
4. Conformity and uniformity can cause its own fall, individuals sometimes tend to react on it and show non-conformist behaviour. Individuals can pursue *diverse means* or acts. At this point a community can split in sub-groups or simply fade away.

So both hard and soft side provide reasons to join (diverse ends (1)) and reasons to stay (common means and common ends (2,3)) or leave (diverse means (3)). To bind participants both should be managed in a proper way. Saxion in particular is responsible. Evaluation has to be done on indicators that make it possible to measure relevant variables in the model.

Weick's model makes it possible to score the CoP on 'means convergence'. It can give insight in the long-term viability of the CoP. It provides us with individual and group reasons to join, to stay or to leave.

## 2.2 The research model

The next important step is to build a research model that makes it possible to evaluate the success of the CoP in Deventer. Weicks' model makes it possible to identify reasons to join, stay and leave. Design characteristics, reification and participation have to make sure partners will stay and potential new partners will join in.

### 2.2.1. Reasons to join and diverse ends

**Individual motivation**

Reasons to join mainly lie in diverse ends. Potential participants join Adoption Learning hoping to achieve their individual targets. This will only happen if the targets the different participants formulate fit the CoP and if there is a similarity and overlap in the different targets. Furthermore it is important participants do not expect disadvantages. Individual reasons to join and stay have to be compared with each other in order to check whether individual motives are in line with group motives. Individual motivation to join and stay can be found in shared common grounds. Reasons to join can be either personal (personal motives like personal growth, or a personal relation) or the motive is more toward organizational motives (business development, getting projects done).

**Common ground**

"Group members want from each other to be liked and trusted before committing, people differ and this also means in character", says Dooner (2008) according to Weick.(1979)
So it is necessary to find out if they trust each other and how they esteem the trustworthiness of their partners: do they have the same values, norms they expect the others to have, do they need a contract to participate. Partners believe shared group activities can only occur if they develop their own unique implementation of the practice they personally wanted to achieve (Dooner, 2008). There has to be enough in common in the diverse ends to build a meaningful practice on. Otherwise potential conflicts by having different personal ethics, abilities and quality of work would frustrate the effort to collaborate. And not all that unimportant; is there a sense of quality in partners.

### 2.2.2. Reason to stay: common ends and common means

According to Weick (1979), common ends and common means do not interfere with diverse ends. First of all, common ends: in order to determine whether this is possible, we have to clarify if the group identifies shared activities that helped to establish common 'points of contact'. (Dooner 2008) The overlap on target and goals, a clear idea of what is expected is essential. Investments in group activities have to be considered meaningful. Commitment to the group and a sense of unity is enforcing. Secondly, common means: can shared activities be identified that help to establish common 'points of contact'? The activities that take place and what members think of them are very important. Mutual understanding, relational aspects and trust are essential. As stated earlier an overriding vision is essential. A leader and a common script with common goals become important. Furthermore there need to be clear agreements on common tasks and goals to be achieved. Meetings are very important to establish mutual trust.

It is very important to mention the fact that at this stage Saxion is the activator and makes the rules. Contrary to how a CoP usually operates, Saxion is the leading organizing party. Taking the lead unmistakably means defining targets and actions and having to communicate openly and transparently to all partners. It also means ensuring targets and actions are in line with those of the different participants.

### 2.2.3. Reason to leave, Diverse means

Weariness on the demands of the group has to be prevented. One of the most important things is an alignment of individual intentions and individual targets. Results on expected targets have to match the realized targets after the first year and members have to be satisfied about them. Members need to realize that targets are being met by participating in the CoP that could not have been realized otherwise. Participants have to realize that participating in the CoP brings advantages in networking and

knowledge. Furthermore the members have to identify interdependency and how the group copes with it, accept that professional relationships become social relationships and realize the effect on the group. Critical incidents are important, positive incidents should be enforced, negative incidents should be evaded.

The combination of earlier identified design characteristics and Weicks model leads to the research model (fig 2.2). Reification and participation have to lead to reason to join and reason to stay. In doing so Weick's model can effectively be used to measure what in the CoP makes different members will join, stay or leave the CoP and in what way Saxion can optimise the CoP and thus preventing members to leave.

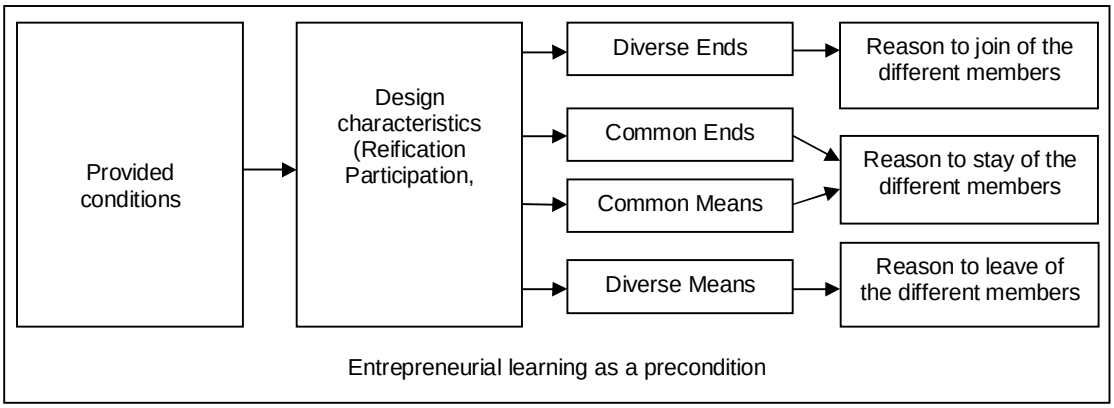


Fig. 2.2 Relationship between optimization of the CoP, the process and activities in the CoP, reason to join and reason to stay.

Considering there are different members in the CoP it has to be possible to analyse if different members have different reasons to join and reasons to stay. Students differ, but issues that might be of importance in evaluating the CoP can be prior education (the preliminary course), how are they connected with the entrepreneur, or the total amount on ECTS at the end of the propaedeutics. Also entrepreneurs are different. The type of business might be of importance.

The variables in the model will be operationalized in the next chapter. Interviews based on these variables will first enlighten whether the process gives individual entrepreneurs, students and Saxion employees reasons to join, stay or leave. They will give insight in how different participants evaluate how the design characteristics, participation and reification, in the process are being modelled. We then know how Saxion has designed its own CoP. Finally, based on this evaluation recommendations can be formulated in order to improve on the process ensuring a long-lasting partnership.

### 2.3 Entrepreneurial learning

The last step in this framework is to identify the main characteristics of entrepreneurial learning. As stated, a very important aspect in the COP in Deventer is that it should provide a sound concept in which entrepreneurial learning is possible. The design characteristics in the CoP have to ensure and optimize entrepreneurial learning. By entrepreneurial learning we understand: teaching students to be an entrepreneur and in a broader sense how entrepreneurs can learn (Man, 2005). Entrepreneurship education is directly related to educational activities in a teaching environment. It is used to define all educational activities by means of lessons, courses, projects, and initiatives, programs that are meant to make it possible to students and pupils to obtain certain entrepreneurial competences and in doing so to prepare them for entrepreneurship (Van den Berghe, 2007). To be effective as a tool in entrepreneurial learning both aspects, entrepreneurship education and making sure also entrepreneurs can learn, have to be met in Adoption Learning. In the next paragraph modern theories on entrepreneurial learning are clarified.

**Theories on Entrepreneurial learning**

Man (2005) states that entrepreneurial learning is important because it is closely linked to the creation, survival and growth of the SME's. Simulating Entrepreneurial learning requires the creation of an uncertain and ambiguous context which forces students to step outside taken-for-granted assumptions about the educational process. In adding ambiguity and uncertainty to an educational process one replicates the circumstances in which an 'entrepreneur' founds a business (Pittaway, 2005). Students have to be able to handle risks in order to learn to deal with uncertainty, an important aspect of entrepreneurship. This inevitably leads to emotional exposure.

Because of its importance, prior studies have been devoted to studying entrepreneurial learning by applying different learning theories. They can be classified under experiential (Kolb 1984, Ulrich, Cole 1987, Von Glasersfeld, 1995, Löbler, 2005), cognitive/affective and psychological approaches. (Gibb, 1997; Shaw, 1997, Man, 2005). They differ in approach but in general they all focus on action, experimentation and reflection,

Education and training for the entrepreneur addresses specifically behavioural modification, and not separate skill acquisition, knowledge transfer and attitudinal change. It focuses on the provision of appropriate contexts which induce the development of entrepreneurial behaviours, especially if you also want entrepreneurs to learn, besides the students. Simulation should get more attention in (pre) start-up and entrepreneurial training. (Man, 2005)

This means a curriculum for entrepreneurship education should be built on three cornerstones: Action, reflection and interdisciplinarity. (M. Löwegren, 2005). So careful educational and tutorial design is needed, Gibb (2005) designed a framework that connects didactic methods to entrepreneurial behaviour or competences it has to train[5]. It requires some form of *Project-based activity* that is 'hands-on'. The problem-based design encourages adaptation; decision-making; linkage between management theory and practice; learning through experience; and, the convergence of disparate management knowledge.

But doing this needs to be accompanied by *reflection*[6]. Research shows the important role of experiential learning in this process. *Emotional exposure* mostly via groups undertaking time restricted problems does effectively simulate entrepreneurial learning. Problem based learning encourages *action-orientation*. Both aspects are important elements in entrepreneurial education[7]. *Creation of discontinuities* is hard to achieve, but nevertheless very important.
It also illustrates the important role of *the interaction between theory and practice*. Without the students' prior experience of other management education (e.g. marketing; financial management) the learning experience would not have been as successful. But precondition to work in an insecure environment on tasks that are new and unknown is prior knowledge; this is an important starting point in experiential learning. Project-based activities as in Action Learning[8] can only be mastered successfully under the right preconditions. (Revans, 1979, 1982, Pittaway, 2005).

The research questions deal with design characteristics that make the CoP successful and how Saxion provides these characteristics. Thus equally important is how well preconditions are met to make Adoption Learning work. Preconditions are:

- Well-defined projects, transparent targets.
- Transparent roles of the different participants.
- Well-prepared students that posses the necessary prior knowledge.
- Well-defined outcome for the different partners, what can be expected and how to assess the outcome
- Evaluation on the outcome

[5] See also Appendix 3 Allan Gibb (2005)
[6] Essential in the Experiential Liberalist view of management education.(Gibb, 2005, Burt, 2000, Löwegren, 2005)
[7] Mirrors to a degree experiences of entrepreneurs
[8] See also Appendix 4, Action Learning, action research and experiential learning, sensemaking in doing

So theoretically, to be successful as a concept for entrepreneurial learning the design characteristics of the CoP have to provide: action-oriented forms (experiential learning) through Project-based activity (projects in real life), accompanied by reflection (mirror the entrepreneur and own activities), with high emotional exposure (or cognitive affection) preferably caused by discontinuities (uncertainty, games, deadlines, contests) accompanied by the right preconditions. In the next chapters these design characteristics will be compared with the actual design in Deventer

**Entrepreneurial learning and innovation**

Entrepreneurship in a broad sense can be defined as the ability to recognise an opportunity, to gather sufficient resources, and to act on the opportunity. So it is not equivalent to starting up a new enterprise. Typically entrepreneurs do what others do *not* expect, which is defined as innovation and creativity. But the learning processes at school as well as at universities do typically not support self-reliance and autonomy of the learning individuals.

Today CoPs receive great attention in educational and organizational practice and research. Research shows that it can lead to organizations that can deal better with political, social and economic conditions in which they exist and potentially lead to competitive and innovative ideas, (Akkerman e.a, 2007) Successful innovation in entrepreneurship education involves a partnership between key stakeholders (Gillingham, 2005). The reason that it is successful is because it uses students as consultants to entrepreneurs and SMEs. It is a powerful method in entrepreneurial learning and innovation because it provides a two-way learning vehicle in which supervised students gain valuable insights into entrepreneurial businesses and the businesses gain low cost consulting services. According to its characteristics, using the CoP in Adoption Learning as a tool and working closely with entrepreneurs in real life projects, entrepreneurs can expect business development in having students working on projects inside their organisation and getting feedback on their entrepreneurship. A typical partnership between stakeholders in this sense mostly includes: the individual (student and entrepreneur), an educational institution; employers, and possibly others (e.g. government agencies; local non-profit organisations). In order to be successful the CoP has to provide this partnership.

So design characteristics have to lead to growth in knowledge of the entrepreneur or the organization and business development of the organization. Whether this is the case or not has to be evaluated. Based on the results after one year the process can be evaluated in the way it supports entrepreneurial learning and the effect business development.

## 2.4 Conclusion

As already stated CoPs define themselves along three dimensions: domain (indicating what is it about), community (defining how it functions), and practice (indicating what capabilities it has produced) (Wenger, 1998). This leads to meaningful, shared and coordinated activities (Akkerman et al, 2007): activities become meaningful when focussing on what matters to its participants; activities become shared when there is an active sense of belonging; activity becomes coordinative, when division of work (tasks and roles) and rules are established and are subordinated to group aims. Normally a CoP is a homogeneous group considering level of knowledge and targets. In this CoP the participants differ a lot.

Key aspects of a successful CoP and what makes them work are identified. They lie in both hard and soft sides of creating a partnership. It means on one hand a CoP has to deal with defining their own overall vision, formulating long term goals and targets on the short term. They have to formulate how to achieve those targets and create meaningful activities. On the other hand a CoP has to deal with relations, trust, norms and values. Reification and participation, diverse ends, common ends, common means, diverse means and entrepreneurial learning, can provide indicators on which the CoP in Deventer can be evaluated. A lasting partnership means joining the CoP and staying. Weick provides us with a suitable model that enables us to do research and evaluate whether the CoP in Deventer is successful or not. It also enables us to formulate if necessary improvements on reification and participation, and thus eventually improving the process. The process in the CoP has to provide or enable action-oriented forms through Project-based activity, accompanied by reflection, with high emotional exposure (or cognitive affection) preferably caused by discontinuities to be suitable as a tool in entrepreneurial learning. Moreover, it should be accompanied by the right preconditions to work effectively and efficiently. The outcome in results after one year can be evaluated in order to assess the

quality of entrepreneurial learning and whether it has lead to business and entrepreneurial development. It enables the evaluation of the CoP as a tool for education on entrepreneurship.

Taking all this into account, a number of aspects become more and more clear. First: CoPs are ending. Second, the dynamics in the process unmistakably lead members through the different stages. Weick's model shows there are stages in building a CoP, both means and ends are important. If Saxion wants the CoP to work they will have to break through these mechanisms. One possible option could be the constant renewal of participants; individual membership can be allowed to end as long as the CoP as a whole stays into existence. Third, in research literature CoPs are rather homogeneous. In Deventer partners are rather heterogeneous. In more heterogeneous groups the ability to communicate to formulate common targets and meaningful activities is essential. Effective communication can especially be difficult in heterogeneous groups due to differences in knowledge and points of view:
Fourth, means and ends have to fit in entrepreneurship education. This means members are not free to choose what to do and how. From literature there is a lot of theory that makes research on CoPs possible. As the third aspect already mentioned, Deventer differs from CoPs as described in literature. Still there is enough similarity that allows to do research on Adoption Learning by using Weicks' model. Research question 1 has lead us to reification and participation as design characteristics for a successful CoP. In order to evaluate the group dynamics, research question 2, we identified diverse ends, common ends, common means and diverse ends as important characteristics. Research question 3 provided us with action orientation, reflection, interdisciplinarity and preconditions as important characteristics. With those characteristics we now can do research in Deventer and assess the CoP on these characteristics and provide it if necessary with proper recommendations.

| Research Question | | Variables |
|---|---|---|
| Succesful CoP | Measured in the CoP via | Reification<br>Participation |
| Group Dynamics | Measured in the CoP via | Diverse ends,<br>Common ends<br>Common means<br>Diverse means |
| Entrepreneurial learning | Measured in the CoP via | Action orientation,<br>Reflection,<br>Interdisciplinarity<br>Preconditions<br>Innovation |

The next chapter will zoom in on the research model, indicators that measure reification and participation, Weicks model and entrepreneurial learning. After that research on the CoP in Deventer can be executed.

# 3 Method

This chapter presents the type of research, the variables and how they are measured, the instrument, the population, collection and processing of the data and the analysis procedure.

## 3.1 Research type

General aim of the study is the CoP as has been conducted from 31 – 8 – 2007 through 31 – 8 – 2008, especially the way in which Adoption Learning, as a CoP, can lead to a positive outcome for the participants of the trajectory, making them stay as a member and potentially attract other members. Even though 'growing in entrepreneurship', being the central theme in the CoP for all participants, beneficial outcome, or success can be described differently for the different partners. In Adoption Learning I was especially interested in how participants have experienced the process. When you are doing research in a CoP, you are looking at the performance, in this case the processes that take place and the results they have. Important is to figure out what works and why. Looking for best practice can be of help. In what way does performance influence the actual outcome?

Assessing performance in professional practice can be a problem. Observing performance or interviewing the participants in the process can be part of it, but checking results or the perception of result is even more important. This often means to question members on the project about details they often have not even considered during the first year of their partnership. Answers will often not exactly match the question and it surely is often needed to question again in a different way to gain full understanding. Looking at the so-called quantitative – qualitative dichotomy (Grix 2004, pg. 122) it is obvious to choose qualitative techniques.

**Interview**

Taking interviews will be most appropriate in discovering facts and opinions. In this way participants, taking part in the process can reveal their emotions, the way they value the process and the results that occurred or did not. This can also reveal whether results were expected or not. Mistakes and misunderstandings can be quickly identified and cleared up. Table 4.1 will only present the answers in a short overview[9]. It presents the researchers interpretation of the answers. In the second part, a closer look on the process, the respondents own words will be used as much as possible to tap in to their personal feelings and remarks.

**Critical incidents**

Originally Critical Incidents Technique was used to assess performance in health care. The aim is to get a better understanding of the interaction between patients and professionals. More recently applications also include supported reflection in education (Urquhart, 2003). In this case student and professional identify behaviour of both parties that leads to effective outcome. In indentifying key factors that affect participant's positive and negative perception you can get insight into the processes that may make practice work. As part of the interview all respondents were asked to identify specific incidents which they experienced personally and which they thought had an important effect on the results. They were asked to identify (critical) incidents[10] rather than vague opinions about success or failure.

**Possible problems and how to tackle them.**

Reliability is very important in doing research. In this research and the chosen research method it is essential. Interdependency between participants, how to deal with anonymity, assuring uniformity in interviews and how to interpret the answers are issues to be dealt with. In the 'Deventer' situation there are 3 groups of CoP members that are interdependent. Student, entrepreneurs and Saxion all have more or less intense relations. In intense relations one is conscious not to hurt other person's feelings. It is very important to separately interview students and entrepreneur in adoption relation. Group interviews or Delphi-Method approach would not give the atmosphere to speak freely about expectations process and results. Retrospective data collection of incidents fresh in mind is acceptable.

[9] appendix 6 presents a more elaborate overview

[10] A critical incident is defined as one which had an important effect on the final outcome. Critical incidents can only be recognised retrospectively. Originally Critical Incidents Technique is used to assess performance. Respondents are asked (1) to focus on an incident which had a strong positive influence on the result of the interaction and to describe the incident, (2) to describe what led up to the incident and (3) to describe how the incident helped the successful completion of the interaction.

A problem could be the fact that the respondents are not anonymous. Anonymity is not guaranteed. In this research one of the issues is to look at possible differences between the different partner groups. Clustering on respondent characteristics has to be possible.
Limitations are well known. Grix (2004) states: anecdotalism, difficulty to generalize, immersion and loss of objectivity could be seen as criticisms of qualitative techniques like interviewing. In interviewing the whole target group and not taking a sample generalization should be covered. Immersion and anecdotalism are bigger problems; thorough questioning and standardizing the interview will help. The biggest danger in using interviews as methods of data gathering is the unstructured nature of the resulting data. They can be misinterpreted or misunderstood. Using the informant's own words as much as possible could be of assistance, but this method is less useful in structured interviews.
Important in this sort of interviews is uniformity in questions. How the questions are phrased, when and how to rephrase should be quite similar in all interviews. The questions have to have brief specifications of the type of relevant behaviour which is questioned or parts of the process they refer to. Also the interviewer has to be clear about the type of answer he wants. Furthermore using the Critical Incident Technique subjects should recall recent incidents. In order to match equality all interview can best be done by the same person. All students, entrepreneurs and Saxion employees are interviewed individually by the same person thus preventing them from copy-behaviour and copying answers and ensuring reliability. The researcher, being a colleague tutor of Saxion institute ABO department SB&RM from Enschede, is familiar with education on entrepreneurship within the didactical concept of SB&RM. Furthermore, not being a tutor in Deventer he therefore is not known to students and entrepreneurs and is likely to be more objective.

### 3.2 Variables

The research model, as outlined in Chapter 2, makes it possible to measure individual and group reasons to join, to stay or to leave, to evaluate the process on reification, participation and entrepreneurial learning. Based on the variables, the indicators have to be translated into questions. Validity is top priority. The interview questions will have to measure what the researcher wanted to measure. There has to be clarity about the interpretation of the question. After that these indicators have to be operationalized in a way in which they can be objectively measured. Uniformity in terminology for both researcher and respondent has to be ensured. Because the respondents differ, the questions have to be formulated in a way that enables comparing the different group answers. The different variables that are used in the model are members of the CoP, diverse ends, common ends, common means, diverse means (these variables provide reasons to join and stay), the process (reification and participation), and entrepreneurial learning. First the indicators and the way they can be measured will be presented.

#### Members of the CoP

In order to investigate possible differences in answers between groups and within groups the different members, students, entrepreneurs and Saxion employees have to be characterized. The main characteristics of the different members have briefly been discussed in Chapter 1. There are 3 types of *members*: (entrepreneurs, students and SB&RM employees. The first two groups will be divided into subgroups. Employees of SB&RM are considered rather homogeneous.
Students are divided regarding school type and course, the total amount of ECTS they had at the end of the propaedeutics and how they were connected to their entrepreneur. Entrepreneur are characterized by the number of employees they have and the branch in which they operate[11].

#### Reasons to join, stay and leave

In order to evaluate group dynamics, the individual and group reasons to join, stay or leave we have to specify the variables presented in chapter 2. Reasons to join mainly lay in diverse ends. Weick (1979), Filius (2007), Schoenmaker (2007) and Dooner (2008) provide us with indicators that make it possible to measure those variables. As mentioned earlier (potential) participants join Adoption Learning hoping to achieve their individual targets. They trust their partners and their qualities, and they do not expect disadvantages. Individual motivation has to meet common ground; both personal and organizational motives have to be in line with group motives. Relational aspects are also very important: trust,

[11] Appendix 1 provides an overview of the different members

trustworthiness, shared norms and values and a sense of quality in partners. This brings us to the following indicators:
*Diverse ends:* Individual motivation to join, shared common grounds to participate, expected trust, trustworthiness, shared values and norms, sense of quality in the partners, expected contribution, esteemed disadvantages.

In order to stay, common means and common ends have to meet diverse ends. Naturally common ends and means have to be recognized in order to assess the fit. First common ends. It is important the group identifies targets and goals. There also has to be clear idea of what is expected of different members and what membership can offer. (Dooner 2008). The overlap is essential. Investments in group activities have to be considered meaningful. To communicate about targets and goals and how to achieve them, commitment to the group and a sense of unity is very important. This brings us to the following indicators:
*Common ends:* Clarity about what is to be expected and when (e.g. Different roles and how to conduct them, rules and regulations, agreements), motivation on goals and common targets, investments in group activities, feeling of commitment to the group, feeling of unity.

Secondly, common means: as stated, this is all about meaningful activities, actions and clear information about when, where and how to act, and what common 'points of contact' take place. Leadership, an overriding vision is essential and a common script (clear minutes, communication and information). They are essential to make sure there are clear agreements on common tasks and goals to be achieved. Sharing activities make relational aspects and trust are essential. This brings us to the following indicators.
*Common means:* Identification of shared activities that enable members to establish common 'points of contact', ownership of meeting (individual: students and entrepreneurs / group meetings) to direct the COP, presence of clear minutes and agreements on common tasks and goals to be achieved, contact meetings, activities take place, evaluation on contact meetings, presence of an overriding vision (long term goals that enable them to be ahead in thinking, a leader, and a common script with common goals), evaluation on mutual understanding, evaluation on one-to-one and group relations, trust in other members, trustworthiness of other members.

Weariness, dissatisfaction about what is achieved and how, even lack of result has to be prevented. Individual intentions and individual targets should be met. Members need to realize that targets are met by participating in the CoP and that they could not have been realized otherwise. The CoP has to bring advantages in networking and knowledge. Highly positively rewarded experiences should be enforced, negative experiences should be evaded.
*Diverse means:* Weariness on the demands of the group (e.g. conflicts that arise, breaking up in smaller groups due to differences in targets and interest), possible interdependency and how the group copes with it, alignment with private intentions and individual targets, professional relationships that become social relationships (especially when there is no "click") and the effect of it on the different members of the group.

**The process**
Partners decide to join and stay based on the fact whether the process is appealing or not. Goals individual members have and common targets have to be attractive. Individual and group activities have to be advantageous and all members have to communicate in desirable individual and group activities. Furthermore the chance of possible conflicts has to be reduced as much as possible. Cooperation has to feel good; people do not join and stay in groups they do not fit in. So indicators on the process measure reification and participation. Not surprisingly, because it is the process that provides reasons to join, stay or leave, most of the indicators are in line with those previously mentioned. Based on the interview which deals with these indicators the process can be evaluated on reification and participation. Main target is to assess the process and to eventually provide recommendations that enforce enduring partnership.
*Reification*: presence and evaluation on common goals and targets, presence and evaluation on activities that take place, presence and evaluation on communication about goals, targets, process and activities.

*Participation*: evaluation of the on-to-one relation between the members and the network as a whole, presence and evaluation on shared norms and values, trust in quality of the partners, presence and valuation on mutual contribution, presence and evaluation on the expected individual and common advantage, the presence and evaluation of a common identity

**Entrepreneurial learning**

Design characteristics of the process have to support entrepreneurial learning: action-oriented forms, interdisciplinarity, accompanied by reflection, with high emotional exposure accompanied by the right preconditions. Indicators that make it possible to measure entrepreneurial learning are: project-based activity (projects in real life) with a problem-based design (interdisciplinarity), activities that link theory and practice, activities that ensure members get insight in entrepreneurial behaviour, reflection: students get insight in their own development, emotional exposure / cognitive affection (games, deadlines, contest), activities lead to Business Development or the entrepreneurs gain in knowledge. In project-based activities the right preconditions are met[12].

### 3.3 Action plan and data collection

**Phase 1**

First an interview schedule was prepared. Topics, the order in which the questions cover the topics and the question itself and what type of answer is wanted / needed resulted in a structured interview. This also included ways to rephrase when a question was misunderstood or an 'incorrect' answer was given. The questions that measure the indicators then were coupled. Table 4.1 connects the variables measuring group dynamics via indicators to the individual questions. Next, two initial interviews were taken, and based on those results, the interviews were further refined. All students and entrepreneurs were contacted by e-mail and later in the same week appointments were made by phone. The interviews with students and entrepreneurs took place in June and September 2008. All Saxion employees were questioned in September 2008.

During the interview, notes will be taken and these will be worked out later at the end of the same day. Reports of interviews have to be carefully analyzed and targeted to ensure impact.

| Variable | Indicators | Questions |
|---|---|---|
| Different members | Students:<br>Preliminary course regarding to school type and course:<br>- School type<br>- course<br>- connection with the entrepreneur?<br>- Total amount of ECT's at the end of the propaedeutics?<br>Entrepreneur:<br>- Number of employees,<br>- Branch<br>Employees of Saxion: considered rather homogeneous | 1.1 Name<br><br>1.2 School type<br>1.3 Course<br>1.4 Connection<br>1.5 ECTS<br><br>1.1. Employees<br>1.2. Branch |
| Diverse ends | Individual Motivation to join<br><br><br><br><br>Enough shared common grounds to participate (individual in groups, between groups)<br>Expected Trust, trustworthiness, shared values and norms<br><br><br><br>Sense of quality in the partners | 2.2 Reason to join<br>2.3 Personal targets<br>2.4 Ranking Pers. targets<br>2.5 Organizational targets<br>2.6 Ranking Org. targets<br>Comparison 2.2 – 2.6<br><br>5.3 Trust<br>5.4 Norms / values<br>5.5 Trustworthiness<br>5.6 Contracts<br>4.2 Partner<br>4.3 Organization |

[12] Preconditions (Chapter 2.3) are: well defined projects, transparent targets. transparent roles of the different participants, well-prepared students that posses the necessary prior knowledge, well-defined outcome for the different partners, what can be expected and how to assess the outcome, evaluation on the outcome

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Expected contribution<br>Esteemed disadvantages | 6.3 Contribution<br>2.7 Disadvantages |
| common ends | Clarity about what is to be expected and when (e.g. Different roles and how to conduct them, Rules and regulations, agreements) overlap on goals / Common targets<br><br>investments on group activities<br>Commitment to the group, Feeling of unity | 4.1Communication<br><br>2.2 Reason to join,<br>2.3 Personal targets<br>2.4 Ranking P<br>2.5.Organizational targets<br>2.6 Ranking O,<br>4.9 Improve network meetings<br>5.1 Part of network |
| common means | identified shared activities that helped to establish common 'points of contact'.<br>Allowing ownerships of meeting (individual: students and entrepreneurs / group meetings) to direct the COP<br><br>Clear minutes and agreements on common tasks and goals to be achieved.<br>Meetings are very important to establish mutual trust. (How and where do members meet? What activities take place and what do members think of it?)<br><br>An overriding vision is essential. (Are there goals that enable them to be ahead in thinking, a leader, and a common script with common goals become important.)<br>Felt mutual understanding, relational aspects, trust | 5.7 Goals / roles<br><br>4.4 Contacts<br>4.5 New contacts<br>4.6 Advantage contacts<br>4.7 Result contacts<br>4.8 Importance contacts<br>4.1 communication<br><br>6..1 New knowledge<br>6.2 Future knowledge<br>6.3 Contribution<br>6.4 Access to knowledge<br>6.5 Importance knowledge<br>4.9 Improve network meetings<br>5.10 Improve on relation<br>5.7 Goals / roles<br>4.1. Communication<br><br>5.2 Relation<br>5.3 Trust<br>5.4 Norms / values<br>5.5 Trustworthiness |
| diverse means | Alignment with own intentions, are individual targets met<br><br>Weariness on the demands of the group (e.g. conflicts that arise, breaking up in smaller groups due to differences in targets and interest<br>Interdependency and how the group copes with it<br>Professional relationships become social relationships and the effect of it on the group. | 3.1 Reached<br>3.2 Unforeseen<br>3.3 Satisfaction<br>3.4 Why reached<br>3.5 Through CoP<br>3.6 Otherwise<br>4.9 Improve network meetings<br>5.10. Improve relations<br>7.1 Strong / Weak<br>7.2 Change<br>7.1 Strong / Weak<br>7.2 Change<br>8.1 Positive/ negative situations<br>8.2 Important<br>8.3 Result |

table 4.1. Variables group dynamics, indicators and interview questions

**Phase 2**

Based on the answers respondents gave during the interviews[13] the process can be evaluated. Different members were asked how they felt about the way the CoP is working. All answers have to be compared, within and between groups. All individual answers of the different members have been worked out and have been combined within the groups to reveal possible differences or similarities. If possible answers are ranked in order to assess the most popular answers. This was done in Word-documents. After that answers of all individuals were imported into Excel. By using sorting techniques it was possible to identify possible differences within and between the groups, by using the different respondent clusters. Also it was possible to look for differences in answers between respondents that were satisfied with the process and those who were less satisfied. That way it was possible to identify how design characteristics of the CoP in Deventer provide different members with reasons to join, reasons to stay or reasons to leave. As presented in table 4.1 the questions specifically Weick's model. Main target is to partly answer the fourth research question as presented in Chapter 1. After that it has to be evaluated whether and how these design characteristics can be improved. The way different members evaluate the process and how satisfied they are about reification and participation reveals possible modifications in the process. Via e.g. results and future expectations the interviews also reveal enough insight into how the process supports the educational aspects. This means the fourth and fifth research question can be answered. The design characteristics of a successful CoP have to meet reification and participation (table 4.2). They lead to a *common identity* .These questions refer to the process and how it meets reification, (individual and overall goals, targets and their transparency to the different members, the results it brought them in gaining knowledge, network relations and other advantages, both expected and unexpected) and (2) participation (the relational aspects and their durability and the provided conditions. Having answered the first four questions the last questions can be answered. Central aim is to get insight into how to effectively provide and if necessary improve on design characteristics and thus effectively support entrepreneurial learning.

Based on the first conclusions according to Weick's model the process can be evaluated on both reification and participation and entrepreneurial learning. Recommendations that support an effective process that ensures both long lasting partnership and a powerful education environment focused on entrepreneurship thus can be formulated.

| **variable** | **indicators** | **How to measure** |
|---|---|---|
| Reification | Presence and definition of overall goals and long– and short-term targets. | Members evaluation on how Adoption Learning has defined overall goals and short-term targets. |
| | Individual motives fit in group motives | Individual targets and motives to join in overlap group motives and targets. |
| | The definition of activities | Members evaluation on how activities are defined. |
| | meaningful activities | Members evaluation on individual and group activities. |
| | common methods | Members evaluation on roles, activities and how to assess them. |
| | communication | Members evaluation on effectiveness and efficiency in communication |
| Participation | Relational aspects<br>sense of trust | Members evaluation on mutual relations<br>Members evaluation on trust and |
| | mutual understanding | trustworthiness. |
| | shared values and standards | How do members evaluate individual and group interaction<br>Members evaluation on shared values and mutual standards |

Table 4.2, evaluation on reification and participation via the answers respondent gave during the interview

[13] Appendix 5 presents the interview

| Variable | Indicators | How to measure |
|---|---|---|
| Action Orientation | Project-based activity that is 'hands-on'<br>linkage between management theory and practice<br>learning through experience<br>decision-making | Projects are executed in real life.<br>Members evaluation on linkage.<br>Members evaluation on results<br>Members evaluation on results |
| Reflection | Individual and group reflection<br>Emotional exposure (uncertainty, games, deadlines, contests) | Members evaluation on feedback<br>Members evaluation on the process and the activities and the way they have to be executed. |
| Interdisciplinarity | problem-based design<br>Convergence of disparate management knowledge | How projects are defined<br>How projects are defined |
| preconditions | Well-defined projects, transparent targets.<br>Transparent roles of the different participants.<br>Well-prepared students that posses the necessary prior knowledge.<br>Well-defined outcome for the different partners, what can be expected and how to assess the outcome<br>Evaluation on the outcome | Members evaluation on transparency, role definition, preparation, availability of prior knowledge, achievements that have to be made, expectations that have to be met, assessments of the outcome, evaluation of the process. |
| Innovation | Partnership entrepreneurs and educational institutes<br>Partners gain in knowledge | Members evaluation on relation.<br>Members evaluation on knowledge gaining. |

Table 4.3, evaluation on entrepreneurial learning via the answers respondent gave during the interview

### 3.4 The population[14]

As stated by Grix (2004) Interviewing the whole target group and not taking a sample should cover generalization. This means all entrepreneurs, students, as well as Saxion employees had to be questioned. This means all 16 entrepreneurs, 17 students and 4 Saxion employees took part in the research. The students and entrepreneurs had all been participants from the beginning. Starting in September 2007 there were actually 24 students that entered the propaedeutics, but from November 2007 on after the first shake out, those 17 remained and all entered the post propaedeutics. Only one of the students did not react to mails and phone calls, this despite several efforts and thus was not interviewed. So a total of 16 out of 17 students took part in the interview which allows us to consider if the results were representative. All students were full-time students, preliminary education was VWO (1) HAVO (7) and MBO (8). Most of them were allocated to an entrepreneur via Saxion. Only a minority brought in their own entrepreneur.

The 16 entrepreneurs also participated from the beginning. 2 Entrepreneurs did not take part in the interview. One of them because the Saxion, the student and he decided together he was not the kind of entrepreneur needed in the concept, too operational, no interest in tactical and strategical aspects of entrepreneurship. With the other it was unable to match agendas; he, however, also wanted to participate the next period. So a total of 14 out of 16 entrepreneurs took part in the interview which also allows us to consider if the results were representative. All entrepreneurs that were questioned intended to participate for an extra period. 8 Entrepreneurs had less than 10 employees (2 of them had a one-man business), 4 of them employed up to 25 employees and the others over 25 up to approximately 70. They operated in a diversity of branches.

### 3.5 Conclusion

As stated in this Chapter, there are several indicators that can give insight into how a CoP is functioning and the possibility participants are willing to participate over a longer period. In this chapter a research plan is presented.

To establish 'adoption learning' as a leading concept in Saxion institute ABO the CoP has to prove it is a useful concept in education on entrepreneurship. It has to be useful in 2 senses. It has to be a concept that ensures stable relations with entrepreneurs that can be managed in an efficient en effective way (1) and the actual outcome has to support students in obtaining knowledge, skills and competences (2). The next chapter will address both issues.

[14] Appendix 1presents an overview of the respondents

As we have seen the first 5 variables are specifically addressed in the interview. Evaluation of the other variables, reification and participation and entrepreneurial learning will be done by using the answers in the interview. This is possible given the overlap of indicators especially in Weick's model and process. Method and planning, as presented meant a lot of work, but interviewing especially entrepreneurs became a very interesting part of the project. Most interviews, though planned to last an hour, took much more due to the fact entrepreneurs and I had very interesting discussions. It was sometimes difficult to separate discussion from the interview and take entrepreneurs back to the questions and incidents and away from opinions and wishful thinking.
As stated a different problem is the relation between means and ends. Weick's model of means and ends makes it possible to assess the long term possibilities of Adoption Learning. It was sometimes hard for entrepreneurs and students to make distinct differences. During the interview often questions had to be rephrased. The questions how to improve or how to facilitate the CoP are to be addressed separately. Facilitation is all about design characteristics. One improvement deals with how Saxion meets those characteristics. The next Chapter presents the different answers according the action plan. Through Weick's model insight into the process can be presented. Finally the process will be assessed as a promising concept for entrepreneurial learning.

# 4 Results

In this chapter, we first look at the design characteristics of the CoP and their effect on the continuity of the partnership. Main target is to investigate whether the differences between the partners have an effect on the design characteristics and on the reasons to join and stay, and is there enough reason to prevent them from breaking up in the future? The three participating groups and the information they provided are presented. As mentioned Weick's model gives us clear insight in reasons to join and stay (4.1). This first impression on how the different groups evaluate the first year on this matter will be presented in table 4.1. Direct aim is to get a clear insight in similarities and differences between the different groups of respondents. The first impression, based on the answers the three groups gave, will lead to a closer look at the process (4.2). How is reification and participation assured in the process? Based on more elaborate personal remarks we get a clear picture of how they think the CoP can be optimised. After that we have to look on the process regarding the way it supports entrepreneurial learning (4.3). Does Adoption Learning provide the conditions which are essential? And if so, does Saxion provide the proper preconditions? The chapter finalizes with the most interesting conclusions.

**4.1. Reasons to join and stay**

| **Reasons to join** | **Entrepreneurs** | **Students** | **Saxion employees** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Individual Motivation to join, providing enough shared common grounds to participate. | Motivation to join: asked by own network partners and getting Saxion as a strategic partner. Personal targets: contribution to the growth students and their education. Organizational targets focused on business advantages by doing projects especially on improving processes and developing business strategy. | Reason to join: Not explicitly formulated Personal targets: personal growth and growth in entrepreneurial skills. Getting inside knowledge about the way entrepreneurs think and decide and build their business. Growing in knowledge about business processes and how businesses operate. | Targets are very different, much more oriented on organizing the concept, keeping up partnership and effectively managing coordination. Long term targets such as: ensuring innovation and business advantage within the participating organizations are main goals. This is a problem, these targets can not lead to concrete activities |
| Expected Trust, trustworthiness, shared values and norms | No problems in trust and trustworthiness, though they sense possible differences in values and norms. | Trust in partners, students gradually learned how to deal with differences in norms and values of entrepreneurs. | Expected no problems in trust, trustworthiness, nor with differences in norms and values |
| Sense of quality in the partners and expected contribution | Appreciated Saxion as a partners and high expectations about quality of the partners and their contributions. | Have high expectations; think they can learn a lot. No concrete ideas about mutual contribution. | High appreciation of all partners as professionals, expected contribution in growing networks and knowledge on practice. |
| Esteemed disadvantages | Could be time-consuming and emotional intensive if there is no "click". | In line with entrepreneurs | Time consuming, in both developing and executing the concept at the same time. |
| **Reasons to stay** | **Entrepreneurs** | **Students** | **Saxion employees** |
| Clarity about what has to be expected and when | Communication on targets, results and how to assess them roles, and mutual contribution is poor | In line with the entrepreneurs. They almost unanimous had difficulties in addressing the entrepreneur about mutual roles and contributions. | In line with students and entrepreneurs, operational activities prevent Saxion to define the process and invest in an overall vision. |
| Overlap on goals | Big overlap on long term goals and short term targets students formulated. | Big overlap on long term goals and short term targets entrepreneurs formulated. | the goals they formulate do not overlap the goals of the students and entrepreneurs. |
| Investments on group activities | Investment on group activities is poor, not based on actual needs. | Think entrepreneurs need more influence on planning and topics | Saxion plans. Focus lies on informing on activities and process. |
| Commitment to the group, Feeling of unity | Feel committed to the project. Entrepreneurs feel less unity to the group, this has to grow. | Feel unity with the own direct partners, the "own' entrepreneur, not yet with the whole network. | Feel a strong commitment to the group, but generally more on a one to one base. |
| Identified shared activities that helped | Difficult: due to poor communication on one on one | Difficult: students think meaningful activities and targets | Having the focus on other goals, Saxion employees have |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| to establish common 'points of contact'. | activities and lack of shared vision on common activities. | should be more explicit to direct mutual communication. | difficulty in identifying shared activities. Focus very on one on one. |
| Allowing ownerships of meeting | Entrepreneurs have actually little influence on the content and the way they are organized. | Students have little influence on the content and the way they are organized. | Saxion employees admit entrepreneurs and students do have little input on the process. |
| Actual meetings | Planning and information too poor. | Planning and information is poor. | No overall planning on activities and how to bind partners. |
| The presence of an overriding vision. | Sense a lack of overriding vision, Long term goals and short term targets were not defined. | Sense a lack of information about what the CoP is all about and where it has to lead. | Admit investment in an overriding vision was too poor. The vision is not made operational / concrete |
| Relational aspects, trust, mutual trust and understanding. | Entrepreneurs trust their partners, and think there is a shared norms and value concept. | Almost all trusted and appreciated the entrepreneur and the organization they adopted. | Experience trust and trustworthiness in all partners. |
| **Reason to leave** | **Entrepreneurs** | **Students** | **Saxion employees** |
| Alignment with own intentions, are individual targets met | Valuated the results as less than expected (danger of false hope)<br>They see less personal growth in students than expected. | Agree, but they also appreciated a lot of unexpected results. Satisfaction mainly lays in the combination of theory and practice | Are satisfied. A growing network and more active students. very satisfied about the cooperation and the possibilities to get an insight in business processes and business networks |
| Weariness on the demanding of the group | They assess their own role too small, the focus lies on the student, and not enough on possible organizational advantages. | Students heavily depend on individual agreements. But Saxion and group activities interfere with individual activities which lead to frustration of both student and entrepreneur. | Agree most entrepreneurs need more guidance. Absence leads to more work, for both students and entrepreneurs, not to more flexibility. |
| Professional relationships become social relationships and the effect of it on the group | Do not know how to support the students, about what to communicate. That makes contact rather difficult. Some students lack drive they think. | Do not know about what to communicate in which way. That makes contact rather difficult/ unpleasant. Also students feel the enterprise comes always first. | As for now Saxion is satisfied in general. |

**First conclusion, heterogeneity leads to design problems.**

Answering the fourth research question starts with an important remark; the heterogeneity of the members does play a role. Different cultures and background as well as the way members are involved in the process is leading to a number of problems that can be identified. At first the different way members operate in the process. Entrepreneurs and students are much more operating in a mutual relation in concrete activities Saxion does not take active part in those activities; they have a much more indirect relation in the process. The Saxion role is more coaching on a distance, to both entrepreneurs and students. The heterogeneity of the members is best seen in the different targets that are formulated and the communication and information that different partners need and what is actually formulated on targets and provided on information.

As seen in previous Chapters differences in culture, background and focus on targets in groups have to be identified in order to enable meaningful group activities. Though students and entrepreneurs differ in goals and targets, these goals and targets have much overlap and are very much oriented on concrete activities that can and have to be done in the CoP. This has to be communicated in an effective and efficient way in order to make potential member to join and to stay in the CoP. Because at the beginning Saxion did not formulate what could and had to be achieved they did not direct the concrete activities, partners had problems to organise their own one on one relation. Later on Saxion improved on it as we will see.
Furthermore they did not give time and attention to let the group formulate their own needs. Differences in cultural background, the norms and values, and especially what members hope to gain from participation directs the focus of the different members on goals and targets. Saxion is focused on

coordination and upholding and expanding the network. They did at first not formulate concrete activities hoping it would lead to flexibility; thus enabling entrepreneurs to formulate their own needs. The focus of entrepreneurs lays on organizational advantages and in seeing students grow on entrepreneurial and personal skills. This overlaps the focus of the students. The focus of students and entrepreneur lays on concrete activities and the way they have to act in it. That has to be defined strictly and the information that is needed has to lead to clear insight in mutual roles, mutual contribution, achievements and well defined results. Entrepreneurs and student lacked that information.
In not organising a platform that allowed members to communicate over shared targets and goals and how to achieve them, partners will have difficulties to identify a common identity, identify meaningful activities and preferred working methods. In this way the differences between the partners prevent the CoP from growing to a self guiding CoP. As a result partners, especially the entrepreneurs, do not feel to belong to a group. This also will lead to problems in attracting new members. It is not clear what they join and what is to be expected and what has to be contributed.

Goals and roles that differ a lot is for a CoP an anomaly. Normally participant's roles and targets are subject to common negotiations. Having noticed the previous problems it is remarkable they think from each other there are no differences in norms and values. Saxion has due to a different role and little concrete activities in the CoP a different perception of the concrete individual needs and about the needs of the CoP as a whole.

**Second conclusion: Design problems affect the reasons to join and stay**

Answering this research question leads also to the conclusion the different design characteristics do in fact have an effect on the decision to join and to stay in the CoP. In regard to reasons to join a number of things can be concluded: Individual motivations of entrepreneurs and students are very similar. Targets both parties mentioned can lead to meaningful activities. All partners are very similar in their expectations about trust, trustworthiness and norms and value: they trust each other and expect values and norms are not that different they negatively interfere in the partnership. Furthermore (potential) participants will join when the information about Adoption Learning gives them the idea this is a meaningful group to join and a platform to achieve their own individual targets. Main reasons to join lay in the network of the entrepreneurs and their estimation of Saxion as a partner. It indicates a positive image of Saxion is very important, as is Saxion being present in important entrepreneurial networks.

Regarding the reasons to stay also a number of things can be concluded. There is enough similarity / overlap and therefore enough common ground in the individual targets between the entrepreneurs and students. This could provide a sound basis to define a common identity. The main problem in formulating goals, targets and therefore meaning activities is the fact Saxion at that moment was unable to organise meetings to discuss common end and common means. Saxion was too tangled in day to day activities, as a result of the start-up phase, but most important, they have a different focus. With a focus very much on the individual students and on coordination, it is very unlikely it will lead to distinct *shared individual* and *group activities*. This makes it very hard to communicate what is and can be expected. Note that a possible danger also lies in the fact entrepreneurs can probably overestimate results and expectations that are reasonable, the growth level of the students in the different phases of their education. A majority has its focus on personal development of the students. Too high expectations will result in disappointment.
Common ends and means should direct meaningful activities and group meetings. But as said neither common ends nor are common means defined yet. Entrepreneurs and students state common activities and group meetings should be organized around specific themes. What themes are interesting should be investigated together with all partners. Investment in a developing an overriding vision, which is supported by all partners, is a necessity. In this stage of the CoP, the role of Saxion as activator is important.

Regarding possible reasons to leave also a number of things can be concluded. Although there are some critical points, there are not enough reasons to leave as of yet. The biggest problem would be when targets are continuously not met. A clear danger lies in not taking into account the distinct values of the entrepreneur, they expect results. What they can expect and how to achieve it is too vague. And

contrary to the other participants especially a number of entrepreneurs are dissatisfied with the results and the communication. Entrepreneurs want more mutual contact moments than the activator provides. Not surprisingly dissatisfaction often comes with lack in communication. This interferes with the mutual relations. Most partners do not need contracts. Most entrepreneurs do feel mutual agreements have to be more pronounced and will be more specific in what they want and expect.

One of the most important conclusions is the fact that meaningful relations and trust do not emerge by themselves. They are the result of what people expect from each other and how partners execute their roles. Students and entrepreneurs need content to start to communicate; communication is the key to a meaningful relation. Mutual expectations are important to a satisfying relation. This means mutual expectation should be communicated in a transparent way. At the moment the mutual expectations are not explicit enough, which could lead to reasons to leave.

### 4.2 How design problems affect the process.

Joining, staying and preventing from leaving are results from the experiences different participants had during the first year process. These first conclusions prompt to take the next step. As announced we now take a closer look at the process. As stated in sense making, successful collaboration needs the creation of shared practice, the building of a stable and predictable environment and the avoidance of tension. Where as the outcome on Weick's model is based on own interpretations based on the interviews, a closer view on the process via reification and participation will be based on more explicit answers entrepreneurs, students and Saxion employees gave. Aim is to answer the second research question. *Does the process in the CoP in Deventer actually meet the design characteristics that characterizes a successful CoP making participants join and to stay*. Ensuring the CoP will survive means the process has to be optimized. Strong and weak points in the process are already indicated, but a more elaborate view is needed. It is inevitable that there will be some duplication in conclusions and remarks, but the more personal remarks respondents made, will give a more vivid impression of what really happened in Deventer and provide us with the necessary information on optimizing this process. This will lead us at the end to the third step, formulating advice op proper preconditions and possible improvements.

#### 4.2.1 Reification

As we have seen, reification is all about overall goals and long– and short-term targets. As stated the success of a CoP is very dependent on the targets of the organisations and the participants, their overlap and whether they are effectively and efficiently communicated. Clear procedures and roles are essential.

**Goals and targets**

From the overall conclusion we learn that there is enough similarity / overlap and therefore there should be enough common ground in the individual targets between the groups. But there are no goals and targets defined, at least not in way entrepreneurs and students can use as guidance. What are the feelings of the different participants about this lack of clear goals and targets? They miss clarity, plans, what to expect and they want to help. As one entrepreneur clearly stated:

> *- Targets are not clear, what everybody is doing and how, what has to be achieved, what are the different roles, what is mine, I'm looking for the relative context in the different activities, I would like to help figuring out how best to realise different things.*

There is no *group ownership*. Entrepreneurs are not really involved in making plans. Students are not broadly involved in making plans; like the entrepreneurs, they also miss goals, roles and information about how and what they are doing.

Remarks three different entrepreneurs made:

> *- I myself do not have any pre-information and I certainly lack feedback, I do not know what they have to do, how, and what the right way to do it is.*
>
> *- If you want students to grow in entrepreneurship, you have to take off from a common starting point. A shared goal and vision is essential.*
>
> *- Things are very unclear to me, and besides, they do not make much use of me in making plans.*

Students specifically had the same problem and said:

*- I need more clarity about the organization and I want to know what the entrepreneur wants, and especially how this fits in the Saxion picture (ECTS, Assessments and so on)*

*- Activities and different tasks have to be outlined very clearly, also to organizations and the role entrepreneurs have. Every participant has a need of his or her own information / communication.*

Saxion Employees stated:

*We still do not know very clear what we are doing and how things will work out. We still do not have a strategy, a vision, and clear targets.*

*It is very important we are going to work on a structure and guideline; we have to plan activities and guide others*

About individual ownership entrepreneurs are very clear. It comes in two different types: entrepreneurs who make one-to-one deals with individual students, they together determine actions and outcome. As an entrepreneur remarked:

*- I myself do not need formats; I can live with uncertainty and am quite able to find ways to make things work.*

This also was the remark one of the students made:

*- Especially the information about tasks is too poor. We, my entrepreneur and me, solved this problem, we were able to direct ourselves, but is should have been more directed from within the Saxion Structure.*

Other entrepreneurs do need specific guidance. They clearly stated:

*- Information that helps me to guide the students helps students to grow, at the moment I am working rather suboptimal.*

*- I want to know what I can do to support my student and what he has to achieve in concrete terms, I plead clear agreements and concrete activities.*

**Communication**

From the first conclusions we learn that Adoption Learning has not yet defined common ends and common means. This means no or little common understanding on activities and it is very hard to communicate what is and can be expected. As already stated; too high expectations will result in disappointment. When targets and activities are not well communicated especially by the leading organization neither Saxion, nor students, nor entrepreneurs know what can be expected and how to assess results. A closer look on the effect of lack on communication is important. Especially entrepreneurs feel the need to be informed on activities, criteria and their role. Their remarks on this issue:

*- Saxion communicates very poorly, guidance and information is far too little (4)*

*- It is not clear what might be expected; please do make an annual plan (2)*

*- How to organize things is rather unclear, different roles are very vague.*

Another problem are agreements, when using deadlines, Saxion is expected to hold them. Their reactions are rather clear:

*- Even when people know what has to be done, agreements and deadlines are unclear, I get too much documentation, less is more, that has still not improved a lot.*

*- In the beginning there were no agreements, make sure you use a format that enables points of control, Saxion has to control the different deadlines and agreements.*

When Saxion employees were asked about communication, their remarks are much in line with the remarks entrepreneurs made.

*- Communication between Saxion and the different organization is not running smoothly, in information we are rather poor, we have to communicate differently, more compact, more businesslike or commercial if you like.*

The lack in communication leads to distinct problems and frustration. Critical remarks of entrepreneurs about the start up phase indicate they want improvement:

*- Initiative has to be structured now; a constant reminder that it is a pilot is not relevant anymore*

*- How do they expect me to support the learning process of the student? I do not know my role and do not know what has to be done. Criteria and how to assess the activities are very important if you want me to be active in coaching a student.*

*- Communication? 2 conversations a year is not much. I miss feedback*

Another problem is the communication channels that are being used. As some students' state:

*- Communication between organization, tutors and mentors is poor, it has to improve; communication and relations go via the student, so rather indirectly. (4)*

*- The triangle (entrepreneur, Saxion, student) is lacking focus in providing each other with proper information. It is often rather difficult; communication is mostly indirect via students.*

But at the end of the first year entrepreneurs feel things are improving. Students still complain a lot about the transparency of the information, though they think, like the entrepreneurs, it has improved. An entrepreneur:

*- There is improvement, Saxion is very willing, but has problems to make things concrete, there still are some things unclear, but information went from a mark 6 to a mark 7.*

### 4.2.2 Participation

Keywords in participation are the relational aspects and their durability: sharing the same values and the same common organization –identity between the different members and networks. In relations a sense of trust, mutual understanding, shared values and standard are precondition to attract and keep new members. Trust in the quality of the partners, their mutual contribution and a feeling of a common advantage is utmost important.

**Relational aspects and their durability**

Feelings about commitment to the group, feelings of unity and the relations with partners at the moment are very divers: all think it is a network in progress. Entrepreneurs in general think investments on group activities are poor, too much a one way track: Saxion telling about their plans and asking what they can offer the partners.

Entrepreneurs feel less unity, but think it has to grow. As three of them remarked:

*- I do not have much of a feeling of a network, Inge[15] is the network*

*- It has chances, but it is not been used the right way, if you want it to work thing have to be done differently.*

*- Feels like a network, but the results are merely negative at the moment. It has to become more intensive.*

Students feel more or less the same. They feel a strong relation with their entrepreneur and admit they made new contacts, but the new contacts came from the network from the entrepreneur and their business. The network is very linear. Saxion **à** student **à** entrepreneur **à** network of the entrepreneur. New contacts within the Adoption Learning network are few. They answered:

*- It is more a network for the students.*

*- I certainly feel part of a / the network, but more via the entrepreneur*

*- It is easy to get new contacts via the entrepreneur*

Students certainly trust their entrepreneur but they admit it is very important to get used to each other. Saxion employees share this view, they state the network is in a growing stage, relational aspects are more important and intense than in contacts they had in the early stages with organizations and entrepreneurs. The former contacts tended to be more temporary. The relational aspect is thus an important part of the job.

**One-to-one relation**

The one-to-one relation strongly depends on the projects the students and the entrepreneur defined together. If they did there is a common end, and therefore communication about plans, possible problems and how to solve them. This is an important issue. Communication is based on content and relation is based on communication. Satisfaction of entrepreneurs is based on results and relation with the student. If students and entrepreneurs meet each other on content there is a sound base for contacts. Remarks entrepreneurs made:

*- He has made the organization more professional, takes on important work: he observes objectively, is a sounding board (9). The relationship with the student and Saxion is very good.*

*- The student did concrete things: he has grown more than expected. I am satisfied in the relationship with the student and Saxion(8[16].)*

[15] Inge Kwast is tutor SB&RM and initiator of the Adoption Learning

*- Sharing knowledge is very hard, though we had lots of conversations: there is too little commitment, he is different (5), relationship with the students has to grow.*

*- Nothing really has accomplished, there is little relation with school (3). I am not satisfied in the relationship with the student and Saxion.*

Nearly all students are satisfied in their relationship with their entrepreneur, though a few are less satisfied with the organization (too simple, not their thing). They describe their entrepreneur as supporting, open, and surprisingly they think the entrepreneur is the most important factor in their learning process. Saxion employees noticed upholding relations with entrepreneurs, especially when thing did not go well, were very time consuming. Upholding a relationship is difficult when students and entrepreneurs do not know exactly what can and has to be done. Freedom and flexibility of choices in this sense work contra productive.

**The network as a whole**

Entrepreneurs do not primarily join Adoption Learning for the network, they have their own business networks (though Saxion, as already mentioned, thinks it is one of the main reasons to join). Remarkably they look more at it as a network that articulates best practice in education and entrepreneurship. They primarily want to learn in meetings. As entrepreneurs see it:

*- To us it's primarily an educational trajectory, not a business network. However it is important to talk with others about how to support students in the best way, we can learn from each others' best practice. It could / should be an education network*.

*- I never would join only for the network*.

*- Organize meetings around a common body of knowledge, make them more attractive, people should feel they missed something in not being present, invite key note speakers, visit each other and learn from colleague entrepreneurs.*

*- Saxion has to assess the needs of the different entrepreneurs and has to organise meetings around those points of shared interest. Then you really meet new people and you can learn.*

Students support this point of view: they have the same ideas to optimize group meetings. Surprisingly they answer in line with the entrepreneurs; tailor made meetings for little groups that share mutual points of interest. Students and entrepreneurs should assess these shared themes and organize meetings that bring result to the entrepreneurs. Furthermore like students Saxion employees also feel it is very easy to get new contacts via the network; entrepreneurs open their own networks very easily. Things like workshops, seminars are thus easy to organize.

**Norms and values**

All parties think trust and relations are of the utmost importance. Especially students and entrepreneurs know exactly that they are essential in keeping up a relation for more years. Trust is no issue, but in norms and value Saxion and students have to grow, so at the moment differences in thinking are accepted. In trustworthiness entrepreneurs have a clear view. Agreements are made to be kept. Students have to learn this. Entrepreneurs' state:

*- Relation and trust are very important, if you want me to invest energy. When I know what I can and may expect, I than also get a clear vision on my own role, in that way I can steer my own and the student's actions.*

*- Students have to learn the mentality of an entrepreneur.*

*- It is difficult to make agreements, and once done, other things are conflicting.*

*- We hardly made agreements, now we do. At first my students did not keep his promises, now he does*

But some entrepreneurs have their doubts on norms and values: Entrepreneurs feel they differ from Saxion and students, they have to plan things more carefully. So communication should be on time and carefully planned to fit in business agendas. They think Saxion is often too late with important invitations, and too elaborate in written communication. They think their partners have to grow on these aspects and plan ahead. As one entrepreneur clearly mentioned:

*- Appointments please on time and if possible in mutual consultation, and please concrete. Make newsletters, plan ahead, and if possible on 1 A4, one page management is the key.*

[16] the note the entrepreneur gave on total satisfaction

Roughly half of the students feel differences in the way entrepreneurs look at things and the way Saxion and they do. As three of them state:

*- There is a lot of difference, entrepreneurs go for their business, and this is top priority*

*- Yes there are shared norms and values but entrepreneurs tend to do things differently, Adoption organizations should therefore be addressed professionally.*

*- Saxion has a more theoretical point of view; entrepreneurs tend to be more practical.*

Saxion employees do not feel these differences as acutely. Yet they subscribe the need to professionalize their communication and participation.

**Trust in quality of the partners and mutual contribution**

All parties have faith in each others qualities, but especially entrepreneurs have difficulties to make use of the contacts. About mutual contribution they are very direct. Entrepreneurs reacted very specifically:

*- I think all parties contribute equally but there is no structure in it.*

*- I have no clear sight. I think "yes", but not everybody knows what to contribute exactly.*

*- Yes… I think, but it could be a lot better.*

As already stated, students highly value the role of the entrepreneur. They have access to all information, even financial. A common reaction of students can be interpreted as: "*Saxion teaches me theory; here I can see how it works in practice*". But a minority also admits that entrepreneurs are very busy, and they have to come up with clear problems and questions to get time and attention.

**Common advantages**

According to the entrepreneurs, common advantages lie mainly in the win – win for all parties. As stated in the first conclusions entrepreneurs join to get things done that otherwise would not have been done. They also hope to learn from Saxion. Students and Saxion should function as a sounding board. But this is at the moment the weakest point. They want access to knowledge and are very keen on supportive projects considering the strategy of their company. Entrepreneurs have clear thoughts about what to achieve:

*- I need an objective approach on my business to make strategic business plans.*

*- I have questions about the effectiveness and efficiency in my processes and I have questions about strategic business processes.*

*- Knowledge comes only via student, I myself want access.*

*- We are in need of an accessible common body of knowledge). We need a knowledge platform that is easy to approach.*

For students the common advantage lies in the specific business knowledge, growing in practical knowledge, building a network in practice, getting support on own business ideas. The advantage also can be found in the unforeseen results. Things they learned unexpectedly. We will deal with this on entrepreneurial learning. For Saxion employees the advantages also lay in the educational process, the awareness of the students, the depth of learning, and the results in personal growth.

**4.3.Entrepreneurial learning**

Finally we have to deal with the last question. Aim is to assess in what way Saxion institute SB&RM provides conditions in the CoP that effectively support entrepreneurial learning and if necessary can improve on them. In chapter 2 Löwegren (2005) stated: a curriculum for entrepreneurship education should be built on three cornerstones: Action, reflection and interdisciplinarity. A closer look on the results the students gave on the results give insight in the evaluation of their learning process. At first action and interdisciplinarity; this means learning in practice through providing theory and how this works in practice. It also means real interdisciplinary business problems are the starting point in the learning process and not, as seen so often in teaching, presenting single disciplines.

**Interdisciplinarity.**

Remarkably students formulated targets they hoped to reach in terms of learning how entrepreneurs act, think and decide, and not in terms of gaining specific knowledge on academic disciplines. In evaluation on these targets most of them stated they had gained knowledge. Note this is tacit knowledge and very hard to provide in traditional forms of education. The outcome states the students gained this tacit knowledge and connected theory and practice in real live business. As some students state:

*- You can learn from others, this is a rich source of knowledge.*
*- I described business processes, I learned what entrepreneurship means, how targets are made and I learned how to cooperate.*
*- I learned a lot about specific theories and specific terms and how to apply these, and above all how to behave as an entrepreneur.*
*- I broadened my knowledge, knowledge about business processes, I built my own network*
*- My knowledge of the branch has grown enormously; I picked up lots of knowledge outside the institute (Saxion).*
*- I did an analysis on feasibility with relevant models and theories; I now have greater insight in business processes.*

**Reflection and emotional exposure**

On reflection they are very clear. Students had their expectations, not all of them were realized, but surprisingly they experienced a lot of unexpected results. Reasons for this, they think, mainly lay in the combination of theory and practice. It forces individual and groups to bring theory to practice and vice versa. Though they think some of the results could be achieved in different ways, they think this is faster and more demanding. They especially named: ''how to work on feedback", "structure in work and planning" and "self reflection". They especially valued the unforeseen results, almost unanimous they ranked them very high. Having to work together in teams and with entrepreneurs provided them with knowledge about their specific approach on tasks. Students answered:

*- I now have more structure in my work, I make plans and even more important I am able to meet them.*
*- I am more open, I have better contact with other employees.*
*- I am able to work in a more independent way and work methodically, I can deal better with feedback.*
*- I became less dominant.*
*- I learned more about myself and my intelligence; I learned to take the lead, am able to express my own opinion.*
*- Self reflection is important, you learn to take a good look at your own practice, learn to plan your own targets and to work in a more structured way.*

About the nature of the projects, especially the group projects, students were very clear. As critical incidents that heavily contributed to their growth on entrepreneurship most of them named group projects they worked on. They valued the projects almost unanimous. They rewarded the projects because as they said:

*- "They really matter, it is a real life business case. The deadline is strict. At the end we were working like hell. The entrepreneurs want to get answers on these questions because he wants to make a decision on it`.*

Also entrepreneurs rewarded these situations the best. They saw real emotions and pressure. As some stated:

*- At the end they acted like real entrepreneurs, seeing the group presenting their results in front of a jury really showed how they were grown.*

**Action orientation and preconditions**

But not all members are satisfied. The problem-based design encouraged adaptation; decision-making; linkage between management theory and practice; learning through experience; and, the convergence of disparate management knowledge. Even though students mostly are satisfied about results, they think the process can be optimized. A part of it lies in the reification and participation process and deals with defining projects and communication. But to work optimally, action orientation has to meet certain preconditions (chapter 2). How well are the preconditions met to make Adoption learning work efficiently and effectively? Especially entrepreneurs do have their doubts. Preconditions: well defined projects, transparent targets, transparent roles of the different participants, have to be assured as already stated via the reification process. Mentoring and assessing the outcome and assuring advantage for the different partners have to be assured via the participation process. In that way reification and participation has to underpin the quality of the education on entrepreneurship. But entrepreneurs also have a problem on a precondition that apart from reification and participation has to be solved. Students

have to be prepared; students have to posses the necessary prior knowledge to be able to deal with the problems they face in practice. Some remarks entrepreneurs made:

*- Screen students in intakes, entrepreneurs can take part in it; show the deficiencies and what to work on.*

*- Provide them wit basic skills before sending them to entrepreneurs, they then know what to expect and how to act*

Students face the same problem and agree with this opinion. Surprisingly they formulate a similar problem from their point of view. One of the students is rather specific:

*- Screen the entrepreneur and their business on basic qualities, the capabilities of the entrepreneur to coach and the complexity of the business organization should provide a sound basis for Adoption Learning*

### 4.4 Conclusion on the process and entrepreneurial learning

**Reification**

The conclusion is very clear, students and entrepreneurs know what they want. Looking at both parties, there is enough common ground, but the different parties do not communicate on what results they want and how, Students do not know what entrepreneurs want and entrepreneurs do not know what Saxion and the students want. Main reason is Saxion employees do not have a clear vision about what they want to achieve. There is no overriding vision and that makes it difficult for Saxion to arrange a group vision, goals and concrete targets. The main problem is that Saxion as facilitator of the CoP has to organise it. But it is virtually impossible to have a discussion about common ends when you do not have a clear idea about what goals and targets you want to reach. Saxion should facilitate meetings where all parties have to be open and clear in what results they expect. Furthermore a clear format is needed in communication. There are three different parties with different motivations. They all need their specific information about what to do and how. All parties, but especially entrepreneurs and students need this clear and detailed format which is very precise in what can and has to be expected (minimum achievement).

**Participation**

Here also the conclusion is very clear. The lack of focus on meaningful activities (reification) makes it difficult to communicate and build meaningful relations. This is the most important aspect to recognize. Without reification there is no base for participation. At the moment most students, entrepreneurs and Saxion can't build a sound relation build on clear defined results that bring advantage. There certainly is advantage, especially for students and Saxion, but for entrepreneurs it is accidental and depends on the coincidence whether entrepreneurs and students are able to provide their own goals. Well defined activities direct and establish points of interest and contacts. There clearly is the will to contribute, but how and when is rather vague and unstructured. Furthermore social meetings have to be built on common interest and results should bring pre-defined advantage. Entrepreneurs differ, and this means relation management should be professionalized. Annual plans have to be made and meetings have to be planned carefully. And not the least, entrepreneurs do want access to Saxion knowledge.

**Do reification and participation lead to a clear common identity?**

As stated in chapter 2, in developing (new) CoP's a shared common identity is very important. A well defined common identity helps the CoP to attract new partners and can be a sound basis to define common end and means. Preconditions are transparent communication about (1) goals and targets that are important to all members, (2) projects and procedures, (3) mutual contribution. Thirdly, there has to be a common advantage in joining the CoP. This depends on the quality of the members and their problem solving capacity. As been said, students and entrepreneurs agreed on the aspect of the information at the starting point of the CoP. Students felt it difficult to address entrepreneurs on what had to be done. They found out it was difficult to explain their role and what could be expected, and therefore it is hard to find an entrepreneur and a promising organization: you do not have a story to tell. It also in some cases results in student being too long occupied with all kind of operational activities. As could be seen mainly the problems in the reification process prevents the CoP from formulating a clear common identity. Saxion has defined its goals not in line with the entrepreneurs and the students and omitted the formulation of distinct long term goals and short term targets. The roles of different members and how to contribute were not formulated at the beginning but evolved gradually. At the moment participants still do not have the same overall vision. Developing a shared vision is the first important step to take. Furthermore this shared vision has to be communicated. At the moment also not

having distinct communication channels makes it very hard to attract new members. Now entrepreneurs mainly join through their own contacts (6), or via Inge Kwast (7). A minority has joined via students (3), but as stated earlier; students have difficulties in explaining the essence of the CoP. A clear message and an appropriate communication channel are essential to attract the number of entrepreneurs to assure future needs, assuming the rise in student numbers.

**Entrepreneurial learning**

Even though many improvements can be made, at the moment Adoption learning already meets the criteria for successful education on entrepreneurship. Interdisciplinarity, reflection and emotional exposure is an important part of the didactic concept in the CoP in Deventer. Action orientation is assured by working on real business projects and students gain in depth knowledge both tacit and explicit about entrepreneurship. They almost unanimously appreciate the results highly. But reification and participation have to provide proper, in this case better conditions for optimal learning processes. Projects need better definition; targets have to be well defined as well as the roles of the different participants. Mentoring and assessing the outcome and assuring advantage for the different partners have to be assured in the relationship between entrepreneur, student and Saxion as third party. Furthermore students and eventually entrepreneurs have to be screened on deficiencies and if necessary have to be provided with basic knowledge and tools to be able to accomplish their tasks. Students and entrepreneurs do need basic skills to (inter)act successful. Adoption Learning in itself is a strong concept for education on entrepreneurship. Saxion however has to provide preconditions that improve on process and results.

In this chapter the main conclusions lay in the fact common ends and common means are not articulated yet due to differences in culture and focus. As could be seen this leads to problems in the reification and participation process. The lack on common means and common ends lead to problems that surely will cause participants to leave. Problems mainly lay in defining a vision, goals and targets and communicating them in an efficient and effective way. This leads directly to problems in participation. Lack of focus on meaningful activities that are advantageous to all partners lead to a lack on mutual communication, this hampers relationships.

Despite this, neither entrepreneurs nor students nor Saxion employees think this is enough reason to leave yet. But Saxion as leading institute really has to redesign the reification and participation process. In a pilot stage partners accept things can go wrong. Adoption Learning growing in the future has to be optimized. The way it is structured now, lacks self guidance (sensemaking). Clear formats, that direct results and thus expectations, have to provide individual and group information.

# 5 Recommendations and Discussions

Dooner (2008) states at the end of her research: “for teaching professionals collaboration outside classrooms is demanding and personally challenging. This certainly is the fact when others than teaching professionals are invited to join in teaching activities. Also inherent in collaboration and according to Weick’s means convergence model can be predicted:

1. Conflict is inherent in the collaboration process and embedded in the model.
2. It’s best not to await conflicts, but to avoid them by talking about possible tensions. It helps to deal with cognitive task related tensions related to differences in viewpoints and generates exchange of ideas.

As we have seen, *the differences between the partners prevent the CoP from growing to a self guiding CoP. As a result partners, especially the entrepreneurs, do not feel to belong to a group.* Goal orientation and communication is the key to success. This chapter will present recommendations to optimise Adoption Learning. Weiks’ model brought focus on participation, reification, lack of common identity and education on entrepreneurship. The presented conclusions will lead us to recommendation on the process, the facilitation on preconditions. And at last this will lead back again to the key point of this research; how to make entrepreneurs join and stay in Adoption Learning.

### 5.1. The main problems

In organizing collaboration in a CoP one has to be very clear-minded about what has to be achieved and how to define targets, different roles and activities that should be undertaken. The conclusions were clear. When the organising party does not have a clear picture, it is hard to describe what the collaboration is really about and to where it should lead. In this particular situation, sense making[17] is done by individuals that do not have clear sight on visions and roles.
Reification and participation direct the satisfaction of the different participants. The starting point of the optimization process lies in formulating goals, targets and optimization of the communication process. Adoption Learning, as a CoP, at first has to formulate common ends and common means to ensure *common identity*. In that way meaningful communication is possible to direct the process of reification and participation.

1. A clear common identity is one of the major criteria of making a CoP work. The success of a CoP is dependent on the targets of the organisations and the participants. Because results define the success of the CoP, it is necessary to formulate targets in a transparent way for all parties and to communicate them in an effective and efficient way (Filius, 2007).
   In Deventer, this has not been done, although clearly, Saxion thinks it has. However, it is not done in a way sense making (Weick, 1979) is done between strict boundaries. Participants need more information than is given at the moment[18]. Especially mutual expectations have to be defined: the results that can be expected and the possibilities about when to intervene. Lack of common identity also deters new participants.
   The problem is caused by the fact that Saxion employees do not have a proper vision of how Adoption Learning must be embedded in the curriculum. Amazingly students and entrepreneurs have a clear vision about what has to be done. Without much effort it could be fitted in.
   Another problem to solve is how to deal with the LOT / LAT[19] trajectories. Students have to be prepared for LOT assessments by doing activities in the LAT trajectory. At the moment LAT is centred on New Venture planning[20]. Adoption Learning is not connected to both trajectories. As long as this is not done, no clear vision from Saxion on the Adoption Learning can be developed and communicated to (potential) participants.

[17] Chapter 3
[18] And in a way less is more. Short accurate information about what has to be done and can be expected.
[19] Leerweg Onafhankelijk Toetsing / Leerweg Afhankelijke Toetsing
[20] zie http://www.newventure.nl

2. At the moment participants have reasons to join and stay. But the first problem (lack of common identity) leads to a second problem: unclear communication on targets and what can be expected. Participants create their own visions or targets, and results only become clear in personal discussions between the individual student and entrepreneur. Apart from the fact that it is time consuming, Saxion employees do not have the whole picture.
   There has to be a common advantage in joining the CoP. This depends on the quality of the members and their problem solving capacity (Filius 2008). At the moment quality of the students differs. Problems they work on, not being standardised, make it hard to predict what results can be expected. Too many entrepreneurs have too high an expectation regarding the desired results and therefore a majority is disappointed in the results Adoption Learning brings. Besides that, they also relate it to the time they have to invest in it. Lack of results is one of the main drivers of dissatisfaction.

3. The net result differs as well as satisfaction. The other driver of satisfaction is the 'click' in the early stages of a relationship. A sense of trust, mutual understanding, shared values and standards are necessary to attract and keep new members. The way students and entrepreneurs are able to work together is important.
   Entrepreneurs and students who are less satisfied have problems in cooperation. This leads to serious problems in communication. Both students and entrepreneurs are forced to draw their own plan. For some entrepreneurs and students this works, they find a way and are happy with it. They are the ones who give the highest marks on satisfaction. But others who have more difficulty in self-guidance experience Adoption Learning as rather vague and discouraging.
   Students often have the feeling they could learn more, or flee in evasion behaviour. The entrepreneur gets the feeling students are disinterested and are unable or unwilling to be coached.

4. The first three problems directly lead to the fourth and last problem. This is probably the most important problem and therefore the most important key to a solution. In terms of Weick's model, after diverse ends, creating common ends and common means become important to members. This phase has not been dealt with properly in Deventer. The education has an advisory board that acts like a think-tank, but in a CoP all members at least have the opportunity to participate. At the moment Adoption Learning is still a bit of a one way track.
   For lack of definition, participants are left to define their own role and targets. Dooner (2008) already identified the possible threats:
   - Interpersonal conflicts by triggering different norms and standards by students, entrepreneurs and Saxion employees;
   - Discussions that trigger conflicts over cognitive and personal tensions.

   Furthermore, it also misses an opportunity in really making the difference and bringing what Saxion employees hope it will bring the SME's.
   Not mapping the motivation of the participants and translating them into a tailor made trajectory is making sure you loose entrepreneurs by lack of interest and cooperation. Keeping them in can only be done when there is a certain flexibility in an otherwise very structured cooperation model. It is necessary to give participants the chance to choose their projects from a variety of possible projects. Results and minimum achievements are to be defined as well as expected roles from the different participants. Also students have to deliver results. *Mass-customization* is the answer to the question. A variety of projects has to be developed by the participants and the students, workshops provide the necessary design-information. Let entrepreneurs design their own role.
   This is in line with the main conclusions from research Akkerman *et al* (2007) did on sponsored / outside organised CoPs. Initiating a CoP is just one of the actions, making it work is something the CoP has to do by itself. Ownership and self-guidance can make a CoP work.
   In line with these conclusions, one can say it is possible to initiate a COP from the outside, while maintaining ownership (common ends and means) of and by the group. This is only possible under proper conditions. According to Akkerman *et al* (2007) the conclusion is:
   - The amount of time given for and attention paid to formulating needs of the group is fruitful.
   - Exclusively paying attention to how to coordinate actions is less fruitful.
   - Exterior motivation does not strongly encourage participants to join actively in participation on activities and context.

Here lies the challenge: Allowing ownership and self-guidance and let participants make a CoP work.

### 5.2. Solutions to the problems

As shown, not surprisingly and in line with previous research, the centre of the problem in Deventer is a lack of a common identity and a lack of time spent on communication necessary to formulate common ends and common means. This means reification and participation in the process is rather suboptimal. This will inevitably lead to diverse means and could eventually lead to leaving the CoP or suboptimal behaviour of participants.

#### 5.2.1. The first step, a work on common identity and reification

Reification is only possible when Saxion is able to formulate its own vision and goals, Saxion's vision and goals have to meet the overlap on goals and target of students and entrepreneurs. Based on this a format has to be developed that enables to communicate with all parties about targets and goals from each point of view. To achieve this workshops have to be organized, starting with Saxion employees, on which all parties define some standard results you want to achieve in the different periods of Adoption Learning.
Based on this first step, a format has to be developed enabling communication between all partners about their specific need for information. This format is used to make year to year agreements with the three parties. What do they want to achieve and what targets they want to expect the next period. Once filled out the format is providing all different partners with the proper information they need.

Dooner (2008) met similar problems in her research. She formulated the dominant problem: how to adopt common means in the group practice and gave the following suggestions.
Designing Common identity and Common means and ends means to ensure reification. You need a tool that enables partners to communicate on targets and process[21]:

- *You have to lead members to adopting strategies to encourage cognitive conflicts.*
  This means you have to make sure each party has the possibility to communicate on their expectations, mutual targets and achievements they expect and how they think Adoption learning is best organized. In that way members have a clear vision on needs and boundaries other members experience. At first a shared vision and goals have to be defined that is subscribes by all parties. First make sure Saxion employees see the problem. Make sure they also define vision, goals and target that recognise Adoption Learning as a tool for education on entrepreneurship, not as a goal in it self.
  Make sure the participants have the possibility to define the achievements they want and need to stay voluntary for a longer period, even if advantages for some participants can and will come in later stages.
  This can be done in different workshops that will help to define the desired results, carefully recruit participants, students and entrepreneurs. In this way a common identity can be formulated that leads to commitment of all partners and is a sound base to communicate Adoption Learning to possible new entrants.

- *You have to recognise group tensions and possible factors that lead to group tension: what aspects trigger sources of conflict:*
  Communication on targets and goals, vagueness about different roles and how to assess results students deliver are a source of frustration. So information about targets, desired results and roles that appeal to all participants have to be communicated to all parties in a way it appeals different parties and guides mutual activities. It has to inform about mutual expectations that bind all parties to minimum efforts and has to be strict in it.

[21] The format is presented in appendix 6. It can be used to unify all points of view. It connects activities to business projects on operational, tactical and strategic level as well as to a common body of knowledge, ECTS and assessments. Appendix 7 presents an overview that can be used as actual communication to the different members and to make concrete agreements on activities it also will be used as "monster board" on the internet platform.

Preconditions that are expected by different partners (e.g. knowledge platform, basic skills students have to obtain) have to be ensured by Saxion.

- *When this is clear it helps to preserve members to "get the job done".*
  Freedom and flexibility is one thing, but it prevents members from making sound agreements. On the other hand, not all entrepreneurs and organizations have the need for standard projects. Mass customization makes it easy to choose and pick targets, and provides flexibility in clear structures. In this way students and entrepreneurs can pick well defined projects that help all actors to create mutual advantages. Sense making in clear structures is less time consuming and possible problems that arise can be foreseen.

#### 5.2.2. The second step: Reification leading to optimal participation by sound periodic agreements.

Working together in the CoP means getting to know each other and get a sight on personal targets. Based on the mass customization individual agreements on what has to be done in the one on one situation can thus easily be made. It enables partners to level on quality and focus. Each year these agreements have to be renewed.
These agreements also have to enable partners to discuss the mutual investments in their relationship. The different roles, the support that is needed, the most favourable way to conduct the process can be clarified. This is important in guiding communication between entrepreneur and student. This has to lead to what students and entrepreneurs have to discuss and talk about, how can they help each other and accomplish the project they both joined in. This heavily supports the important "click"
It helps to accept task related disagreements, because there is already an agreement on content and process. Not having stressed the intention of interpersonal contact and interaction is a risk for interpersonal conflicts; partners now know where to communicate about and where it has to lead.
Another important issue in relation is the fact that entrepreneurs have their own strong value and norms, students have to cope with the fact "business comes first" and what it means to "act as an entrepreneur". Saxion has an obligation to coach students on these important matters. Seminars and workshops will have to ensure the right mindset.

Interdependency has to be minimal, this makes members vulnerable. When group activities are organised, make sure partners know the activities that will take place and that they do not interfere with the periodic agreements earlier made. In group activities new relations are made between students and entrepreneurs: make small groups with very similar targets and norms that are in line with those of the entrepreneurs.

### 5.3. Recommendations in concrete line of work

As has been said, whether a CoP comes into existence and is successful depends on a number of conditions. For sure, it depends heavily on the support of the organization that initiates it, whether the resources needed are provided and whether the CoP is properly supported. Especially in starting up a CoP, facilitation is crucial. (Filius, 2007)
*In what way can Saxion institute SB&RM effectively provide and if necessary improve on those conditions?*
It has identified what has to be done on the reification and participation to optimize the process. To achieve a lasting CoP recommendations will be formulated in line with reasons to join and to stay because joining and staying is the cornerstone of Adoption Learning. Obviously recommendations will recall the remarks made earlier.

#### 5.3.1 Reasons to join, attracting new entrants based on a common identity.

Partners join in because vision, goal and targets appeal to them and they expect advantage in participation. So this has to be communicated in an efficient and effective way. Based on the conclusions the common identity and how is has to be communicated and promoted to (potential) members is utmost important and the first thing that has to be done.

**Content of the message.**
Reification is about content and describing is effectively. If the process of reification is really worked through and common ends and means are institutionalized this can be done rather easily. In this stage communication on vision, goals and targets should lead to a common identity. Who are we, and why this CoP is so special. The format earlier presented is the key solution. It enables the entrepreneurs to define concrete action and results they want / need. Communication with entrepreneurs is essential. Use examples of earlier projects as an example and entrepreneurs to get the right formulation, it has to attract colleague entrepreneurs. First workshops with entrepreneurs in filling the format were very promising.

Focus has to lay on individual advantage. Appeal to individual motivation to join in describing possible advantages, use story telling and make sure people can get a good look at Adoption Learning. Define expected trust, trustworthiness, shared values and norms and bring in entrepreneurs with success stories. Present the quality of the network, in terms of what it already achieved and who is connected; what business are they in, what are they proud of? This is a clear message on what can be expected and has to be presented to potential entrants and current members. Clear targets, mutual expectations, basic quality of the members and the conditions to join are an important part. Because not everyone can join; entrepreneurs also need some basic qualifications. (Kearny Rubins, 2005)

**Communication channel**
Essential is a communication channel that provides potential and participating members each with the explicit information they need. Best use the internet to provide information on entrepreneurs and their businesses and give a professional insight. A very important part in providing this information lays in presenting the members, their qualities, and achievements the CoP already brought the participating members. Links to joining businesses and entrepreneurs is important. They provide the success stories and icons you need to attract new entrepreneurs.

It has to function in a way sites like www.monsterboard.nl function, name it for instance www.adoptieleren.nl[22] . A communication channel that connects members with shared interests. New entrants immediately have a picture on what can be expected and how and what they have to invest to take part. This is only one of the functions the internet portal has; the function to communicate and distribute the common identity. Other functions will be discussed later in this chapter.

**Promotion**
Conclusions made clear entrepreneurs joined in from their own network or were interested via concrete network activities done by Saxion employees. This means being present in entrepreneurial networks is essential. Entrepreneurs attracting new entrepreneurs are only possible when they are satisfied with results and the relations they have with Saxion and especially the students. That means students are your best ambassadors by their behaviour and the results they bring. Behaviour counts in relation management, train employees and students in networking.
Effective and efficient networking calls for concrete actions. At first networks have to be localised and how to connect them. A first step is to map the network possibilities within the CoP. This is what students in September have to do. They have to map the network from their own entrepreneur and localise promising new contacts and important links. So here all participants are relevant. This means the ability to network is a quality Saxion employees should have or at least be able to develop. Make networking, e.g. contracting new entrants, part of the task students have to accomplish.

### 5.3.2 Reasons to stay, reification and participation in the process.

**The one on one relation**
Common means and common ends have their impact on reification. Reification is best done when group targets ensure individual advantage. As already stated mass customization provides enough flexibility to ensure individual targets can be met. Mass customization means: less flexibility, more concrete project that can be chosen.

[22] www.adoptieleren.nl is not in use as an accessible site at the moment, Saxion already has claimed it.

The format is already discussed before. To stay members do need a clear picture on what to do, when and in what way. Mutual advantage should be part of the information. So concrete projects with clear targets from year to year in which all individual participants (entrepreneurs, students and Saxion) agree on terms of conditions, clear roles for students and entrepreneurs, support from different parties, minimum level of achievement.

But there can be more. The format also helps to make new contacts within the CoP. Entrepreneurs can provide more projects than their own student can handle. Student can look for other projects or business environment than their own entrepreneur has available. The internet can be a big help in connecting students to entrepreneurs. The format can enable another www.adoptieleren.nl function. It makes it easy to recruit other students (entrepreneurs) or other projects (students). It should function as a catalyst to ensure the mutual relations.

**Invest in group activities to establish relations.**
Thus far satisfaction on group meetings was poor. To improve the quality on group meetings a number of actions are in place. Point of contact or group activities have to be based on group interest. Further more there is need for an accessible body of knowledge based on individual and group interest.
In both aspects the internet can and has to provide an easy solution.

At first in assessing the need individual participants have. This can be done by students but even better by using our www.adoptieleren.nl . A third function is to work as a platform on shared point of interest. Enough interest is reason to start up joined activities, workshops and meetings. In that way smaller groups with shared interests can easily connect and produce clear minutes and agreements on common tasks and goals to be achieved after meetings so people who did not attend the meeting immediately know they missed something interesting and important. It also, not all that unimportant, allows shared ownership of both individual and group meetings to direct the contact moments within the COP. It collects ideas and organizes meetings that focus on problems which are of interest to students and entrepreneur. It also ensures these meetings activate and energize participants because they are of interest.

Furthermore www.adoptieleren.nl allows effective and efficient investment in a knowledge platform, it provide a platform that allows direct communication and 24 x 7 information, with input and focus on projects and education, meetings that enlarge knowledge.
Enlarge the network by inviting interesting partners that are willing to participate or have special skills.
Communication on content and interesting details / links is another function of www.adoptieleren.nl .
The news bulletin function has to generate traffic, regularly refreshing the content and using the site as a communication channel has the effect members frequently check the site.
Visiting the site has furthermore to be stimulated by another function. Students and entrepreneurs should be able to use it as a helpdesk. Questions, calls for help and support stimulates new contacts and communication.

**Build commitment to the group, a feeling of unity, enlarge group relation**
Group meetings should focus on getting to know each other, on letting entrepreneurs and students present their business and business models to each other. Every meeting should have a bonus in bringing in and solving a business problem.
In the one on one relation coaching is the central issue. Coach the entrepreneur in educating the student. Eventually support on coaching activities if necessary.
Celebrate success; organize elections of the project, entrepreneur, coach and/or student of the year.
An important issue is recognition this is an important pilot project. Saxion has to acknowledge the importance of the project. It has to be communicated in a broader sense. Adoption Learning has to become a brand name. This means also communicating the project in other platforms that are of any importance.

### 5.3.3 Prevent members from leaving

As been said results are important in this CoP as in every CoP. Members mostly join in with clear vision on the advantages it brings. Individual advantages have to outreach the costs.

**Advantage and results, alignment with individual targets and intentions**
The format makes it able to investigate individual targets. Evaluation on these targets is essential. Targets have to be assessed on feasibility. But when mutual approved, Saxion has to make sure individual targets of entrepreneurs are being met. Thus it is utmost important individual parties communicate about mutual expectations. But as been said they all have to invest in the joined activities, but also want to harvest. Weariness on the demanding of the (individual in the) group should never outgrow the results. This means a steady focus on revenues and costs. Individual advantage, once defined and "put under contract" by mutual agreements have to be monitored. Students have to be forced to meet deadlines, results that have to be met, need to be clear and translated in advantages to all parties. This calls for a strict use of evaluation scheme on (sub)results.

The "click" is indicator on quality of the one on one relation. So there is need to monitor the relation between the student and the entrepreneur. Saxion has to keep a sharp eye on their relations. During contacts moments between Saxion and the entrepreneur the relation with the student is always point of discussion. During the year at least once a job evaluation conversation has to take place. Saxion is responsible for actions relations do not work. As we saw, often it is lack of concrete activities and mutual expectations; in that case Saxion has to intervene. If not, Saxion has to make a re-match try to find another student.

**Results have to outgrow the costs, also on action oriented learning**
**Screening.**
On motivation students have to be preselected on interests (like kind of business and branch) and expectation on the program and the special qualities it requires. But also entrepreneurs should be screened. Entrepreneurs need appropriate skills; furthermore their business has to challenge students to focus on business processes. Eventually support on coaching capabilities if necessary.

**Preparation and Training**
Students need appropriate skills and knowledge, they should operate rather independently. Entrepreneurs do not want to invest in basic skills; they expect them to be present. This means Saxion should provide students with basic skills, knowledge and motivation. Skills and knowledge can be provided by a training program that enables students to operate quite independent once connected to an entrepreneur and his organization. Screening on skills and knowledge should give clear insight in individual and group deficiencies lay. A training program has to deal with possible deficiencies also on communication skills especially since sound and meaningful communication is precondition to a meaningful relation.

### 5.4 Should Saxion continue Adoption Learning despite all problems?

All in all, building and maintaining a CoP looks like an difficult task, is investment in it worthwhile? A closer look at the concept and how it meets entrepreneurial learning made it clear. There is a lot to gain from a successful CoP in entrepreneurial teaching. Answers to critical incidents and unforeseen results of the students indicate the CoP is a viable and valuable tool in education on entrepreneurship. Successful education on entrepreneurship has distinct features: the curriculum should be built on three cornerstones: action, reflection and interdisciplinary. (M. Löwegren, 2005). Adoption Learning in the eyes of the stakeholders, students, entrepreneurs and Saxion employees, meets these aspects.

Action-orientation is the key to success in entrepreneurial learning and interaction between theory and practice leads to communication between entrepreneur and student. Orientation towards action also leads to tacit learning, which, according tot Filius (2008), is one of the things that could be expected. Students clearly state it does: things they do not learn from theory. Unforeseen results and positive critical incidents indicate students learn about what it actually means to be an entrepreneur: how it feels to be an entrepreneur, what drives and distresses him.

Interdisciplinarity comes from real life projects. But as Pittaway (2005) states; without the students' prior experience of other management education (e.g. marketing; financial management) the learning experience will probably not be successful. This clearly was one of the conclusions drawn by especially entrepreneurs in the Deventer CoP. Providing tools will certainly lead to success and advantages that really matter to all parties. Students experience high emotional impact on success. Careful educational and tutorial design is needed. In that sense Saxion can improve a lot. Project-based activity that is 'hands-on' can be well defined in the workshops and in a way that leads to success and clear advantage to all partners.

Emotional exposure mostly via groups undertaking and via restricted problems does effectively simulate entrepreneurial learning. Adoption Learning certainly provides a way to implement emotional exposure or cognitive affection. This is one of the things which are generally hard to achieve in 'traditional' curricula. Emotion and results lead to retrospection and reflection. Unforeseen results are formulated in terms of reflection. Not just the competence-based curriculum, but particularly the need to comment on your behaviour with the entrepreneur leads to reflection.

In conclusion, we can state that adoption learning is extremely suitable for all kinds of education on practice, but especially for education on entrepreneurship. Given the answers it also suits SME's, as could be expected (Filius, 2005).

### 5.5 Discussion and reasons for further research

A CoP as defined in theory is often a rather homogeneous group. This is not the case in Deventer. This particular group differs a lot, though the research conducted tells us they have a lot in common. We started this chapter with this remark: "for teaching professionals collaboration outside classrooms is demanding and personally challenging". This counts even more when these professionals have to interact with other professionals of a different kind. As we have seen culture, focus and different role and little concrete activities in the CoP leads to a different perception of the concrete individual needs and about the needs of the CoP as a whole. This heterogeneity has to be overcome in order to optimize the CoP. Focus on goals and roles that differ a lot are for a CoP an anomaly. Theoretically despite of all heterogeneity the different partners have to work together. Only then the participants are prepared to set aside personal advantage in favour for common ends and means. And only then they are prepared to participate for four years.

Our contribution to theory lays in the distinct notion that in bringing in others than teaching professionals on a regular base the nature of work also changes. Being able to communicate with individuals outside the institute has to happen on a more regular base than before. More flexibility is needed than in the traditional situations as we see in dual trajectories and internship. These trajectories mostly are uniform and do not need strong one on one relation with the outside parties. In Deventer all parties together

have to formulate common ground that lead to common ends and common means. That is rather new to teaching institutes; normally they define activities and trajectories.

The first contribution is the notion working in a CoP needs other professional qualities. For teaching professionals working in a CoP changes business as usual. Their core capabilities do not lay on networking and participating with others outside the classroom or the institute. Relation management becomes an important quality. So they have to be trained and stimulated in these job foreign qualities. Furthermore the institute has to provide proper communication channels and has to allow and enable and finance mutual personal contact, as in one on one and group meetings
The second contribution is how to deal with more flexibility in education. The format of mass customization enables parties to cooperate and all gain on it, without disturbing teaching methods too much. All parties are in control.

So, there clearly are some points of interest and possible further research. Another point of interest is the fact Saxion feels it has the lead. But defining common ends and means definitely means to allow others to (re)create parts of your curriculum. Is an institute of higher education prepared and willing to partly hand over control? Is it possible to build a curriculum on common grounds that fits in the vision of Saxion and the Bologna agreements? And if so, is this concept transferable to other institutes of higher education? To answer these questions, more research has to be done, and certainly only after at first Adoption Learning has proven itself.

Maybe the toughest problem and the hardest to predict is the role of the Saxion employee. Using the CoP as a tool in your curriculum means teachers have to (re)define their profession. As been said they have to cooperate with outside members. They are partly dependent in their work of others doing part of their job. Will they accept? The current group of teachers in Deventer is willing and able, but growing student numbers lead to a need for more manpower. Working in a CoP without sufficient skills and motives will certainly lead to a failure.

Last but not least, there is one more aspect that needs to be addressed: a CoP is all about maintaining relationships. Relation management is at the moment no key competence when hiring a professional teacher. In the case of Deventer it should be. Furthermore, it is possible other teaching institutes will embrace the concept, but in all cases this means that management of the institutes are responsible for results that partly depend on persons not being employees. How to manage people not being own employees' is not a problem at the moment in Deventer, but could become problematic in future. A management problem could occur when participants, responsible for educating in practice, lack skills and motivation.

Adoption Learning as a pilot is promising, it can and will work if the above mentioned recommendations are institutionalized. First steps have been taken and things are starting to change for the best. But it does not necessarily mean the concept can be copied to other institutes as easy. This needs more research and especially more time to get more insight in practice and the community.

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**Appendices**

**Appendix 1: 12 competences**

Hieronder volgen de competenties en de bijpassende indicatoren van de persoonlijke karakeristiek waarbij in een tweede kolom is aangegeven of de indicator meer op kennis/cognitie (K ), vaardigheid (V) of attitude (A) gericht is. Tevens zijn valkuilen en voorbeeldsituaties aangegeven.

| **Persoonlijke karakteristiek: Doel voor ogen houden (1)** | **Type indicator** |
|---|---|
| 1.1. In staat zijn te bepalen of een doel op korte dan wel langere termijn realistisch, haalbaar en wenselijk is (beter ten halve gekeerd dan ten hele gedwaald) | K |
| 1.2. Is naar medewerkers duidelijk omtrent zijn wensen ten aanzien van te realiseren doelen, deadlines en te volgen richtlijnen. | V |
| 1.3 Kunnen aangeven van weerstanden die je van het doel afhouden en deze overwinnen. | V/A |
| 1.4. Toont zich consequent in denken en handelen, ook in situaties waarin sprake is van tegenstand of tegenwerking.. | V |
| 1.5. Geloven in je doel ondanks dat anderen daar nog niet van doordrongen zijn. | A |

| VALKUILEN: |
|---|
| 1.A. Ineffectief gedrag door verkeerde doelen |
| 1.B. Doordrammen; als anderen alleen meewerken om van het gezeur af te zijn. |
| 1.C Vervalt in een dogmatische of rigide opstelling |
| 1.C. Slecht beeld van eigen kunnen en werkelijkheid |

| **Persoonlijke karakteristiek: Initiatief nemen en doorzetten (2)** | **Type indicator** |
|---|---|
| 2.1. Durft beslissingen te nemen en deze uit te dragen | A/V |
| 2.2. Blijft bij grote problemen, tijdsdruk en/of hevige emoties naar een mogelijke oplossing zoeken om eruit te komen. | V |
| 2.3. Afhankelijk van de situatie getimed en adequaat actie (laten) ondernemen/ initiëren (effectief daarbij is juiste moment en juiste wijze, juiste mensen en middelen | V |
| 2.4. Bereid om risico's te nemen | A |
| 2.5. Blijft constant prestaties leveren onder tijdsdruk, tegenslag, teleurstelling of tegenspel | A |
| 2.6 Neemt het voortouw, onderneemt actie zonder aansturing van anderen | V |

| **Valkuilen:** | |
|---|---|
| 2.A. Slecht beeld van eigen kunnen en de werkelijkheid. | |
| 2.B. Actie ondernemen op alles wat op het bedrijf afkomt, geen rust inbouwen en consolideren. | |

| **Persoonlijke karakteristiek: Flexibel en innovatief (3)** | **Type indicator** |
|---|---|
| 3.1. Kijkt over de grenzen van eigen afdeling., werkterrein, bestaande structuren en denkkaders en ontleend daaraan relevante vernieuwende ideeën, oplossingsmethoden of gezichtspunten | V/A |
| 3.2. Zoekt uitdaging in nieuwe en andere toekomstgerichte oplossingen,en werkwijzen. | A |
| 3.3. Accepteert veranderingen & staat open voor andere inzichten. | A |
| 3.4.. Is bereid zijn doel via verschillende 'wegen' te bereiken. | A |

| **Valkuil** |
|---|
| 3.A. Enthousiast vernieuwen zonder oog voor zakelijke, commerciële en persoonlijke gevolgen |
| 3.B. Inconsistent gedrag, met alle winden meewaaien. |
| 3.C Chaotisch worden, anderen weten niet meer waar men aan toe is. |

| **Persoonlijke karakteristiek: Leert van eigen fouten (4)** | **Type indicator** |
|---|---|
| 4.1. Vraagt regelmatig en systematisch om feedback. | V/A |
| 4.2. Analyseert eigen prestaties om eigen tekortkomingen te begrijpen en in de toekomst | V/A |

| | |
|---|---|
| succesvoller te presteren. | |
| 4.3. Ziet feedback zien als kans op ontwikkeling en staat open voor kritisch opbouwende feedback. | A |

| **Valkuilen** |
|---|
| 4.A Alles 'zomaar' aannemen |
| 4.B Kritiek zien als persoonlijke aanval of bedreiging |
| 4.C Overdreven veel aandacht voor kleine afwijkingen |
| 4.D Alleen op zaken letten die fout gaan in de onderneming of functioneren |

**Effectiviteit A – Vraagstukken**

De context waarin de SB&RM'er opereert is zeer veelzijdig en veranderlijk. Vaste methoden en werkwijzen zijn eerder een obstakel dan een hulpmiddel. Tips voor een effectieve aanpak zijn situationeel gebonden. In de beantwoording van de vraag wat een effectieve aanpak kenmerkt neemt het gestructureerd en planmatig aanpakken van problemen een centrale plaats in. De vraagstukken die karakteristiek zijn en effectief moeten worden aangepakt worden in de volgende competenties beschreven.

| **Effectiviteit A – Vraagstukken: Anticipeert op ontwikkelingen die van invloed zijn op de positie en kansen van de onderneming en heeft daarbij het vermogen vanuit de klant te redeneren; het betreft ontwikkelingen in een veelheid van omgevingen. (5)** | **Type indicator** |
|---|---|
| 5.1 Kent de marktpositie en kerncompetenties van de eigen organisatie op lange termijn; | K |
| 5.2. Signaleert en spoort bij voorkeur proactief nieuwe ontwikkelingen op en vertaalt deze methodisch in producten of diensten. | K/V |
| 5.3 Pikt gemakkelijk de rode draad op uit dagelijkse gebeurtenissen en weet de consequenties hiervan aan te geven voor te nemen besluiten. | V |
| 5.4. Geeft aan hoe het benutten van kansen of pareren van bedreigingen ingrijpt op de bedrijfsprocessen | K |
| 5.5. Kiest onderbouwd nieuwe (ondernemings)doelen waar nodig. | V |
| 5.6. Heeft bij verandering oog voor (externe) prioriteiten. | A |
| 5.7. Stimuleert en geeft methodisch leiding aan innovatieprocessen | V/K |

| **Valkuilen** |
|---|
| 5.A Op alle hype's klakkeloos ingaan, 'door de bomen het bos niet meer zien'. |
| 5.B In alle zaken overdreven vooruit plannen. |
| 5.C Teveel (externe) informatie verzamelen en geen keuzes kunnen/durven maken. |
| 5.D Gebrek aan informatievaardigheden of kennis van methoden |
| 5.E Ideeën niet effectief kunnen communiceren naar stakeholders |

| **Effectiviteit A – Vraagstukken: Rekent – om tijdig kansen en risico's te kunnen schatten – in allerlei voorkomende situaties en in kort tijdsbestek consequenties van factoren, beslissingen of maatregelen door, op financieel, personeel, logistiek, juridisch en strategisch terrein. (6)** | **Type indicator** |
|---|---|
| 6.1. Snel een zakelijke afweging maken binnen (mogelijk conflicterende) belangen op grond van globale informatie of onvolledige gegevens. | V/A |
| 6.2. Methodisch evalueren en leiding geven aan de evaluatie van het functioneren van de eigen organisatie gerelateerd aan externe marktontwikkelingen in interne veranderingen (o.a. benchmark; inbouwen van prestatie-indicatoren). | K/ V |
| 6.3. Ziet de bedrijfsimplicaties van gegevens over prestaties en resultaten; verbindt hieraan conclusies en formuleert op grond hiervan beleidsdoelstellingen. | K/V |

| **Valkuilen** |
|---|
| 6.A. Je eigen normen projecteren op anderen en op organisaties/instellingen |

| |
|---|
| 6.B. Klakkeloos externe ontwikkelingen als leidend nemen en eigen organisatie daaraan afmeten. |
| 6.C. Alles in de gaten willen houden. |
| 6.D Achter de feiten aanhollen. |
| 6.E Overdreven veel aandacht voor evalueren en verbeteren van processen. |
| 6.F Niet effectief en methodisch werken waardoor implementatie niet mogelijk is. |

**Effectiviteit B – Aanpak**

In de beantwoording van de vraag wat een effectieve aanpak kenmerkt neemt het gestructureerd en planmatig aanpakken van problemen een centrale plaats in. Dat wil zeggen hij stelt duidelijke doelen, stelt een plan op, werkt volgens dit plan en bewaakt de uitvoering ervan. De volgende competenties beschrijven waaruit de effectieve aanpak bestaat

| **Effectiviteit B – Aanpak: Analyseert en verbetert methodisch de bedrijfsvoering teneinde betere resultaten te bereiken (7)** | **Type indicator** |
|---|---|
| 7.1. In de organisatie processen (laten) opnemen waardoor terugkoppeling ontstaat; bouwen intern signaleringssysteem. | K/V |
| 7.2. Inbouwen actiegerichtheid, signaleren omzetten tot daden (toekennen van verantwoordelijkheden en bevoegdheden in de organisatie). | V |
| 7.3. In staat zijn een adequate organisatiestructuur vorm te (laten) geven. | K/V |
| 7.4. Optimaliseren van logistieke- beheers- en productieprocessen. | K/V |
| 7.5. Heeft een duidelijk langer termijndoel en een scenario op korte en middellange termijn om hiertoe te komen | K/V |
| 7.8. In staat zijn te onderkennen of de cultuur en de structuur nog wel passen bij de ontwikkelingsfase van het bedrijf in zijn omgeving | V/A |
| 7.9. Ziet nieuwe toepassingsmogelijkheden voor bekende instrumenten. | V |

| **Valkuilen** |
|---|
| 7.A. Klakkeloos externe ontwikkelingen als leidend nemen en eigen organisatie daaraan afmeten |
| 7.B. overdreven veel aandacht voor evalueren en verbeteren van processen, alles kan altijd beter, sterker nog: in alles de beste willen zijn. |
| 7.C. Denken dat alles met alles verband houdt. |
| 7.D Door “overorganisatie” de slagvaardigheid en flexibiliteit van de organisatie op het spel zetten<br>A |

| **Effectiviteit B – Aanpak: is succesvol in het genereren van omzet (8)** | **Type indicator** |
|---|---|
| 8.1 De ondernemer heeft kennis van de markt, klanten en concurrenten en gebruikt dit in zijn argumenten. | V |
| 8.2 Bij acquisitie gaat de ondernemer actief en doelmatig te werk. Hij is daarbij in staat de belangrijkste interne en externe klanten te benoemen en effectief te benaderen en indien hiermee zonodig langdurige relaties mee op te bouwen. | V |
| 8.3 Identificeert de wensen van de klant en markt en kan dit commercieel vertalen naar gerealiseerde producten, diensten, assortiment en bedrijfsbeleid. | V |
| 8.4 Gaat flexibel met de eisen van de klant zonder de belangen van de eigen organisatie uit het oog te verliezen en combineert daarbij zonodig bestaande oplossingen tot een, voor de klant unieke oplossing die de klant aanspreekt. | V |
| 8.5 Kan belanghebbenden overtuigen en toont verkoopkracht. | V |
| 8.6 Op basis van klantinformatie de vertaling naar eigen organisatie kunnen maken en de klant in beider belang te bedienen. | K/V |
| 8.7 Evalueert en organiseert methodisch het verkoopproces op korte en lange termijn. | K/V |

| **Valkuilen** |
|---|

| |
|---|
| 8A. In organiseren van klantcontacten afstemming extern - intern en effectiviteit en efficiency uit het oog verliezen. |
| 8B. Bij klantrelaties risico, effectiviteit en efficiency uit het oog verliezen. |
| 8C. (Te) afwachtend zijn ('komt wel goed'), klant komt zelf wel. |
| 8D. Doorschieten in zoeken naar nieuwe klanten en nog onbekende wensen. |

| **Effectiviteit B – Aanpak: Kan een project opzetten, leiden, bewaken en evalueren (9)** | **Type indicator** |
|---|---|
| 9.1. In staat zijn een adequate de organisatie methodisch vorm te (laten) geven. Zorgt voor structurering, fasering en realisatie van sturings- en evaluatie-instrumenten | K/V |
| 9.2. Matcht mensen en organisatie. | K/V |
| 9.3 Delegeert taken en verantwoordelijkheden, volgt de voortgang en spreekt medewerkers aan op resultaten. | V |
| 9.4. Maakt helder en evenwichtig gebruik van formele macht en autoriteit en behoudt de eindverantwoordelijkheid. | V |
| 9.5. Verzekert, waar van belang, projectoverstijgende samenwerking, verenigt ook teamleden met individuele strijdige belangen teneinde de team- en organisatiedoelstellingen te bereiken. | V |
| 9.6. Herkent succes- en faalfactoren (reactief, pro-actief), verheldert problemen, ziet oorzaak/ gevolg relaties en komt tot een praktische oplossing. | V |

| **Valkuilen** |
|---|
| 9.A. Alleen interne invloedsfactoren meenemen in de besluitvorming en aansturing |
| 9.B. Doodknuffelen, over-democratiseren van de organisatie, iedereen op alle niveaus over alles laten meepraten. |
| 9.C. Te veel vertrouwen in planningsschema's en afspraken op papier |
| 9.D. In personeelsbenadering overdreven veel aandacht aan of, wat mensen zelf willen, of organisatiebelang schenken, doorschieten in een van beiden. |

**Effectiviteit C – Betrekt anderen**

De afgestudeerde betrekt anderen bij de aanpak van de vraagstukken, door met hen effectief te communiceren en teamgericht samen te werken. De werkomgeving kan multicultureel, inter-nationaal of multidisciplinair zijn en kan mede ethische en maatschappelijke vragen rond het ondernemerschap oproepen. Tot de samenwerking behoort ook het uitvoeren van leidinggevende taken. Vanuit dit perspectief onderscheiden we bij de volgende specifieke competenties:

| **Effectiviteit: C – Betrekt anderen : Overbrugt verschillen die mede voortkomen uit cultuurgebonden gedrag, en toont daarbij voldoende 'stevigheid', zowel zakelijk als moreel (10).** | **Type indicator** |
|---|---|
| 10.1. Herkent behoeften van mensen en geeft de mogelijkheden voor hen weer in toepasselijke termen zonder het belang van de organisatie uit het oog te verliezen. | V |
| 10.2. Controleert of zijn boodschap overkomt | V |
| 10.3. Gevoelig voor barrières bij anderen | A |
| 10.4. Weerspiegelt in houding en gedrag de waarden van de organisatie, draagt de bedrijfscultuur uit, is ambassadeur van bedrijfscultuur. | A/V |
| 10.5 Kan zich inleven in het belang van anderen en de daarbijbehorende normen en waarden. | A/V |

| **Valkuilen** |
|---|
| 10.A. Doordrammerigheid, starheid, halsstarrigheid, dictatoriaal regime |
| 10.B. Afwachten (het komt wel goed) |
| 10.C. Niet alle klanten dezelfde benadering geven, persoonsvoorkeuren hebben: onderscheid zakelijk en persoonlijk. |
| 10.D. Je eigen normen projecteren op anderen en op organisaties/instellingen. |

| **Effectiviteit: C – Betrekt anderen : Geeft feedback, zodat medewerkers zichzelf ontwikkelen (11)** | **Type indicator** |
|---|---|
| 11.1. Schat gedrag en prestaties van individuele medewerkers op waarde in en bespreekt deze regelmatig. Bespreekt dit op een open, constructieve wijze, gericht op het realiseren van verbeteringen. | V/A |
| 11.2. Stimuleert de ontwikkeling van anderen; gaat actief op zoek naar mogelijkheden en geeft gevraagd en ongevraagd feedback over de voortgang hierin. | A/V |
| 11.3. Coacht medewerkers bij hun persoonlijke ontwikkeling met betrekking tot verbeterpunten, door anderen te helpen hun capaciteiten te vergroten, hun mogelijkheden optimaal te benutten of alternatieven te (laten) herkennen | V |

| **Valkuilen** |
|---|
| 11.A. Uitsluitend negatieve feedback geven, doorschieten in kritiek |
| 11.B. Ongenuanceerdheid bij feedback |
| 11.C. Te weinig letten op bedrijfsdoelstellingen; hobbyistisch gedrag. |

| **Effectiviteit: C – Betrekt anderen : Gaat op een stimulerende wijze om met medewerkers (12)** | **Type indicator** |
|---|---|
| 12.1. Beseft zijn invloeden op anderen en neemt de verantwoordelijkheid voor het motiveren van anderen. | A |
| 12.2. Schat gedrag en prestaties van individuele medewerkers op waarde in, bespreekt deze regelmatig en legt verantwoordelijkheden op zo laag mogelijk niveau neer. Bespreekt dit op een open, constructieve wijze, gericht op het realiseren van verbeteringen. | V |
| 12.3. Creëert een klimaat van wederzijdse ondersteuning; stimuleert het team; moedigt aan en versterkt. Spreekt inefficiënt of storend gedrag aan. Lost spanningen en conflicten op constructieve wijze op. | V |
| 12.4. (Laten) hanteren van een adequate leiderschapsstijl. | |

| **Valkuilen** |
|---|
| 12.A. Afschuiven van vervelende klussen |
| 12.B. Overdemocratisering |
| 12.C. Je eigen normen opleggen aan anderen. |
| 12.D. Het op zijn beloop laten, geen vorm kunnen geven |

**Appendix 2: Partners in the CoP**

| **Entrepreneur** | Total employees | Branch |
|---|---|---|
| Kok Marko | 1 | MKB adviseur |
| Schurink Henk | 1 | Klussen en bouw |
| Steetsel Henk | 2 | evenementenorganisatie |
| Zalk Gerke van | 2 | bedrijfsadvisering |
| Vossebeld Roelof | 3 | leerwerkplaats productie |
| Nijhuis Patrick | 5 | ICT en mediadesign |
| Tielkes | 6 | groothandel/productie |
| Roon Jasper van | 13 | groothandel |
| Riesewijk Marc | 14 | retail |
| Bergman Henry | 15 | ICT automatisering |
| Kok Hans | 25 | retail / supermarkt |
| Beuzel | 35 | retail / supermarkt |
| Wolters Gert Jan | 43 | onderhoud |
| Achtereekte Marco | 72 | productie textiel |

| **Student** | Preparatory training :Type school / Course | Course |
|---|---|---|
| Blijderveen | Havo | Economie en Maatschap. |
| Brinkman | MBO | Ondernemer Groothandel |
| Bronkhorst | Havo | Economie en Maatschap. |
| Daalmeijer | Havo | Cultuur en Maatschappij |
| Diender | MBO | Comm. Med. Marketing en Communicatie |
| Hoekman | Havo | Natuur en Techniek |
| Hogeboom | MBO | Manager/Ondernemer Detailhandel |
| Huits | MBO | Manager Opslag en Vervoer |
| Nus | Havo | Economie en Maatschap. |
| Paalman | Havo | Economie en Maatschap. |
| Pothoven | MBO | Ondernemer/manager/detailhandel |
| Salik | MBO | Filiaalbeheerder |
| Spies | MBO | Ondernemer/manager/detailhandel |
| Visser | MBO | Onderwijsassistent |
| Weisz | VWO | Economie en Maatschappij |
| Wever | Havo | Cultuur en Maatschappij |
| Wildeman | MBO | Hoofd magazijn |

| **Saxon Employee** | Age | Experience in SB&RM concept (years) |
|---|---|---|
| Inge Kwast | 55 | 10 |
| Cees Slot | 47 | 1 |
| Hans Schafer | 54 | 9 |
| Ellen Oostenenk | 30 | 4 |

**Appendix 3: Gibb**

| Linking Entrepreneurial Behaviour s and Skills to Pedagogy (Gibb, 2005) | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Seeking opportunities | Taking initiatives / acting independently | Solving problems creatively | Persuading / influencing others | Making things happen | Dealing with uncertainty | Flexibly responding | Negotiating a deal successfully | Taking decisions | Presenting confidently | Manage interdependence successfully |
| Lectures | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Seminars | | | X | | | | | X | | X | X |
| Workshop on problems / opportunities | XX | | XXX | X | | | | X | XX | | |
| Critiques | | | X | X | | | X | | | | |
| Cases | | | | | | | | X | X | | |
| Searches | X | X | | | X | X | | | | | X |
| Critical incidents | | | X | | | X | X | | X | | |
| Discussion groups | | | X | X | | | | X | | | X |
| Projects | X | X | X | | X | X | | X | X | X | X |
| Presentations | | | | XX | | | | | | XX | |
| Debates | | | | XX | | | | | | XX | |
| Interviews | | | X | X | | X | X | X | | | |
| Goldfish bowl | | | | X | | | X | X | | | X |
| Simulations | | | X | X | | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Evaluations | XX | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mentoring each other | | | X | X | | X | X | X | | | X |
| Interactive video | | | | | | | X | | X | | |
| Games | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Organising events | | XX | | XX | XX | XX | | XX | XX | | X |
| Competitions | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Audit (self) instruments | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Audit (bus.) instruments | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Drawings | | | X | X | | | | | | | |
| Drama | | | | X | | X | | | | X | |
| Investigations | | | X | | X | | | | X | | |
| Role models | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Panel observations | | | | X | | | | X | X | | X |
| Topic discussions | | X | | X | | | X | | | X | |
| Adventure training | X | X | X | | | X | X | | X | | X |
| Teaching others | | | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | |
| Counselling | | | X | X | | | X | X | | | |

**Appendix 4: Action Learning, action research and experiential learning.**

**Action learning** ((Dick, 2000).

Action learning can be defined as a process in which a group of people come together more or less regularly to help each other to learn from their experience. As Reg Revans used and described it, it was mostly used across different organisations. That is, the participants typically came from different situations, where each of them was involved in different activities and faced individual problems. Most commonly the participants have been managers, though this is not essential. The current practice more often now is to set up an action learning program within one organisation. It is not unusual for a team to consist of people with a common task or problem.

There may or may not be a facilitator for the learning groups which are formed. Revans mostly avoided them.

**Action research**

Action research is a process by which change and understanding can be pursued at the one time. It is usually described as cyclic, with action and critical reflection taking place in turn. The reflection is used to review the previous action and plan the next one. It is commonly done by a group of people, though sometimes individuals use it to improve their practice. It has been used often in the field of education for this purpose. It is not unusual for there to be someone from outside the team who acts as a facilitator.

As they were previously practised, I think a useful distinction could be made. In action learning, each participant drew different learning from different experience. In action research a team of people drew collective learning from a collective experience. More recently, the advent of in-company action learning programs has begun to change this. The use of a team with a common project or problem leads to an action learning program which looks remarkably like action research. There were also some differences, on average, in field of application. Action learning was more often used in organisational settings, action research more common in community and educational settings.

**Experiential learning**

Both action research and action learning may be compared to experiential learning. As usually described, it is a process for drawing learning from experience. The experience can be something which is taking place, or more often is set up for the occasion by a trainer or facilitator. Clearly, both action research and action learning are about learning from experience. The experience is usually drawn from some task assumed by a person or team.

All are cyclic. All involve action and reflection on that action. All have learning as one of their goals. You might say that experiential learning is the basis for the learning component of both action learning and action research.

You could also say that both action learning and action research are intended to improve practice. Action research intends to introduce some change; action learning uses some intended change as a vehicle for learning through reflection.

In action research, the learners draw their learning from the same change activity. All are stakeholders in this activity. In action learning, as I said earlier, the learning and the activity used to be unique to each learner. With the increasing use of project teams in action learning programs, this is no longer true.

**The experiential learning cycle**

Consider the following simple learning cycle. It appears to capture the main features of experiential learning, action research, and action learning. At its simplest, it consists of two stages: action and reflection: action --> reflection, in an ongoing series of cycles.

However, the reflection gains its point by leading to learning, which in turn leads to changed behaviour in the future: action --> reflection --> action. We can therefore expand the reflection component. We want to take into account that it is partly a critical review of the last action. It is also, partly, planning for what will happen next.

Action --> review --> planning --> action. We can now add "theory" or principles to this. In our review, we can only make sense of the world in ways which build on our prior understanding. In enhancing that understanding, we become better able to act on the world. When we are acting, we often do not have the time to be deliberate about what we are doing. The "theories" we draw on are intuitive theories. In review and planning our theories can be made explicit. In other words, action is informed by intuitive theories. Critical review and planning are informed by conscious theories and assumptions. These

theories are derived deliberately from recent experience, and used to plan the next experience. Sensemaking comes from actions and leads to further actions,

You could say, then, that experiential learning functions by a dual alternation: between action and reflection; between unconscious and conscious theories. By engaging with both of these in a cyclic procedure, we integrate them. To return to action research and action learning; in each, action informs reflection and is informed by it. The reflection produces the learning (in action learning) or research (in action research). Think of both learning and research as understanding. In both, the action is changed as a result of the learning/research, and leads to more learning/research

**Appendix 5. The interview**

| question | Label | As posed in interview |
|---|---|---|
| 2.2 | Reason to join | What were your reasons to join the CoP? (only entrepreneurs) |
| 2.3 | Personal targets | Can you recall personal targets you hoped to achieve through the CoP? |
| 2.4 | Ranking Pers. targets | Can you rank the importance of the targets you named? |
| 2.5 | Organizational targets | Can you recall organizational targets you hoped to achieve through the CoP? |
| 2.6 | Ranking Org. targets | Can you rank the importance of the targets you named? |
| 2.7 | Disadvantages | Were there disadvantages in joining the CoP you expected? |
| 3.1 | Reached | Were estimated targets reached and how do you validate the results[23]? |
| 3.2 | Unforeseen | Did it bring any results that were unforeseen, and how do you validate them[24]? |
| 3.4 | Why reached | Why do you think these targets are reached? |
| 3.5 | Through CoP | Do you think these targets / results are reached through the CoP? And if so, why? |
| 3.6 | Otherwise | How could these results have been reached otherwise? |
| 4.1 | Communication | What do you think about the communication about targets, meetings, activities and other important aspects? |
| 4.2 | Partner | How interesting is your direct partner in the CoP (student, entrepreneur) |
| 4.3 | Organization | How interesting is Saxion as a partner / How interesting is the organisation that “adopted” you / how interesting is the student you adopted? |
| 4.4 | Contacts | Did you get any new promising contact via the CoP other than your direct relations? |
| 4.5 | New contacts | In what way could these new contacts be advantageous for you? |
| 4.6 | Advantage contacts | What advantages could new contacts gained via the CoP bring? |
| 4.7 | Result contacts | What concrete results did new contacts via the CoP brought you or the organisation? |
| 4.8 | Importance contacts | How important are new contacts for you and / or the organization |
| 4.9 | Improve network meetings | How could the CoP improve on network meetings? |
| 5.1 | Part of network | Do you feel part of the CoP network? |
| 5.2 | Relation | Are you satisfied with the relations in the CoP, students, entrepreneurs and Saxion? |
| 5.3 | Trust | Do you trust the relations in the CoP? |
| 5.4 | Norms / values | Do you think the different partners share the same values and norms? |
| 5.5 | Trustworthiness | You think all partners in the CoP are trustworthy? |
| 5.6 | Contracts | Do you think the CoP needs contracts to bind partners? |
| 5.7 | Goals / roles | What do you think about the communication of goals and targets that have to be reached and your role in it? |
| 5.8 | Importance relation | How important do you think relational aspects are for the success of the CoP? |
| 5.9 | Relation failure / success | Were relational aspects, any time last year, cause of failure or success? |
| 5.10 | Improve relation | How could the CoP improve on relational aspects? |
| 6.1 | New knowledge | What new knowledge did you gain last year through the CoP |
| 6.2 | Future knowledge | What future knowledge do you hope to gain next periods |
| 6.3 | Contribution | What do you think about the contribution of all partners(mutual contribution) |
| 6.4 | Access knowledge | How important is access to all knowledge, models and theories that are used, and do you have? |
| 6.5 | Importance knowledge | How important is gaining in knowledge to the organization? |
| 7.1 | strong / weak | Can you name a few strong / weak points in the CoP? |
| 7.2 | Change | What should be changed as soon as possible? |
| 8.1 | Positive/negative situations | Can you recall important situations ( that startled you, amazed you)? |
| 8.2 | Important | What played an important role? |
| 8.3 | Result | What was the result? |

[23] Less than expected, as expected, more than expected

[24] low, average, high

**Appendix 6: Reasons to join and stay.**

| Reasons to join | Entrepreneurs | Students | Saxion employees |
|---|---|---|---|
| Individual Motivation to join, providing enough shared common grounds to participate. | Personal reasons to join and personal targets are quite explicit. Main reasons to join lay in the network of the entrepreneurs (6[25]) and their estimation of Saxion as a partner (4). Personal targets are very much related to results the students have to accomplish. Entrepreneurs hope to see personal growth of the student. Participating entrepreneurs have their focus on education. First because at least 8 of them think education is important and also because they think they can contribute to the student's development. A minority looks at it as a moral obligation (4). Remarkable is the fact very few entrepreneurs have a focus on personal advantage.<br><br>Organizational targets are rather well defined by the entrepreneurs. The targets are focused on business advantage. Entrepreneurs expect students to execute projects that otherwise would not have been executed due to lack of time or money (8). A remarkable answer given by 8 entrepreneurs is the use of students and Saxion as partners in strategic decisions. The main target is to gain explicit knowledge of models, concepts and frameworks about how to operate efficient and effectively, and to investigate explicit organizational problems. | The majority of the students did not formulate concrete reasons to join. They did not explicitly choose Adoption Learning. They choose for Saxion Deventer as institute. When they do formulate concrete targets, they are in line with those of the entrepreneurs: personal growth, growing in taking initiative, getting more self-confidence, growing in social skills. A majority of the students (8) wanted to grow in the organization they adopted. Two of them explicitly hoped to get a feeling what it means to be an entrepreneur.<br><br>In terms of things to learn, students were more explicit: getting to know business processes and how to assess them, how organizations operate and how to become entrepreneur. Remarkably few (2) referred to specific knowledge on explicit disciplines. | As they stated; "*Adoption Learning has to lead to innovation, an enduring partnership and mutual advantage*". Concrete targets were keeping organizations inside the project and effectively managing the concept, in which they meant learning how to manage it over 4 years and organizing the growth of it (Adoption Learning expects to grow to approximately over 200 students within the next 3 years). |
| Expected Trust, trustworthiness, shared values and norms | None of the entrepreneurs expected problems with trust, trustworthiness and mismatches in values and norms. | All students trust their partners, both entrepreneurs and Saxion employees, most of them had no ideas about value and norms (yet gradually they learned there are differences) | They all trusted the partners and expected little differences in values and norm |
| Sense of quality in the partners and expected contribution | Though only a minority joined especially to get Saxion as a partner in their network, they all valued Saxion as a possible partner and had trust in the quality of the other partners and their willingness to contribute. | Students expect to learn a lot from the entrepreneurs and the business they are in. At the beginning students had no idea about mutual contribution | They valuated all partners very high as a professional and expected contribution in networks and specific knowledge on practice. |
| Esteemed disadvantages | Only 7 Entrepreneurs expected possible disadvantages, such as costs in time (5). In combination with the time factor they think there has | Students in general did not expect real disadvantages, although some (5) came up with the same issues entrepreneurs mentioned; time | They all admitted the project to be very time consuming in doing two things at the same time: developing and |

[25] The numbers between brackets indicate how many respondents gave this kind of answer

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | to be a match between student and entrepreneur, as they stated "*there has to be a 'click' to make it work*". | consuming, possible mismatch and the importance of the 'click' | executing Adoption Learning. |
| **Reasons to stay** | **Entrepreneurs** | **Students** | **Saxion employees** |
| Clarity about what has to be expected and when | Especially in the beginning targets and mutual expectations were very unclear. They feel communication is poor but improving. An important aspect is communication about results and how to assess them. Especially entrepreneurs feel the need to be informed on activities, criteria and their role and part in education: it is the key to success. At the moment it is still too poor. | Students complain about clarity on targets and process. What had to be done was not clear. They almost unanimous experienced difficulties in addressing the entrepreneur about their mutual role and contribution. Though almost all of them stated clarity and communication improved a lot during the year. | Mutual expectations and meaningful activities should be more pronounced. At the moment the CoP is still under construction and the operational activities prevent Saxion to define the process and invest in an overall vision. |
| Overlap on goals | The overlap on goals of especially entrepreneurs and students is remarkable.(reason to join, individual motivation) | The overlap on goals of especially entrepreneurs and students is remarkable.(reason to join, individual motivation) | Saxion employees mentioned a number of reasons to stay:<br>But all in all the goals they formulate do not overlap the goals of the students and entrepreneurs. Saxion employees value the entrepreneurs in a totally different way than the students. They do not focus on what entrepreneurs or students can learn but on what Saxion can learn. |
| Investments on group activities | Entrepreneurs in general think investment on group activities is poor, too much a one way track: Saxion telling about their plans and asking what they can offer the partners. The content should be based on mutual needs and interest. | Like the entrepreneurs, students claim the results of group meetings should improve. Both on communication and on content Entrepreneurs do need more influence on planning and topics. | At the moment group activities are organized by Saxion. The focus lies on communication of activities and process. Focus lies on Saxion goals, the education of students and less on entrepreneurial interest and advantage to all members. |
| Commitment to the group,<br>Feeling of unity | They have trust in and experience trustworthiness in Saxion.<br>They feel committed to the group and think it is a network in progress. Entrepreneurs feel less unity, but they think it has to grow. | Students are reserved; they feel unity with their own direct partners, the "own' entrepreneur and students in their group. They do not have a sense the CoP is acting as an strong network. Students mainly use the network of their own entrepreneur, but not yet the network Adoption Learning could provide them. | They experience commitment to the group. They strongly feel the CoP has to be a success and are prepared to invest a lot of energy. |
| Identified shared activities that helped to establish common 'points of contact'. | Entrepreneurs do not primarily join Action Learning for the network, they have their own (though Saxion thinks it is one of the main reasons to join). Shared activities are very isolated which means they are not organized based on mutual interest. Individual meetings with their own student are difficult to organise due to the fact there is no clarity about what has to be expected. | Students also think mutual expectations and meaningful activities should be more pronounced especially in regard of the group meetings. At the moment they feel their entrepreneur does really value the group meetings. Individual meetings often lack focus as a result of absence of targets and focus on points of meaningful communication. | Having the focus on other goals, Saxion employees have difficulty in identifying shared activities. Common points of contact actually are more based on how to support the student and the entrepreneur in relation to the projects the students work on. So focus lays on individual activities and less on group activities and group thinking. |
| Allowing | At the moment network meetings do | Saxion is at the moment the | Saxion employees admit |

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| ownerships of meeting | not meet the needs of the entrepreneurs. Nor students, nor entrepreneurs have actually influence on the content and the way they are organized.<br>They also experience different levels of ownership of the CoP. Ownership comes in two different types: entrepreneurs who make one-to-one deals with individual students, they together determine actions and outcome. Other entrepreneurs need more specific guidance. | organising party. Individual and group activities have to be based on mutual advantage (e.g. more on business advantage to be successful). | entrepreneurs do have little input on the process, and therefore or the desired results. All partners have an active role but they assess their own role as organizing partner in the process is too little, focus lies on the student. |
| Actual meetings | Planning and information is not conducted in a way entrepreneurs are properly addressed, no overall planning that they can properly fit in their own agenda. Group meetings do not have their priority. | Students experience communication is too often late. Also it has to come mostly via the students. Subjects of the meetings do not match the interest of the entrepreneur. | There is no overall planning on activities. Activities are too much based on handing over information about what new activities are started up and evaluation of past activities. Ideas how to use group meetings as binding activities are not clearly developed. |
| The presence of an overriding vision. | Almost unanimous entrepreneurs sense a lack of overriding vision. Long term goals and short term targets were not defined. These counts for group targets as well as individual targets. Activities are based on mutual agreements, not on well defined activity plans that actually can guide the process. | It is clear to students there is a lack of information about what the CoP is all about. That makes it very difficult to communicate with potential new members, especially entrepreneurs, to clarify what the CoP can mean to the different partners. It also means future meaningful activities are based on individual agreements. | Saxion Employees admit investment in an overriding vision was too poor. The vision is not made operational in the sense goals and process is operationally formulated. At the moment activities in the process are too much build on individual agreements. |
| Relational aspects, trust, mutual trust and understanding. | Entrepreneurs trust their partners, and think there is a shared norms and value concept, though some of them think students have to be more reliable. They feel Adoption Learning is a developing concept worthy of putting effort into.<br>Only a few think a binding contract is needed. | All students are unanimous about trustworthiness of their partners. Students think highly of the entrepreneur and the organization they adopted. Those who are contented think they can learn a lot and think both entrepreneur and organization are very interesting. Only 2 have mixed feelings about the entrepreneur and 3 about the organization. They feel all partners do have an active role. A minority think a contract could improve the process. | They are unanimous and experience trust and trustworthiness.<br>In line with students and entrepreneurs they also think there is no need for a binding contract. |
| **Reason to leave** | **Entrepreneurs** | **Students** | **Saxion employees** |
| Alignment with own intentions, are individual targets met | Entrepreneurs valuated the results as less than expected: a potential risk is the fact that mutual expectations, not being articulated, could lead to false hope or unilateral results. Mutual expectations and meaningful activities should be more pronounced. They do not experience ownership on group targets and do not valuate them high.<br>Furthermore they see less personal growth in students than expected. | Students mention the results they experience, the entrepreneur as an interesting partner (almost unanimous (14)) and the organization (almost unanimous, (13)). They also valued the way they learn in practice. Students experienced a lot of unexpected results. They especially mentioned “how to work on feedback”, “structure in work and planning and self reflection”. The valuation of the unforeseen results was remarkable, | They see a growing network: entrepreneurs, who are in the group, stay in the group. They see students that are more active, more motivated and more disciplined. They see a rapid orientation on the profession by the students.<br>They are very satisfied about the cooperation and the possibilities to get an insight in business |

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| | | almost unanimously they ranked them very high.<br>Reasons for a high level of satisfaction lie mainly in the combination of theory and practice. Adoption Learning forces individual and groups to bring theory into practice and vice versa. Though they think some of the results could be achieved in different ways, they think this is faster and more demanding. This makes satisfaction of students being higher and more homogeneous than satisfaction of entrepreneurs. Surprisingly, it is very hard to correlate satisfaction on specific answers. Students obviously have different reasons to be overall satisfied | processes and the business network of the entrepreneurs and the variety of the enterprises. So they see it mainly as a possibility to learn about business processes and how to work on sound relations.<br>As was the case with the entrepreneurs and the students, the main problem here is the expectation of students and entrepreneurs. Mutual expectations, not being articulated, could lead to false hope or unilateral results.<br>Saxion wants to be more specific about activities, mutual efforts, preconditions and results to be expected, seeing that this a clear reason to stay. |
| Weariness on the demanding of the group | Entrepreneurs have little input on the process, and therefore on the desired results. They assess their own role in the process is too small as the focus lies on the student. This means: focus in the CoP is on what students can and have to learn, and not on their advantage.<br>Entrepreneurs almost unanimously report a lack of information, it was too little and too late. What could be expected and what overriding goals and targets had to be made was unclear. This made it hard for entrepreneurs to build a meaningful relation. They expect a lot of input from students and especially Saxion and think all partners will contribute equally. They find defining their role in relation to the student difficult.<br>A minority of the entrepreneurs feel they have to invest heavily in the students before they can forest organisational advantages. They are not properly prepared on their tasks. | A lack of information also leads to situations where student have to consult the entrepreneur on what has to be done. Students heavily depend on individual agreements. But group activities interfere with individual activities which lead to frustration of both student and entrepreneur.<br>Students have mixed feelings about group activities, meetings with entrepreneurs should bring more, a feeling of unity and the relation with partners at the moment is very divers. | Saxion admits poor information is a potential risk. Saxion is aware the information was rather poor at the beginning; they hoped more flexibility would offer participants (especially entrepreneurs) more freedom to choose their own meaningful activities. But most entrepreneurs need more guidance. Instate of it, it lead to more work, for both students and entrepreneurs. |
| Professional relationships become social relationships and the effect of it on the group | Not all entrepreneurs are satisfied with the student, they expect motivation and drive, some (5) of them do not see enough of it in their student. At the moment the biggest problem that could lead to leaving the CoP is the fact that due to the fact results and achievements are unclear, students often do not deliver 'the click'. A majority of the entrepreneurs sense a lack of drive and, in some cases, trustworthiness. Entrepreneurs do not know how to support the students and students | Due to a lack of information students it felt difficult to address entrepreneurs on what had to be done.<br>They also sense differences in norms and values especially between Saxion and the entrepreneurs (entrepreneurs are result driven an the enterprise always comes first), and lack of sense of commitment. This may seem strange but in general they meant the behaviour of colleague students in group activities. | As for now Saxion is satisfied in general. |

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| | do not know about what to communicate. That makes contact rather difficult. Also it does lead to suboptimal results. Implicit expectations that are not met lead to uncomfortable personal relations. | Only three students did not feel part of a group and were less satisfied with the relationship with partners. | |

**Appendix 7: Format to communicate.**

| matrix of Knowledge / BOKS = linking to theory and models | Analytic abilities, (common) law, Communicative skills, Financial management | Process or problem areas | **Operational:** *Executing plans by using the proper resources and eventually adjusting the plans.* **Optimizing the current situation** | | **Tactical:** *Implementing strategy, commercialization, organising resources, evaluation of the process and if necessary adjusting them* **improving and redesigning processes within the current strategy** | | **Strategic** *Signalling developments, discovering opportunities, translating these into strategic options, focus on main strategy for parts of the organization* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | **Fit** | **Focus** |
| | | | **Describing the situation. Benchmarking Signaling effectiveness and efficiency of the processes** | **Signaling / Bottleneck analysis Quality management.** | **Analysis and redesign Improving effectiveness and efficiency of the processes** | **Change management and Quality management, redesign** | **Positioning Strategy and contingency problems** | **Implementing strategy. Redesigning the organization. Process and product innovation** |
| | | Organizational structure and communication | | | | | | |
| | | Personal management / HRM | | | | | | |
| | | Procurement, logistics and operations | | | | | | |
| | | Marketing, (after) sales, service | | | | | | |
| | | Market research. Research on business environment | | | | | | |
| | | Lea-ding to these assess ments. | Proj plan 2 | Proj plan 2 | Proj plan 2 | Proj plan 2 | Proj plan 2 | Proj plan 2 |
| | | | Meth. 2 | Meth. 2 | Meth. 2 | Meth. 2 | Meth. 2 | Meth. 2 |
| | | | Fu 2 | Fu 2 | Fu 2 Verkoop 2 OV 2 | Fu 2 / Verkoop 2 / OV 2 | Cas 2 / Verkoop 2 | Cas 2 / Verkoop 2 |

**Appendix 8: The format loaded**

| Propedeuse: 4 opdrachten vaststellen i.o.m. Bedrijven (workshop) 2 kiezen | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Kennismatrix / BOKS** | **Analytisch denken, recht, communicatieve vaardigheden, financieel management**<br>Exploitatiebegroting vaststellen, verschillen kosten / uitgaven en opbrengsten inkomsten bepalen, liquiditeitsplanning en beheer, kostprijsbepaling, bepalen en beoordelen financiële ratio's, administratieve organisatie beoordelen en boekhouden.<br>Consequenties van rechtsvormen aan organisatie(vorm) kunnen verbinden, schatten van wettelijke aansprakelijkheid en dit via risicomanagement af kunnen dekken<br>Vanuit een omschrijving van een probleemgebied een onderzoek kunnen opzetten en daarbij elementaire kernbegrippen van onderzoek kunnen hanteren | **Probleemgebieden** | **Operationeel** | | **Tactisch commercialisatie** | |
| | | | **Beschrijven en signaleren** | **Signaleren / knelpuntsanalyse**<br><br>**Kwaliteits-bewaking** | **Analyseren en planvormend Effectiviteit en efficiency van de processen verbeteren** | **Changemanagement en kwaliteitsmanagement** |
| | | Interne organisatie en comm./ cultuur en structuur | Meewerken, herkennen en uitvoeren van processen, interne coördinatie en communicatie. Bepalen en beschrijven van organisatiecultuur. | Bewaken en uitvoeren kwaliteitsbeleid. Beoordelen workflow en administratieve organisatie. Beoordelen van interne communicatie leidinggeven, besluitvorming Knelpunten organisatiecultuur kunnen herkennen. | Aanpassen en uitbouwen van de organisatie, Werkstructurering / opdrachten toewijzen = interne afstemming, Plannen en organiseren productie, opzetten (delen van) kwaliteitsbeleid en opstellen criteria. Organisatie aanpassen aan klantbehoeftes en verwachtingen omgeving (Externe afstemming) | Evalueren, bijsturen en optimaliseren van organisatiestructuur, interne communicatie bijsturen. Voorstellen doen voor Organisatieverbeteringen en deze mee uitvoeren en bewaken. |
| | | Peroneels-management en HRM | Beschrijven personeelsinstrumenten, (werving en selectie, gesprekscyclus etc.) Meedraaien en ervaring krijgen in gebruik personeelsinstrumenten | Beoordelen Werving en selectie<br>Uitvoeren en beoordelen gesprekscyclus en overige personeelsinstrumenten<br>Personeelstevredenheids-onderzoek. | Beoordelen personeelsinstrumenten en personeelsbeleid, doen van voorstellen voor effectueren personeelsplan en aanpassen uitbouwen en optimaal ondersteunen personeelsbestand, | Optimaliseren gebruik personeelsinstrumenten, CAO inpassen. Inpassen ARBO beleid. |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Kennismatrix / BOKS** | **Analytisch denken, recht, communicatieve vaardigheden, financieel management**<br>Exploitatiebegroting vaststellen, verschillen kosten / uitgaven en opbrengsten inkomsten bepalen, liquiditeitsplanning en beheer, kostprijsbepaling, bepalen en beoordelen financiele ratio's, administratieve organisatie beoordelen en boekhouden. .Consequenties van rechtsvormen aan organisatie(vorm) kunnen verbinden, schatten van wettelijke aansprakelijkheid en dit via risicomanagement af kunnen dekken. Vanuit een omschrijving van een probleemgebied een onderzoek kunnen opzetten | Inkoop en operations | Meewerken en uitvoeren productieplannen, orderplanning, inkoop en voorraadbeheer, uitvoeren werkzaamheden voor service, nazorg en klachtenafhandeling | Evaluatie (onderdelen van) bedrijfsprocessen en gebruik ICT instrumenten | Ontwerpen productieflows en werkprocessen, ontwerpen leveranciersbeoordeling en bestelmodules, en ontwerpen serviceplan, Beoordelen benodigde ICT ondersteuning en automatiseringsbehoefte | Optimalisatie (onderdelen van) bedrijfsprocessen Verbeteren automatisering en ICT onderstuning. |
| | | Marketing en verkoop | Uitvoeren promotie en reclamecampagnes, opstellen van delen van een marketingplan / marketingcampagne, uitvoeren marketingplan en verkoopactiviteiten. | Bewaken van kwaliteitscriteria marketing en communicatie. | Opstellen (van delen van) marketingplan, vaststellen communicatie- / promotieplan, ontwikkelen reclamecampagnes, optimaliseren verkoopstrategie. | opstellen en bewaken van kwaliteitscriteria. Verbeteren en marketingplannen en verkoopstrategie. Opzetten verkooporganisatie. |
| | | Marktonder-zoek, bedrijfs-omgeving | Uitvoeren (delen van) marktonderzoek (klanttevredenheid, concurrentie, bedrijfstakanalyse) | Signaleren afwijkingen en evaluatie marketingplannen en verkoopstrategie. | Evaluatie marketing- en promotiebeleid en verkoopstrategie | Optimaliseren verkoopstrategie en marketingplannen. Assortimentsbepaling. |
| | | **LOT assessments** | Proj plan 1, Meth. 1, Fu 1, OV 1, Cas 1 | Proj plan 1, Meth. 1, Fu 1, OV 1, Cas 1 | Proj plan 1, Meth. 1, Verkoop 1, OV 1, Cas 1 | Proj plan 1, Meth. 1, Verkoop 1, OV 1, Cas 1 |

| Postpropedeuse en afstuderen | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Kennismatrix / BOKS** | **Analytisch denken, recht, communicatieve vaardigheden, financieel management**<br>Bepalen financiële bedrijfsdoelstellingen, Op basis van bedrijfsdoelstellingen (doen) ontwerpen van financiële scenario's, Bepalen meerjarenbegrotingen, Opstellen en toewijzen budgetten, Bepalen financieel administratieve organisatie ARBO –beleid en wetgeving in organisatie herkennen en toepassen, organisatie en arbeidsvormen binnen arbeidsrecht toepassen, in zakelijk verkeer beschermingsconstructies toepassen bij overeenkomsten en verbintenissen. Vanuit een omschrijving van een probleemgebied een onderzoek kunnen opzetten en daarbij elementaire kernbegrippen van onderzoek kunnen hanteren. Geschikte onderzoeksstrategie selecteren, onderzoeksresultaten kunnen beoordelen en interpreteren, de aard van causale verbanden kunnen identificeren. | **Probleemgebieden** | **Tactisch commercialisatie** | | **Strategisch** | |
| | | | **Fit** | | **Focus** | |
| | | | **Analyseren en planvormend Effectiviteit en efficiency van de processen verbeteren** | **Changemanagement en kwaliteitsmanagement** | **Externe positionering Strategiebepaling. Contingentie-denken** | **Innovatie Proces- product-in-novatie** |
| | | Interne organisatie en commu-nicatie. | Aanpassen en uitbreiden van de organisatie, Werkstructurering / opdrachten toewijzen = interne afstemming, Plannen en organiseren productie, opzetten (delen van) kwaliteitsbeleid en opstellen criteria. Organisatie aanpassen aan klantbehoeftes en verwachtingen omgeving (Externe afstemming) | Evalueren, bijsturen en optimaliseren van organisatiestructuur, interne communicatie bijsturen. Voorstellen doen voor Organisatieverbeteringen en deze mee uitvoeren en bewaken. | Ontwerpen organisatie-structuur / organisatiecultuur en plannings-systematiek Ontwerpen communicatie-structuur, kwaliteitsbeleid | Ontwerpen bedrijfsproces, ontwerpen taken en functies. |
| | | Personeels-management en HRM | Beoordelen personeelsinstrumenten en personeelsbeleid, doen van voorstellen voor effectueren personeelsplan en aanpassen uitbouwen en optimaal ondersteunen personeelsbestand | Optimaliseren gebruik personeelsinstrumenten, CAO inpassen. Inpassen ARBO beleid. | Bepalen personeelsbehoefte en vaststellen personeelsplan, ontwerpen werving en selectiebeleid Ontwerpen scholingsbeleid, ontwerpen functionerings-en beoordelingssystematiek | Alternatieven ontwikkelen in samenwerking mat potentiële partners op gebied van personeelsbeleid. Alternatieven ontwikkelen t.a.v. beloningsbeleid. |

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| **Kennismatrix / BOKS** | **Analytisch denken, recht, communicatieve vaardigheden, financieel management**<br>Bepalen financiële bedrijfsdoelstellingen, Op basis van bedrijfsdoelstellingen (doen) ontwerpen van financiële scenario's, Bepalen meerjarenbegrotingen, Opstellen en toewijzen budgetten, Bepalen financieel administratieve organisatie<br>ARBO –beleid en wetgeving in organisatie herkennen en toepassen, organisatie en arbeidsvormen binnen arbeidsrecht toepassen, in zakelijk verkeer beschermingsconstructies toepassen bij overeenkomsten en verbintenissen.<br>Vanuit een omschrijving van een probleemgebied een onderzoek kunnen opzetten en daarbij elementaire kernbegrippen van onderzoek kunnen hanteren. Geschikte onderzoeksstrategie selecteren, onderzoeksresultaten kunnen beoordelen en interpreteren, de aard van causale verbanden kunnen identificeren. | Inkoop en operations | Ontwerpen productieflows en werkprocessen, ontwerpen leveranciersbeoordeling en bestelmodules, en ontwerpen serviceplan, Beoordelen benodigde ICT ondersteuning en automatiseringsbehoefte | Optimalisatie (onderdelen van) bedrijfsprocessen Verbeteren automatisering en ICT onderstuning. | Ontwerpen processen, optimaliseren goederenstroom, doen van voorstellen richting voorraadbeheer en inkoopbeleid en leveranciersbeleid | Opstellen (nieuw) distributiebeleid Assortimentsbeleid bepalen en make or buy beslissingen nemen. Chainmanagement invoeren in strategie, samenwerkingsverbanden met potentiële partners onderzoeken en opzetten. |
| | | Marketing en verkoop | Opstellen (van delen van) marketingplan, vaststellen communicatie- / promotieplan, ontwikkelen reclamecampagnes, optimaliseren verkoopstrategie. | opstellen en bewaken van kwaliteitscriteria. Verbeteren en marketingplannen en verkoopstrategie. Opzetten verkooporganisatie. | Marktomgeving van een bedrijf beoordelen. Interne organisatie en bedrijfsvoering beoordelen. Strategische analysemodellen gebruiken, strategische opties formuleren en beoordelen | Visie van bedrijf, bedrijfsdoelstellingen en marktstrategie op elkaar afstemmen. Marketingmix bepalen. Strategie naar implementatieplannen vertalen en kunnen uitwerken in concrete activiteiten. |
| | | Marktonder-zoek en onderzoek in bedrijfsomgeving | Evaluatie marketing- en promotiebeleid en verkoopstrategie | Optimaliseren verkoopstrategie en marketingplannen. Assortimentsbepaling. | Marktomgeving van een bedrijf in kaart brengen, sterkte / zwakteanalyse maken | Interne organisatie en bedrijfsvoering in kaart brengen en beoordelen op consistentie en strategie |
| | | **LOT assessment** | Proj plan 2, Meth. 2, Fu 2, Verkoop 2, OV 2 | Proj plan 2, Meth. 2, Fu 2, Verkoop 2, OV 2 | Proj plan 2, Meth. 2, Cas 2, Verkoop 2 | Proj plan 2, Meth. 2, Cas 2, Verkoop 2 |

| SIO (Strategisch (Innovatoief ondernemen) | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Creatief denken | | Commercialisatie, van plan naar uitvoering | | Strategisch | |
| | | | | | | | Fit | Focus |
| Kennismatrix / BOKS | Innovatiemanagement, creatieve technieken, probleemoplossend vermogen en analytisch denken, commercieel denken, ontwerpen business plan | **Probleemgebieden** | **Creativiteit & Methodiek Creatieve processen faciliterenen** | **Innovatie-management Managen van creativiteit en samenwerking intern / extern** | **Analyseren en planvormend Haalbaarheid Change-management en kwaliteitsmanagement** | **Implementatie Van beleid naar actie** | **Externe positionering Strategie-bepaling. Strategie en bedrijf koppelen. (Contingentie)** | **Innovatie Proces- product-in-novatie** |
| | | Interne organisatie en communicatie.<br>Personeelsmanagement en HRM<br>Inkoop en operations<br>Marketing en verkoop<br>Marktonderzoeken onderzoek van de bedrijfsomgeving | Problemen herkennen, centrale probleem kunnen vertalen in een onderzoeksvraag en deze kunnen definiëren, doelstellingen formuleren. Oplosmethodieken kennen en afhankelijk van probleem kunnen kiezen. Keuzes uit oplossingen kunnen maken, Oplossingen kunnen implementeren. | Begrip “Innovatie” kennen, beschrijven en kunnen herkennen, voorbeelden van verschillende innovaties op product, markt, proces en organisatie niveau herkennen en beschrijven. Oorzaken en gevolgen van innovatie herkennen en beoordelen. Problemen rond het managen / stimuleren van innovatieprocessen herkennen en beschrijven. | Ontwikkelingen en kansen met creatieve technieken kunnen vertalen in nieuwe activiteiten. Nieuwe activiteiten kunnen vertalen in concrete businessplannen en deze beoordelen op haalbaarheid en wenselijkheid. (Inschattingen maken van kosten en baten en cash flows herkennen) Kwaliteitssystema-tiek ontwerpen | Product-, markt- en / of procesinnovaties kunnen herkennen en vertalen in haalbare plannen.<br><br>Businessplan onderbouwen met gedetailleerde management-modellen, kwaliteits-systemen. | Externe en interne ontwikkelingen in kaart kunnen brengen. Vanuit ontwikkelingen kansen zien voor “business development” | Nieuwe activiteiten kunnen vertalen op product markt en procesniveau = kansrijke opties kunnen vertalen naar concrete plannen. |
| | | **LOT assessments** | **OV 2 Cas 2** | | | | | |