

“Finding the Red Thread”

The Role of the Learning Space in Transformative Learning in Executive Education

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Abstract

The adult education and critical reflection fields have developed new perspectives in recent years. Studies show that achieving congruence in teaching-learning environments is essential to enhancing the experience and quality of learning. Students’ evolving ways of thinking and practising in a subject area underpin their mastery of the subject. By concentrating course design on specific module outcomes rather than the fundamental goals of the subject or discipline area students fail to make connections between topics and do not come to see the subject as an integrated whole.

This action research study was conducted over a four-year period focusing on the development of teaching-learning environments in executive education in a Scandinavian context. It investigates the nature of transformative learning in executive education and its relation to the identification of a distinctive learning space. Therefore, in the light of the organisation project, particular contributions to knowledge from this research study apply to the tradition of critical reflection. They apply particularly in the area of transformative learning through the development of a framework for creating a distinctive learning space in executive education.

The research has identified the key role of the learning team, coupled with a range of components that must be employed within the learning space, that emerged as a distinct contribution to the area of transformative learning. The learning team must understand that its role is to enhance personal leader development and, then, to work with support systems, including mentors, in a collaborative effort to enhance the learning experience of everyone in the team. Trusted relationships between members of the learning team are essential to the development of dialogue, critical reflection and profound discourse.