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Teaching business model innovation to large and interdisciplinary IS/IT classes

A didactic approach involving peer feedback via self-recorded video presentations

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Business models describe the mechanisms of how organizations create, deliver and capture value for their customers. While these mechanisms play a key role in turning technological innovation into economic success, technological innovation itself enables new mechanisms to emerge, constantly challenging established business models. As a result, business models have garnered great interest not only in research and practice (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2013) but recently also in education and have become an integral part of university curricula for IS/IT students. Future IS/IT graduates who want to work as software developers, management consultants or start-up founders need to be equipped with the required knowledge, methods and tools of business model innovation so that they learn not only how to develop late-breaking technology but also how to contribute to business model innovation, including collaboratively as part of interdisciplinary teams.

With this in mind we developed a novel teaching approach which draws on experiential learning and comprises eleven weekly lectures and three assignments. The teaching approach is scalable to large classroom settings (i.e., courses with more than 200 students) and capable of being delivered to students from diverse disciplines (e.g., information systems, computer science, economics, international business and engineering). In a nutshell, this approach empowers students to acquire business model knowledge and to apply methods and tools for business model innovation. Throughout their assignments students report their results by means of self-recorded video presentations, which enables them to receive from and provide feedback to peers. In this way IS/IT lecturers can create a dynamic learning environment in which students from different study programs can work collaboratively in small teams. The consecutive assignments involve analyzing and innovating business model ideas, applying digital tools and creating clickable prototypes for piloting their ideas. For a detailed description of the didactic underpinnings and the realization of the teaching approach see Szopinski (2019).

To help IS/IT lecturers to convey the business model concept to IS/IT students, this TREO Talk provides insights gained from our successful implementation of this teaching approach at the Paderborn University with over 750 students over the course of three semesters. By presenting our approach, we contribute to the exchange, sharing and discussion of teaching ideas, materials and best practices among IS/IT lecturers. Our ultimate aim is to enable IS/IT graduates to contribute to tackling the interdisciplinary challenge of business model innovation.

References

Osterwalder, A., and Pigneur, Y. 2013. “Designing business models and similar strategic objects: The contribution of IS,” Journal of the Association for Information Systems, 14(5), pp. 237–244.
Szopinski, D. 2019. “Squaring the circle: Business model teaching in large classroom settings,” Journal of Business Models, 7(3), pp. 90–100.