Open and Social Innovation: Interdisciplinary Participation in Understanding and Addressing Significant Problems

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Abstract

Education now has a responsibility to name the problems it addresses and, what is more, to illustrate the progress it is making in addressing these problems. While students are already working to develop their understanding of this task, the education sector and its institutions, including policymakers are lagging behind in understanding the importance of acknowledging student participation as actors in open and social innovation. This development can be understood in terms of how the introduction of networked information economies and the use of social media platforms produce student actions not anticipated by neoliberal notions of the curriculum. This student use of information and communication technologies can be seen right across the global panorama of the learning experience, of which plurilingual learning (Maslo, 2015) is but one example. Individual methodologies and methods used for accessing and _combining_ open sources challenge both human capital theory and endogenous growth theory to provide an account of these subjective developments. The authors of this paper argue that the reason the significance of this development is largely ignored is that it exposes the closed and static disposition of educational institutions in confronting the problem of including students not just as commercial subjects but also as collaborative actors in the naming and addressing of significant problems.

In this paper, we will explore how two multilingual individuals construct their learning spaces through a process of combining different life experiences. The empirical material comes from an ongoing study of plurilingual learning experiences (Maslo, 2015), where learning stories are constructed on the basis of conversations with individuals who have learned three or more languages. As experienced learners, these people share unique stories about learning styles and strategies, learning biographies and changes in identity when learning new languages. The educational value of this approach to learning languages is that it illustrates how such heuristic learning provides new understandings of what it is to be entrepreneurial, where the _combining_ of learning experiences that produce new ideas for addressing significant problems.
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