

International Entrepreneurship Educator's Programme

Entrepreneurial Learning - Pedagogical Note Series

29. Leveraging the Student Interest

1. What is leveraging the student interest?

In the University/College context a key challenge is to create wide awareness across all disciplinary areas of the relevance of entrepreneurial learning and programmes. Leveraging the student interest to create staff interest is a major component of a 'whole university' strategy. Not all students will have an interest in starting a business or indeed a capacity so to do. All, however, will have some interest in their personal development and in their capacity to make an impact in the job market. The exercise below aims to focus participant attention on the relevance of 'established' entrepreneurial attributes and behaviours to their future 'life-world'. It also can be used to encourage them to reflect on the university/college contribution to this future?

2. How is the exercise constructed?

The exercise consists of the use of two Likert scale questionnaires (see Annex). They can be used as an 'in-class' instrument or sent out electronically to a wider student body. Both questionnaires are easily completed in a class. Each will take only a few minutes. Questionnaire 1 asks the students to score the perceived relevance of a number of entrepreneurial attributes and behaviours to their future work, social and family experience. Questionnaire 2 asks them to use the same scale to indicate how the university/college experience has served to enhance these attributes and behaviours. An important distinction, to be explained carefully, is the difference between what has been enhanced by the formal university disciplinary learning process as opposed to the wider experience of university life.

The questionnaires are administered in sequence and the second one is introduced after some discussion of meanings from the first answers.

If the instruments are used as a 'class' exercise then they should be prefaced by a class discussion/brainstorming on the attributes and behaviours associated with being 'entrepreneurial'. The major headings in the questionnaire can be drawn out by this process. There can also be some discussion as to who they are relevant to – in what career contexts - although this is best left until after the completion of the first questionnaire. After the questionnaire is completed the participants are asked to draw a connecting line linking up their 'scores' so that there is a visible profile. The facilitator can then go through the questions asking for scores and facilitating discussion of why they were scored in this way. It is obviously impossible to collate scores in a live situation. But it is possible for the facilitator to ask who scored a six or seven and then pick up on reasons why. Similarly with scores below the median level. Discussion on each attribute and its contexts can then be facilitated.

After adequate discussion the second questionnaire can be handed out and a similar discussion facilitated as to the reasons why the university experience scores high or low. Comparisons can be made with the impression of their personal scores. This is perhaps best done through small group discussion. Small group discussion can also be used to bring out explanations for variances. Full group debate can be focused upon

different contexts for entrepreneurial behaviour – Who needs to be entrepreneurial? (doctors, police, religious leaders, local government, bankers etc). If desired this can lead further discussion of the changing environment and complexity and uncertainty and how everyone is being affected in some way*. This might be the focus for further sessions.

The questionnaires are completed anonymously and can be collected in, analysed and used carefully for discussion with university/college staff.

3. Relevance to Entrepreneurial Learning

The exercise is designed to bring out the relevance of entrepreneurial behaviours and attributes to wider contexts. It also deliberately builds from the perspective of the participants, giving them ownership of the discussion and allowing them to benchmark their own views and experiences with others in a non- threatening environment.

4. Outcomes

The major participant outcome is that they will gain a perspective on the wider relevance of the entrepreneurial paradigm and will be better able to take a personal perspective on this. The data can also be used by the facilitator to leverage interest in the university/college in the broader cross university relevance of entrepreneurial learning.

ANNEX
Entrepreneurship Questionnaire Part 1
An assessment of the importance of entrepreneurial capacity to your future

The questions focus upon a number of key entrepreneurial or enterprising capacities/attributes. Can you provide an estimate of the importance of these in relation to what you want to do when you leave university (work, leisure, social life)?

Please complete quickly, circling the appropriate number
 7 = Highly important
 1= Unimportant

1. Ability to see opportunities in problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Ability to take initiatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Ability to analyse data	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Ability to think creatively	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Forward looking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Being optimism	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Sense of ownership (of events	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Determined to be independent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Capacity to make judgments on the basis of limited information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Ability to persuade others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Ability to use social networks for career advantage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Can control own destiny	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Capacity - work independently	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Imaginative use of knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Desire to see things through	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Ability to persuade others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Having lots of ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Strong orientation to achieve	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part 2

The university/college experience
To what degree do you feel that the following capacities/attributes have been enhanced by the university/college experience

	7 = greatly 1= very little							Degree of influence*	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Formal	Informal
Ability to see opportunities in problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Ability to take initiatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Ability to analyse data	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Ability to think creatively	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Forward looking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Being optimism	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Sense of ownership (of events)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Determination to be Independent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Capacity to make judgments on the basis of limited information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Ability to persuade others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Ability to use social networks for career advantage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Feeling can control own destiny	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Capacity to work independently	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Imaginative use of knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Desire to see things through	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Ability to persuade others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Having lots of ideas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Strong orientation to achieve	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

*Formal= the formal study relationship with the university
 Informal = other aspects of university life (social, leisure, living)