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# Innovation project courses in universities – benefits and challenges

Why do we need them? What are the benefits? What challenges must we tackle?

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PIRKANMAAN LIITTO



Vipuvoimaa  
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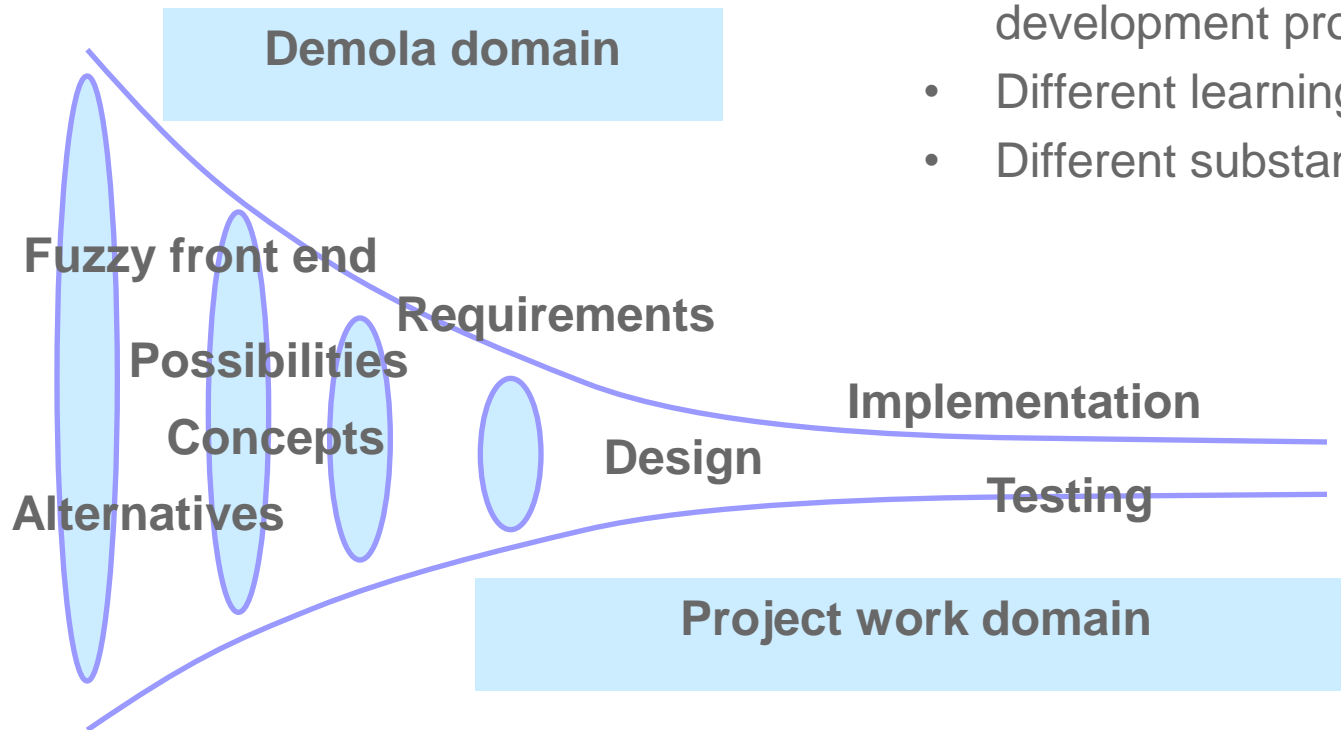
# Necessities to do this

- World changing around us
  - Need for innovation, collaboration, multinational operations, learning in teams, understanding others
  - Need for entrepreneurship, start-ups
  - Era of giant corporations with strict positions is over
- Need for
  - A new world view in education
  - Teaching and supporting new skills, broader competence
  - Changing attitudes
  - New kinds of teachings ... and learning

# Innovation project courses

- New learning environment
  - Multicultural, multinational
  - Open innovation
  - Open, shared space
- New ways of learning
  - Focuses on informal, situated learning
  - Learning by doing
  - Learning in teams
- Feeds the brain and the heart
  - Experience from succeeding – and from problems
  - Theory into practice
- Infusion into the new culture of professional life and society
  - Innovation, dynamics, start-ups, lean and agile product development
- Way to channel companies and students into real fruitful co-creation

# Different positioning than traditional project work courses



- Different positioning in project development process
- Different learning goals
- Different substance

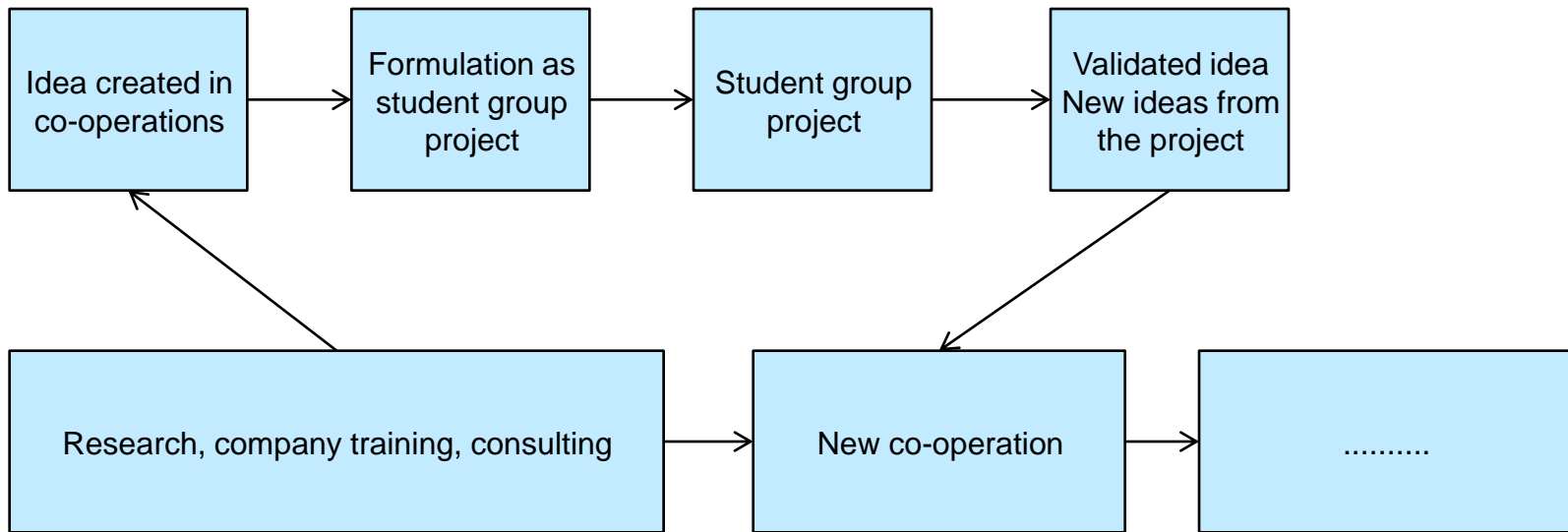
# Benefits



- General
  - Keeping in touch with the times
- Fulfilling the function of education in the future
- Better image
- Luring the best students and keeping them happy
  - Better results in learning, better professionals
  - More motivation
- Empowering personnel
  - New energy, ideas, motivation
- Company relations
  - More possibilities to collaboration with companies, more interaction
  - Support, ideas to research collaboration
- Tool for cross-university collaboration
- A link to universities in other countries
  - Common project work concept is a conversation piece
  - Student exchange in the small and in the large
  - Getting the best international students to Tampere

# Using innovative student group projects to channel ideas in company co-operation

## Idea development in innovative student group project



Long-term co-operation

# Challenges



- Cultural challenge
  - We need to change
- Hype!
  - Universities need to know what they are doing and not just jump to buzzwords
- Quality of learning
  - What people really learn... (Experiences as such are good, too)
  - Linking to other courses
  - Teacher's role
- Relation to traditional project work courses
  - Both are important
- Isolation
  - Other courses need to change too!
- Finding the right people to teaching and running the things
  - Teachers that are enthusiastic and feel personal benefits
  - Company relations at department level
- Practical matters, like
  - Meetings and happenings outside office hours
  - Knowing beforehand the volume of work (number of students, teams)