

Chapter # 8

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION BY ME & MYCITY PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Me & MyCity learning environment as a pedagogical method for enhancing working-life competencies among Finnish sixth-grade pupils. In Me & MyCity, twelve-year-old students participate in a one-day simulation in a miniature society that includes companies and public services. During the visit, pupils work in assigned roles, earn a virtual salary, and act as active citizens and consumers. The project aims to investigate the learning outcomes and experiences of both teachers and pupils. The research sample consists of 40 teachers, 220 pupils, and an additional group of 70 pupils from Tampere and five surrounding municipalities. The theoretical framework is based on the Finnish Core Curriculum 2016, phenomenon-based learning, Kolb's experiential learning theory, and Strauss's grounded theory approach. Empirical data have been collected through multiple qualitative and quantitative methods. The findings indicate that Me & MyCity is an effective and engaging teaching method that supports pupils' understanding of economic concepts, working life, and entrepreneurship. Pupils enjoy participating in the simulation and value the opportunity to work in a chosen profession. However, teaching materials are perceived as somewhat theoretical, suggesting that more concrete preparatory activities could strengthen learning outcomes.

Keywords: curriculum, working skills, entrepreneurship education, teaching method.

1. INTRODUCTION

Pirkanmaa has about 530,000 inhabitants, with the center being Tampere, which has about 250,000 inhabitants. The pupil learning environment *Me & MyCity Pirkanmaa* is placed in this frame of reference. Pirkanmaa needs more small and medium-sized companies and, above all, growth companies because unemployment has risen at a record pace.

Pirkanmaa's unemployment rate is 12.3 percent in October 2025. According to the final report on entrepreneurship education published by the European Commission (2013), the whole of Europe has not recovered from the economic downturn of 2008 in the desired time. As a medicine, the report proposes promoting and enhancing entrepreneurship education in schools and universities. The same drug is also suitable for the treatment of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was shaking the entire world economy (See: Liguori, E. & Winkler, 2020; Liguori 2018 et; Ratten, 2020). The owners of F-Secure and Supercell in Finland have responded to this challenge by donating EUR 6 million to entrepreneurship education in schools. At the heart of all this is European education and economic policy, which calls for the European Union to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustaining economic growth and creating new innovative jobs. European Commission, (2000). Me & MyCity Pirkanmaa is in this frame of reference.

2. ME & MYCITY PIRKANMAA

Me & MyCity is a learning entity for society, working life, and entrepreneurship aimed at the sixth grades of comprehensive school. The visit to Me & MyCity is preceded by a course of about 10 lessons and a complementary visit to the visual village of Me & MyCity. Me & MyCity day is led by educational material on economic issues based on the primary school curriculum. The teaching material covers the following issues: private and public services, job search, various companies, taxes, banking, financial accounting, advertising and customer service, and sustainable development. Me & MyCity operates in 13 locations and reaches 80% of sixth graders in Finland. Every school year, about 50,000 pupils visit Me & MyCity. The concept of Me & MyCity is funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture, foundations, private partners, and municipalities.

The research of Me & MyCity Pirkanmaa has sixteen different business and public service premises as well as City Hall. The learners work in a mobile Me & MyCity built of cardboard elements for the day in the profession they have chosen. The themes of the lessons and the assignments made by the learners in the workbook help the learners perceive their role in Me & MyCity as a n employee and consumer. For learners work, he receives a virtual salary and acts as a consumer and citizen as part of society. Me & MyCity employs about seventy pupils at a time and have supervised by tutors too. Tutors are pupils from a secondary school. The pupil group participates in Me & MyCity Day on a prearranged day from 9.30 AM to 2 PM. Before visiting Me & MyCity, the pupils complete a ten-hour study unit consisting of financial matters. Teacher training and orientation to Me & MyCity take place with a few hours of guidance. The following video gives an idea of Me & MyCity, <https://youtube/Jt-wFB5KZOE>

2.1. Theoretical Background of Me&MyCity

The research framework is based on the Finnish current primary school curricula (POPS, 2016, see Figure 2). At the school level, the school principal leads curriculum work. (See Uljens, & Rajakaltio, 2017) Curriculum work is guided by the Basic Education Act and Government Decree 422/2012. The principal in his or her own school implements the implementation of the curriculum.

Me & MyCity, on the other hand, has been studied quite a bit. Some theses about Me & MyCity have been done, for example, by Lindholm (2017), Roine, (2013), and Ojala (2021). First two mentioned are students seminar papers, not full-time research. Prof. Kalmi at the University of Vaasa has studied how Me & MyCity supports pupils' understanding of financial issues. The study concludes that the understanding of financial skills was significantly improved by 17% for those pupils who had participated in Me& MyCity learning method and all t-values are statistically significant at 1% level. The result was obtained by measuring the knowledgeable level before and after visiting Me & MyCity learning environment. (Kalmi, 2016).

In Finland, phenomenon learning, and its related concept multidisciplinary learning entity (Figure 2) were highlighted in the Opetushallitus (National Board of Education) (POPS 2016). The multidisciplinary learning entity has been justified by POPS, for example, motivation, creating a community culture and working life needs. A multidisciplinary learning entity means learning in which broad thematic entities are outlined across subject boundaries and things are explained by combining different subjects.

Kolb's (1984), experiential learning is seen as a circular cycle and includes unconscious and conscious understanding, as well as four related topics that emphasize learning in different ways. These four groups are direct personal experience, for example, brainstorming

or a learning diary and critical contemplative observation can be used as a teaching method. In the abstract conceptual phase, theories and models structure personal experience, and teaching, group work, or reading can be used as teaching methods. The active model is an experimental activity model tested model and the knowledge is applied in practice through case studies, role-plays, exercises, and on-the-job learning.

The phase of active activities can also take place in the form of a project, where the material to be studied is tested outside a formal learning situation. Kolb's cyclical learning model is suitable for entrepreneurship education because it highlights thinking and learning-to-learn, the pupil's experiences, the uncertainty of experiences. (Kupias, 2001, pp. 16-25; Leppilampi, & Piekkari, 1998, pp. 9-11; Hakkarainen, Bollström-Huttunen, Pyysalo, & Lonka, 2005; Autio, 2006; Seikkula-Leino, 2007, p. 31; Blender, Dreisler, & Kjedsen, 2006, p.101).

Figure 1.
The course of the research.

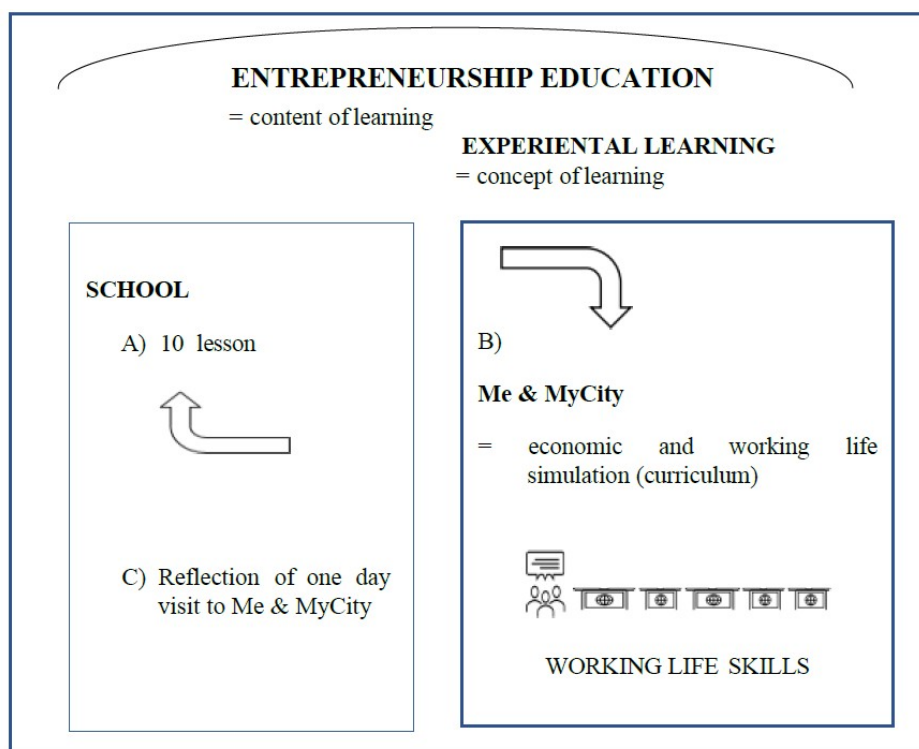


Figure 1 shows the course of the study. First in class 10 lessons are taught in economics according to the curriculum and then the things learned are practiced in a Me & MyCity. Pupils also choose the profession in classroom they will work in Me & My City.

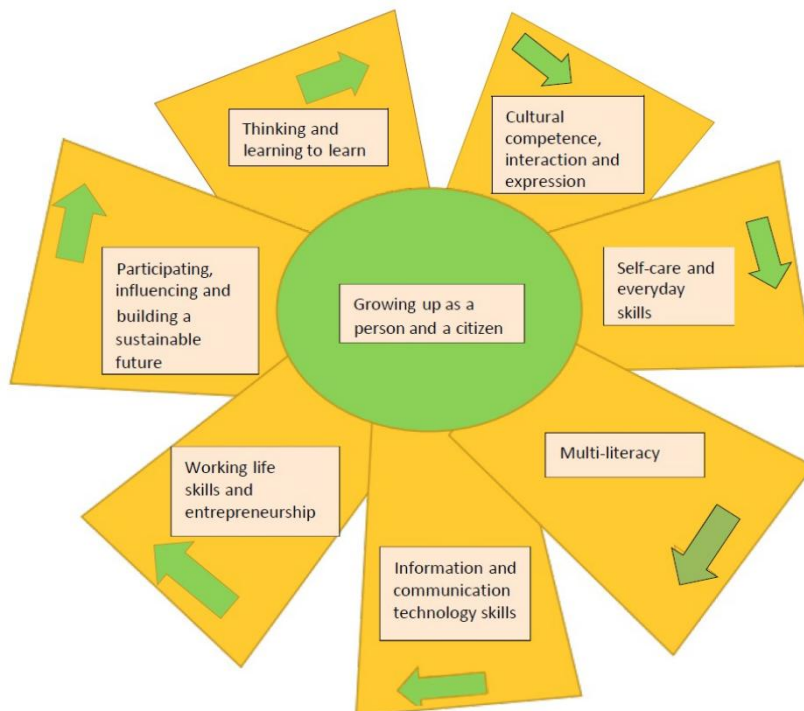
2.2. Extensive Competence in Curricula

The curriculum is difficult to define at a general level because it depends on the perspective into the seven different blocks. (Figure 2) Overall, it is an entity through which

the pupil learns skills and knowledge. The experiential nature of learning is also related to this. Existing aids, such as the development of information technology, also guide the development of the curriculum. (See: Marsh, 2004, pp. 4-7, Autio, 2014). Thinking and learning create the basis for the development of competence. A key role of the teacher is to encourage the learner to be self-confident and critical of knowledge and to guide the learner in independent knowledge acquisition and to encourage the learner to create new knowledge through play, experimental and playful practices, and teaching methods. Each learner is guided to identify their own way of learning and to develop their learning strategies so that they provide a basis for postgraduate study and lifelong learning.

Current curricula present a concept of learning in which the key issues are the pupil's active role in their own learning, interaction and doing together, positive experiences support of motivation, learning to learn skills, and self-direction and its support. Extensive knowledge in Figure 2. (POPS, 2016) refers to the totality of attitudes and will of the values of knowledge and skills. Competence refers to the ability to use knowledge and skills as required by the situation. The need for broad-based expertise arises from the changes in the world around us, and there are a total of seven areas of expertise. Broad-based competences have commonalities and aim to support learner growth, promote membership of a democratic society and competences that require a sustainable lifestyle. It is especially important that the learner recognizes his or her own strengths and weaknesses (POPS, 2016).

Figure 2.
Extensive competence of the comprehensive school curriculum 2016
(Source adapted by Ojala, A. 2021, based on POPS 2016, pp. 20-24).



2.3. Entrepreneurship Education based on the Pupil's Need

Me & MyCity as a learning environment is understood here as a teaching method. The teaching method is the way of teaching and working. It activates and motivates the pupils. A successful teaching method depends on the level, motivation, and habits of the trainees. Experiential and functional ways of working, as well as the use of different senses and movement, increase the vitality of learning and strengthen motivation. Motivation is also strengthened by ways of working that support self-direction. (cf. POPS, 2016) Teaching methods should activate the common learning process. In this method, the actual Me & MyCity day theory part and the pupils' introduction to the concept of Me & MyCity learning environment are taught in Me & MyCity lessons in class. The actual working life skills training then takes place in Me & MyCity (cf. POPS, 2016, pp. 20-24, see also Ranne, 2009).

Entrepreneurship education first appears in Finnish primary school curricula as early as 1994. In 2004 the basic education curricula, entrepreneurship education emphasized the pupil's active role in learning (Lehtonen & Lehtonen, 2011, see also POPS, 2016). Perceptions that support learning form the psychological basis of the learning environment and are inextricably linked to knowledge and the interest in knowledge: How knowledge is used and acquired and how it is analyzed (Lehtonen & Lehtonen, 2011). Entrepreneurship and related education and upbringing are different in different countries and cultures. However, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activity are relatively similar in different environments.

In previous studies, it can be stated that entrepreneurship education is an ambiguous term and its definition is difficult (Korhonen, et. al., 2012; Ristimäki, 2011; Katz, 2003; Matley, 2005, 2008; Rae, 2005, Rae, & Carswell, M. 2001, Rae, & Woodier-Harris, 2012; von Graevenitz, & Harhoff, & Weber, R. 2010). A clear definition and understanding of entrepreneurship education has been hampered by partial, conceptual, and contextual confusion, non-theory (Fayolle, 2013), and fragmentation. Entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial learning have been defined with many different definitions, in broader and narrower versions, mainly in a business environment. Jones, and English (2004) defined entrepreneurship education as skills that can be taught and qualities that enable learners to previous research have shown that entrepreneurship education is an ambiguous term and its definition is difficult (Korhonen, et. al., 2012, Ristimäki, 2011) by researchers (e.g., Fayolle, 2013; Higgins, & Galloway, 2014; Liguori, et al., 2018; Matley, 2005; von Graevenitz, Harhoff, & Weber, 2010).

Today, the development of entrepreneurship education has gradually shifted away from a strictly business and management-focused focus towards a multi-disciplinary approach that brings together different study programs, towards entrepreneurial education based on learner needs, holistic learning (POPS, 2016). It encompasses the natural sciences, technology, as well as the humanities (Wilson, 2008; Heinonen, Hytti, & Tiikkala, 2011). This enables more use of learning challenges and new ways of learning in the learning process, in personalization of learning, utilization of technological applications and simulators in the learning process and, for example, the use of pupils' smartphones in learning. The implementation of entrepreneurship education should include, for example, community, problem-solving, learning from mistakes, team learning, project work, learning by doing, learning diaries, pedagogical drama, training entrepreneurship, as well as getting to know working life and company visits (Seikkula-Leino, 2007, pp. 35-37; Seikkula-Leino, Ruskovaara, Ikävalko, Mattila, & Rytölä, 2012, pp. 117-127; POPS, 2016).

Increasing entrepreneurship in Europe was a key element of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs (2001), which aimed to make the European Union the world's largest economic area by 2015. Increasing the number of enterprises was also a key factor in developing the European Economic Area in the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs (European Commission, 2010), which continued the work of Council of the European Union (2005): *The Lisbon Strategy*. To increase the number of companies, the Entrepreneurship 2020 program was launched, one of the main pillars of which was entrepreneurship education (European Commission, 2013). European Commission (2010) says entrepreneurship education should be integrated into all curricula (cf. POPS, 2016, Figure 2). (See also Kalmi, P. et. al. 2015 and 2016).

Policies of the Ministry of Education and Culture on 17 March 2017, the Ministry of Education and Culture published new entrepreneurship guidelines for education (OKM Entrepreneurship Guidelines, 2017), the purpose of which is to guide, develop and guide measures to promote entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education at different levels.

3. THE RESEARCH TARGET

The research target is Me & MyCity Pirkanmaa, a total of 220 pupils and 40 teachers are involved in the research. Five of the schools are in the vicinity of Tampere: Orivesi, Nokia, Ylöjärvi, Kangasala, Vesilahti and Pirkkala. The neighboring municipalities have been included because in Tampere the curriculum is made regionally and Me & MyCity Pirkanmaa. The research material was collected in 2013–2016 and the additional material in 2019–24. The additional material from 70 pupils has been collected immediately after the visit in Me & MyCity. The additional material also include 10 teachers. The nationwide material is only pupils who were collected intermediately after visit.

3.1. Research Task

1. How do teachers perceive entrepreneurship education and Me & MyCity as a teaching method?
2. How do pupils perceive Me & MyCity as a teaching method?

3.2. Research Analyses

The present research is based on the work of Glaser, and Strauss (1967) and is based on the Straussian orientation, and the Straussian school enables the study problem to be studied existing bringing ready-made categories derived from theory into the analysis process. (See: Glaser, & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992, p. 102, pp. 16-17; Lowe, 1996, p. 2.) When assessing the reliability of the study, the study partly uses the reliability analysis of the Strauss and Corbin schools. (See: Tynjälä, 1991, 1999, , Alasuutari, 1999). Grounded Theory of Strauss & Corbin, J. 1990, does not prohibit the use of previous research in theoretical sampling.

The analysis aims to verify the resulting hypotheses and to understand the relationships and explanations between the concepts through the research material. (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 274.). The purpose of Grounded Theory is to create a theory that explains the phenomenon under study and that is relevant and relevant to the problems involved. The theory is created around the core categories, a teaching method pupils' experiences and teaching method teachers' experiences of Me & MyCity. After the axial coding process, selective coding can be switched. Selective coding is the process of selecting a core category, in which the description of a phenomenon is moved to a conceptual level. The core category

explores several important roles in creating a theory. The core categories are selected as a key phenomenon to which other categories can be associated. These core categories are, Me & MyCity as a teaching method and pupils' experiences of Me & MyCity. The study examines Me & MyCity through two observation units. The maturation of the categories is promoted by theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling provides a continuous direction for research, as previous research and literature on the subject can be used in research. the relation of other categories to the core category is done through a paradigm: circumstances, context, strategies, and consequences. (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.124.).

3.3. The Sample of Open Coding

The coding of the study is based on the Straussian school's view of three different coding levels: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The study first modifies qualitative data through meaningful, empirical indicators. This is called open coding. Glaser and Strauss (1967, pp. 101- 102) call this a test of assumption.

Yes, this is PIK1 great for elementary school. Let us learn initiative and work. PIK12 The students noticed from PIK12 my activities that the point would be Me & MyCity hour. They were really looking forward to it. This is great for PI K3 a math section, percentages, and all. However, the learning material was PI K22 a bit challenging. Lot of concepts. I do not know if I got there (P1 stands for person and KI for coding marks).

After this is followed by an axial coding and selective coding. Axial coding is a set of procedures by which categories are linked together by examining the conditions, context, action and interaction strategies, and consequences of a phenomenon. Selective coding, on the other hand, is the process of finding a core category. An analytical account of a core category is a theory that the researcher can report and publish (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 174-175) However, in developing a theory, attention must be paid to theoretical sampling.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Teachers' Experiences Me&MyCity as Teaching Method

In the interview, the teachers saw Me & MyCity teaching and learning method as strengthening civic skills and pupil co-operation. The visit to Me & MyCity was particularly well suited to the mathematics period, as taxes and percentages were calculated there (cf. POPS, 2016). However, the use of the teaching material was challenging, not everyone had time to go through it in 10 hours. According to the teachers, the pupils learned from each other, and asked help from the adult tutors in Me & MyCity if they could not do some work. Most of them liked the job and knew how to do it. (cf. POPS, 2016) The pupils waited for the visit to Me & MyCity and noticed from the teacher's hourly activities that now the Me & MyCity lesson is coming. The sixth grade was the most appropriate because the pupils saw their role realistically even saving money (Kolb, 1984) although they were aware that virtual money did not work outside Me & MyCity. Pupils also liked the profession they had chosen (POPS, 2016; Kolb, 1984). There were some problems with disciplinary visits to Me & MyCity.

“Sorry, you send false invoices”.

There were also thefts in a few cases. However, the pupils resolved the problem case with each other. The use of computers developed the pupils' initiative, as there were 40 tablet computers in use in Me & MyCity. If necessary, help was received from the Me & MyCity instructors. (Ojala, A. 2021) For developing the teaching method, two visits (spring and autumn) were hoped for. The same was what the pupils wanted. In this way, the learning experience deepens and at least then the students wanted to work in the same profession. (Kolb, D. A. 1984).

4.2. Entrepreneurship Education as Defined by Teachers

Teachers of entrepreneurship education saw it mainly as internal entrepreneurship, as a way of working through the curriculum. (Cf. POPS, 2016) Teachers found a clear link to the curriculum. However, the understanding of entrepreneurship education as fundraising also came to the attention of teachers. There are a lot of sales ancestors in elementary school (class trips).

“Taking personal responsibility for learning and competence through internal entrepreneurship.”

The latter is also very evident in terms of lifelong learning: taking responsibility for learning and competence. Entrepreneurship education is emphasized in all Finnish curricula, and teachers play a key role in how it is implemented in practice. (See: Seikkula-Leino, Ruskovaara, Ikävalko, Mattila, & Rytkölä, 2010); European Commission. 2010). In addition to the above, entrepreneurship education should be linked to the school's operational culture and management strategies.

4.3. Pupils' Experiences of Me & MyCity

Pupils are growing up in a world where they are more concerned with knowledge. The work is based on working together and working in networks. This is precisely the wide-ranging competence that the primary school curriculum (2016) emphasizes. In the interview, the pupils first described the work and the profession they had chosen for their position in Me & MyCity.

“Nice taste of working life.”

Everyone would like to visit again Me & MyCity and most would choose the same profession. (Kolb, 1984), (See: Wilson, 2008; Heinonen, Hytti, & Tiikkala, 2011.). This also supports Kalmis' research, according to which learned financial matters practically closely, earned to save money even though virtual money did not work outside.

“I went to ask for a pay raise No, salaries could not be raised” “I save the money to computer”.

“The virtual card was hard for it when I didn't know how much money was in the account.” (See Kalmi, 2015; Kolb, 1984, pp. 9-11; Hakkarainen, Bollström-Huttunen, Pyysalo, & Lonka, 2005; Hakkarainen, 2009; Autio, 2006; Lehtonen, & Lehtonen, 2011; Leppilampi, & Piekkari, 1998.).

4.4. Discussion and Further Research

In this study, study validity refers to the accuracy of scientific findings, which means the extent to which the conclusions are reliable and correspond to reality. Me & MyCity as a teaching method was studied through two observation units: teachers, and pupils. The material was collected through a thematic interview and studied with a ground-based research approach from the Straussian trend. It allowed the import of ready-made categories into the research process. The research material has been collected in natural situations, in a natural context in schools. Additional material was collected immediately after visiting Me & MyCity in Pirkanmaa. That's how it best verifies reality.

The internal validity of the study is considered in relation to the study results. Internal validity can be improved by interviewing enough and for a sufficient period. This provides enough information about the phenomenon under study. The review is based on students' experiences of Me & MyCity (Kolb, 1984.). Additional material was collected from pupils immediately after their visit to Me & MyCity (2019). Another additional material, TAT Analytics (n.d. Report) <https://tat-ry.bibook.com/analytics/report/f215138e-0e19-41ad->

8c30-25261e4c36b2 (2024) was used to confirm the research results like an earlier article from the same source. (See: Ojala, 2021.).

The problem of conceptual validity can be reduced by the researcher's prior knowledge of the context. (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 280; Karila, 1997, p. 155) emphasize good knowledge of the research subject. There are few studies in the area (Kalmi, 2016.) Instead, the researcher has more than 30 years of experience as a subject teacher. It is likely to increase the reliability of the research subject. External validity describe-show research describes reality. If key concepts cannot be derived from the theory, the conceptual validity of the research is poor (Hirsijärvi, & Hurme, 2001, p. 129; Hirsijärvi, 2007.). These core categories of research are Me & MyCity as a Teaching Method and Pupils' Experiences of Me & MyCity. The theory of Me & MyCity helps to structure, develop, and bring an addition to Me & MyCity teaching method in a certain area of substance. (See: Yin, 1989.) However, it should be noted that Me & MyCity learning environment is based on Finnish national curricula. This must be considered when considering the generalizability of Me & MyCity learning environment. A further research, I suggest more visit (for example twice in academic year) to Me & MyCity learning environment and clarifying the teaching materials to make them suitable for students. This way learning will deepen (Kolb, 1984).

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