

International Entrepreneurship Educators Programme

Entrepreneurial Learning - Pedagogical Note Series

44. Simulating Entrepreneurial ‘Ways of’

1. What is Simulating Entrepreneurial ‘Ways of’

It can be argued that a key component missing from much entrepreneurship education is the creation of a ‘feel’ for the way that entrepreneurs do, learn, feel, see, think, organise and communicate things. Drawing from a varied literature it can be argued that, as a result of the close identity of the owner-managed a firm with the business, certain values are built interacting with, and developed from, a range of experience. ‘Ways of’ can be characterised as¹:

Ways of Doing Things

- intuitively
- through ‘what if’ strategising
 - by jumping in
 - by making it up
 - by problem solving
- through opportunity seeking
- by responding to stakeholder pressure
 - through contacts
- by making judgments on basis of limited data

Ways of Communicating Things

- verbally v written word
 - based on trust
- by appropriate word count
 - acting different parts
- person to person – not to ‘organisation’
 - with feeling

Ways of Thinking Things• via heuristic/ experiential rules

- based on experiential frames of reference
 - within thresholds of potential
 - unreasonably
 - intuitively
 - within thresholds of experience
 - pragmatically

¹ Gibb, A. A.(2007) ‘Entrepreneurship: Unique Solutions for Unique Environments. Is it possible to achieve this with the existing paradigm?’ *International Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*. Vol. 5 Senate Hall Academic Publishing.

Ways Of Organising Things• in entrepreneurial mode by providing organisation members with ownership, control, degrees of freedom, ability to network, responsibility to see things through, rewards linked to effort and success with clients, ability to learn from mistakes and stakeholders

- informally and overlapping
- held together by culture not control
 - sharing strategies
- project based organisation

Ways of Seeing Things

- aggressively
- not through checklists and plans
- often defensively to protect 'Way of life'
 - through independence culture
- cautiously relating to use of own resource
 - resisting unnecessary formalisation
 - looking for value in practice

Ways of Feeling Things

- through the ego
- through ownership values
- often through a family perspective
 - through high locus of control
- through emotive judgment of people
- through a values filter (anti bureaucracy, formality, affinity, self made aspiration)
- valuing experience

Ways of Learning things

- by doing
 - copying
 - from stakeholders
 - under pressure
- by experiment and mistake making
 - problem solving creatively
 - opportunity grasping
 - by repeated practice
 - on a need to know basis
 - know how focused
 - know who linked

2. How can an exercise constructed?

Possible ways of achieving measurable outcomes related to 'Ways of' include:

Ways of doing

- Mini cases/critical incidents calling upon students to take decisions with limited data.
- Following the development of frames of reference in class (the start up process – of any kind of organisation being one) judgements made as to possibility of success and reasons given (no business plans!)
- Creating a convincing argument for something with limited information – off the top of the head in a limited time space.
- Giving students a particular problem and asking them to identify as many opportunities for solving it as possible – for example drugs in night clubs, nothing for young people to do in the evening in their local community
- Seeing all activities/opportunities as know who - being about identifying relevant stakeholders, empathising with their needs and points of view and developing strategies for carrying the opportunity forward. For example setting the students the objective of setting up a college disco – identifying who they need to persuade, what the pros and cons seen from each of these individuals point of view might be, deciding who best to use to persuade others etc. (possible key stakeholders being teachers, principals, parents, caretakers, canteen staff, local police, local householders, possible stewards, local authorities re. noise etc.).

Ways of communicating

- asking students to make a persuasive verbal case for something on their feet a short notice – as practiced in developing debating capacities
- exercises in telephone selling
- after inputs on emotional intelligence asking students to make assessments, for and against whether a person on a video is trustworthy
- feedback on role play of a person in very different situations (for example re. the disco exercise above how should one 'appear' before a head teacher, police inspector, chairman of governors, school caretaker. The enterprising person/entrepreneur is a good actor.
- Practice in putting things simply using a word count appropriate to an audience – test in writing a story for a five year old child.

Ways of feeling

- simple exercise to test understanding of the life world of a person (what changes in the life of a teacher who decides to become self employed?).
- exercise in understanding how strong ownership of an idea or ideology might influence the way people present and defend their actions. Using for example a craftsman whose work is criticized in a newspaper to get the student to understand how it might feel when someone really 'owns' something yet has it threatened. Use of video or mini incident and check responses.
- write a short story around a picture of two people at a table where one is trying to persuade the other to do something that he/she thinks is unethical.
- Selecting two of your friends/acquaintances (using fictitious names) explain why you might trust one more than the other
- Given a list of entrepreneurial values explain why these should be so.

- Given a particular job description and two candidates one with a great deal of formal qualification and the other with a great deal of experience, how would you go about assessing the two?
- Take a family incident and get the student to explore the impact of different feelings upon the way different members of the family see the incident (I want to set up my own business says the young daughter).
- Explain why entrepreneurs do not like bureaucrats

Ways of thinking

- use some of de Bono's lateral thinking exercises
- ask students to construct heuristic frames of reference for making intuitive judgements of different kinds of events – for example how to you assess how to trust someone?)
- ask students to provide examples of different kinds of entrepreneurial experiences they have had selecting from a list and ask them to evaluate results (for example, have they ever tried to sell something, persuade someone to do something against their will, defend something that you really believed was right but others felt was wrong).
- explain what the use of some particular piece of knowledge might be to whom and why?

Ways of organising

- explain how to design an organisation so that people can be very enterprising
- explain how to design an organisation to suppress enterprise
- explain whether you think the university/college is enterprising and why or why not
- make a drawing showing what you believe to be the culture of the university/college and explain it.
- plan a project to determine the needs of older people in the community and how they can be met

Ways of seeing

- students assume that have to have to create their own living and wealth by hard work and independent effort with little support. Asked to indicate how this might influence attitudes to: increased taxation, a tax on inheritance, public expenditure on subsidies to the unemployed.
- Students asked to assume that they are the boss of a small firm employing 14 people many of whom have been with it for 20 years.. A government scheme is introduced to encourage every employer to train formally every member of staff, keep records of all training events and undertaking formal training needs analysis. You as an employer are asked to contribute a percentage of your labour costs in the form of a payroll tax to pay for this. If you complete all the paper work. keep records and send your workers on formal training courses you will recoup most if not all of the tax. Why should you object to this?
- Students assume have many years of experience in doing something and have been reasonably successful. An expert comes along and sets out new ways of doing things based upon objective analysis and theory. What will be your attitude to this and why?

Ways of learning

- student wishes to start a tennis club in your local area. What does he/she need to know in order to progress the idea. How and from whom will they get to know it?
- student is thinking of setting up a local crafts and art gallery. He/she visits several galleries in other areas. What would you be looking for?
- students are lost in the mountains with minimum equipment and are faced with a night of freezing temperatures. Describe what they might do to escape or survive.
- Students are asked to list as many needs as possible that a sofa might meet (that might reasonably be in the mind of someone wishing to buy one)
- Students are given a two-page summary of an idea for a business which is full of errors and are asked without adding to the word count to amend it so that it is more plausible..

3. Relevance to Entrepreneurial Learning

The focus of all of the exercises is that of creating/simulating aspects of the considered ways that entrepreneurs might approach different problems and opportunities. The aim is to create empathy with this world by 'doing'

4. Outcomes

Programme participants will gain a true 'feel' as to the way that SME owner managers might see and do things and the rationale for their 'ways of behaving'.