

WHAT SHOULD WE TEACH?

A note on Key areas for development of a Template for Entrepreneurship Programme Development in HE

The need for a template.

The discussion today (September 13th) with Young Enterprise raised once again the notion of NCGE having a template for Entrepreneurship which might be used to benchmark the potential contribution of all existing programme offers. Such a template would need to incorporate a definition of *what constitutes entrepreneurship in education* and, in particular address the key issue of *what might be the range of desired outcomes from entrepreneurship programmes*. With such a base it might then be possible to explore:

- What outcomes existing programmes are offering against this template?
- Are they really being delivered?
- How well are they being delivered and where is there scope for improvement?
- How (well) are the outcomes being assessed?

Without such a template it will not easily be possible to harness effectively existing offers and indeed add value to them. Moreover it will not be possible to prevent the spread of irrelevant or poor practice, which has arguably happened in schools enterprise education. The research into offers of entrepreneurship in HE demonstrates for example that much of what is taught is 'about' rather than 'through' or 'for'.

Benefits of a template

These would include;

- allowing NCGE to capture the high ground of conceptualisation of entrepreneurship in an educational context
- providing the basis for effective dialogue with all key stakeholders, particularly policy makers and funders
- providing the basis for programme of education and training for policy makers, organisers and deliverers of entrepreneurship education

Some key areas for outcome setting and measurement

These are set out below (Exhibit 1), for discussion. They are not meant to be the definitive article. Nor are they a template against which to assess the worthiness of programmes (most would fail to match these criteria). They in my view represent some 'ideal type' components against which to benchmark potential for adding value and development. They also represent in my view a research and development agenda.

A. Entrepreneurial behaviour, attitude and skill development

To what degree does a programme have activities that seek clearly to develop?:

- opportunity seeking
- initiative taking
- ownership of a development
- commitment to see things through
- personal locus of control (autonomy)
- intuitive decision making with limited information
- networking capacity
- strategic thinking
- negotiation capacity
- selling/persuasive capacity
- achievement orientation

- calculated risk taking

Exhibit 1

Potential Key Outcomes to be Benchmarked

A. Key entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attitudes have been developed.
(these will need to be agree and clearly set out)

B. Student s clearly empathise with, understand and 'feel' the life-world of the entrepreneur

C. Key entrepreneurial values have been inculcated

D. Motivation towards a career in entrepreneurship has been built and students clearly understand the comparative benefits

E. The students understand the process (stages) of going into business, the associated tasks and learning needs

F. Students have the key generic competencies associated with entrepreneurship
(generic 'how to's')

G. Students have a grasp of key business how to's associated with the start up process

H. Students understand the nature of the relationships they need to develop with key stakeholders and are familiarised with them

B. Creating empathy with the entrepreneurial life world

To what degree does the programme help students to 'feel' the world of:

- living with uncertainty and complexity
- having to do everything under pressure
- coping with loneliness
- holistic management
- no sell, no income
- no cash in hand – no income
- building know who and trust relationships
- learning by doing, copying, making things up, problem solving
- managing interdependencies
- working flexibly and long hours

C. Key entrepreneurial values

To what degree does the programme seek to inculcate and create empathy with values:

- strong sense of independence
- distrust of bureaucracy and its values
- self made/self belief
- strong sense of ownership
- belief that rewards come with own effort
- 'hard work brings its rewards
- believe can make things happen
- strong action orientation
- belief in informal arrangements
- strong belief in the value of know-who and trust
- strong belief in freedom to take action
- belief in the individual and community not the state

D. Motivation to Entrepreneurship career

To what degree does the programme help students':

- understand the benefits from an entrepreneurship career?
- compare with employee career
- have some entrepreneurial 'hero's' as friends acquaintances
- have images of entrepreneurial people 'just like them'

E. Understanding of processes of business entry and tasks

To what degree does the programme take students through

- the total process of starting a business from idea to survival and provide understanding of what challenges will arise at each stage
- helping students how to handle them

F. Generic Entrepreneurship competencies

To what degree does the programme build the capacity to:

- find an idea
- appraise an idea
- see problems as opportunities
- identify the key people to be influenced in any development
- build the know who
- learn from relationships
- assess business development needs
- know where to look for answers
- improve emotional self awareness, manage and read emotions and handle relationships

- constantly see yourself and the business through the eyes of stakeholders and particularly customers

G. Key Minimum Business how to's

To what degree does the programme help students to:

- see products and services as combinations of benefits
- develop a total service package
- price a product service
- identify and approach good customers
- appraise and learn from competition
- monitor the environment with limited resource
- choose appropriate sales strategy and manage it
- identify the appropriate scale of a business to make a living
- set standards for operations performance and manage them
- finance the business appropriately from different sources
- develop a business plan as a relationship communication instrument
- acquire an appropriate systems to manage cash, payments, collections, profits and costs
- select a good accountant
- manage, with minimum fuss, statutory requirements

H. Managing relationships

How does the programme help students to:

- understand the needs of all key stakeholders at the start –up and survival stage
- know how to educate stakeholders
- know how to learn from them
- know how best to build and manage the relationship.

Conclusion

There is no space in this note to examine the detail of how the above can be taught/facilitated. I believe that they can and that we need to set this out as the basis for teacher training and the benchmarking of 'good practice'. Whether you accept the above or not I believe that we need to have some high level workshops to establish curriculum and pedagogy.