

**Joanna Markiewicz /David Blunck (ed.)**

# Graduates in the European Labour Market

Employment, Entrepreneurship, Initiatives



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## Preface

We would like to present you the scientific publication, which sets out to explore the issue of young graduates on the labour market. Young people, even those with university diploma very often have to face the problem of difficulties in finding a job. Recent economic crises, uncertain future, untypical forms of employment and aging society are obstacles rather than facilitators in this situation.

One of the ways to support young people was “Pathways for Graduates” project, which was funded with the support of the European Commission within the framework of Leonardo da Vinci programme Transfer of Innovation. The main aim of the project was to increase the integration of young graduates into the labour market by producing a multilingual, multicultural training course which allows young graduates to acquire the competences and transferable work skills needed to open up progression opportunities either directly to employment and/or to further vocational qualifications.

There were five partners involved in the project. University of Szczecin played the role of the project leader. The German partner – Univations GmbH was responsible for the research part. Springboard Opportunities Limited from the United Kingdom for the elaboration of the content. Canice Consulting (also from the United Kingdom) dealt with the technical realization. Fundacion Laboral del Metal from Spain conducted the pilot test.

The issue of the situation of young graduates on the labour market was treated in the project in practical way. To enrich the project results, the partnership decided to publish scientific papers in order to present a wide spectrum of theoretical discourse on this topic, gathering authors from different European countries. Readers will find interesting papers on the meaning of the entrepreneurship in university education, learn about the situation of young people through the lenses of the institutional economy. Some papers provide knowledge for young people from the perspective of human resources scope. There are also papers which present initiatives directed to reinforce young work force on the labour market.

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# Putting Entrepreneurship Education into the Undergraduate Curriculum: Why And How

COLIN MASON (GLASGOW)

## Contexts

The graduate labour market is undergoing profound changes. There are two significant trends at work. The number of graduates is increasing. Adding to the competition for jobs is the internationalisation of the student population. Meanwhile the number of graduate-level jobs is not keeping pace. More and more graduates are in jobs where a degree is not necessary. The nature of employment is also changing as companies increasingly structure their employment around ‘projects’ which require only temporary and freelance staff. The expanding creative economy is largely organised around projects. The response of an IT industry worker to the question who he worked for – that “no one works for anyone in IT” – brilliantly summarises the nature of contemporary labour markets. His remark is no longer restricted to the IT sector.

These changes were perceptively highlighted some 20 years ago by William Bridges in his book *Jobshift*.<sup>1</sup> He was one of the earliest commentators to observe that ‘the job’, which he defined as “boxes in organisational charts with regular duties” and offering 9–5 workdays, 12 months of work, promotion and a pension at the age of 65, would not be part of the 21st century economy. He argued that the job is a social artefact created to meet the needs of the industrial era but which is incompatible with the need for more flexible models of employment in an information-based and digital-enabled economy. Work is therefore being reconstituted as “the contingent, just-in-time workforce” (p. 9) and employment categories are losing

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1 Bridges, W., 1995. *Jobshift: How to prosper in a workplace without jobs*. London: Nicholas Breakeley.

their boundaries as work “is repacked into projects and assignments” (p. 114). These developments are evident in the decline in permanent employment and career structures and the notion of ‘the job-for-life’ and the rise in various forms of contingent jobs (part-time, temporary, agency, freelance), the transformation of career structures and the increase in self-employment. Employment statistics underline the pervasiveness of these trends. The UK is estimated to have 1.72m freelance workers, while the number of self-employed in 2014 is 4.6 million, a rise of 650,000 (17%) since 2008 and representing 15% of the economically active. The consequence for workers is that “whether or not you are employed in what we used to call a job, you are henceforth in business for yourself” (Bridges, 1995, p. 61).

Equally significant is that since the last quarter of the 20th century, and starting in the USA, developed nations have been experiencing an increase in entrepreneurial activity – which is, in turn, creating a new type of economy which Carl Schramm<sup>2</sup> terms “entrepreneurial capitalism”. Indeed, Kuratko and Hodgetts say in their book that “the opportunities during this century will be immense. Entrepreneurial opportunities will continue to arise for individuals willing to take the risk.”<sup>3</sup> Similarly William Bygrave and Andrew Zacharakis say in their book *Entrepreneurship* that “there has never been a better time to practice the art and science of entrepreneurship”.<sup>4</sup> Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian says that “‘I have a start-up’ is the new ‘I’m in a band.’ In fact, starting a company is probably easier than starting a band.” Young people have such a great opportunity. They don’t have dependents, their room and board are inexpensive, and they have a lot of free time. I get a little jealous just thinking about what they can accomplish.”<sup>5</sup>

There are several reasons why it is claimed that it has never been easier to start a business.

First, cultural attitudes towards self-employment have become more positive. No longer are entrepreneurs seen as being the shady operators and tax dodgers as portrayed in such TV series as *Minder* and *Only Fools and Horses*. Instead, entrepre-

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2 Schramm, C. (2006) *The Entrepreneurial Imperative*, HarperBusiness.

3 Kuratko, D. F. and Hodgetts, R. M. (2001) *Entrepreneurship: A Contemporary Approach*, Harcourt, 5th edition.

4 Bygrave, W. and Zacharakis, A. (2014) *Entrepreneurship*, John Wiley and Son, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

5 Ohanian, A. (2013) Is there such a thing as too many start-ups? Inc Magazine, October, p. 28.

neers are now praised and celebrated for their economic contributions, and some receive knighthoods.

Second, the attractions of working for ‘big business’ are much reduced. Few large companies now offer long term job security and other benefits of working in the corporate sector have disappeared. Pension schemes have been curtailed or closed, seniority systems have given way to performance pay, workloads have increased and work schedules are increasingly long and inflexible. It is suggested that Generation Y, or Millennials, (born between 1978 and 2001), having been raised on computers and the internet, are less likely to be attracted by corporate careers and more likely to want to maintain their independence and ‘own’ their own careers, and so are also much more likely to work for themselves compared with previous generations.

Third, economic changes have opened up opportunities for small businesses. Size and economies of scale are no longer important in many sectors; indeed, being big is now often a disadvantage. This is linked to the growth of services, and especially knowledge-based work which in many cases requires little in the way of investment in equipment and infrastructure.

This, in turn, has reduced the costs of starting a business. The costs of doing business are becoming variable rather than fixed on account of increasing opportunities to outsource (e.g. distribution and shipping). ICT technology in the form of cheap and powerful personal computers and software, and other innovations (e.g. express parcel delivery, printing and copying) have provided small businesses with the power, scope and access of large companies but without sacrificing the independence and flexibility of being small. Internet-based trading platforms, such as Ebay, Etsy and Amazon, along with money transfer mechanisms (notably PayPal), have been particularly important in enabling small businesses to cost-effectively serve small, geographically dispersed, market niches (the ‘long tail’ phenomenon<sup>6</sup>). At the same time, consumers have become more comfortable buying online. Small businesses can access technology through ‘plug and play’ access and open source software. Advances in production technologies which connect PCs to a wide range of machine tools have encouraged small scale manufacturing. For many businesses their only requirement is laptop computers and associated software, mobile phones

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6 Anderson, C. (2006) *The Long Tail: Why the future of business is selling less of more*, New York: Hyperion.

and high speed internet access, enabling them to be run from the owner's home, further reducing costs. Meanwhile, crowdfunding platforms have made the financing of start-ups much easier.

These trends have profound implications for graduates who have recently joined or will be entering the labour market. First, they need to have an entrepreneurial mindset regardless of whether they are an employee, or working for themselves. If they are employees, they need to operate as if they were an external provider, because their employer will be continually assessing whether the function needs to be performed in-house. As Bridges<sup>7</sup> states, “workers need to develop a mindset, an approach to their work, and a way of managing their careers that is more like that of an external vendor than that of a traditional employee. Workers will be wise to think that they are ‘in business for themselves’ ...” More positively, many large companies recognise that they need to operate like smaller, nimble companies if they are to continue to be innovative, and so organise themselves around internal new venture teams. These companies are therefore actively seeking to recruit entrepreneurial graduates. Second, whether for positive or negative reasons working on a self-employed or freelance basis, or starting a business is now a career option for graduates. As *Financial Times* columnist Luke Johnson comments, this transformation of the labour market “should have an impact on what we teach young people entering the workforce”.<sup>8</sup>

## Teaching Entrepreneurship: Pedagogical Issues

Universities have traditionally been concerned with the employability of their graduates, especially since this measure has become a performance indicator. But, as the previous discussion implies, this becomes less relevant in a context of disappearing jobs. Hence, Universities also need to equip their graduates with entrepreneurial skills and know-how to create their own employment. However, universities have given rather less attention to this objective. One of the reasons is the belief that it is not possible to teach people to become entrepreneurs. This view is now largely discredited. Entrepreneurship is seen not a personality characteristic, but as a learned skill. However, there are caveats: “taking an entrepreneurship class isn’t likely to turn a student with no business smarts into an opportunity-spotting, mon-

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7 *Op. cit.*

8 Johnson, L. 2014. The future is freelance – and that is healthy, *Financial Times*, 1 April, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/fce447ea-b8f3-11e3-98c5-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3AAU8zKeX>.

eymaking genius. Yet plenty of anecdotal evidence suggests that the classes can speed the learning curve for people with the right stuff.”<sup>9</sup> Of course, this is not a challenge that is limited to the teaching of entrepreneurship: “we cannot guarantee to produce a great entrepreneur from our entrepreneurship courses any more than a music professor can promise to produce a Mozart or a physical professor an Einstein. But give us a student with ... determination, dedication and inspiration and we are confident we will produce a better entrepreneur.”<sup>10</sup> In short, as Kuratko<sup>11</sup> states, “the question whether entrepreneurship can be taught is obsolete.” The pertinent question is how should we teach entrepreneurship.

A lot of the teaching that occurs under the entrepreneurship heading is ‘about’ entrepreneurship, covering academic studies of entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial businesses and the entrepreneurial process. This is not intended to teach students how to be entrepreneurs. Teaching ‘for’ entrepreneurship, in contrast, aims to produce graduates with mindsets, skills and the capability to identify and shape opportunities and develop business ventures. However, it is increasingly questioned whether standard approaches to teach ‘for’ entrepreneurship are effective in achieving their outcomes. First, they have a classroom-based focus and “lecture teaching methodology, basically a stand-and-deliver approach”<sup>12</sup> which misses “the vital stimulation of the ‘knowing how’”<sup>13</sup> and discourages right-brain thinking. Indeed, Pittway and Cope<sup>14</sup> argue that “it is not possible to convey the challenge and complexities surrounding new venture creation using only conventional pedagogies such as lectures and seminars.” Second, the reliance on theories, content and pedagogical approaches borrowed from business management results in a failure to emphasise the distinctiveness of entrepreneurship,<sup>15</sup> defined as the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities to provide goods and serv-

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- 9 Gray, P. B., & Field, A. (2006). Can entrepreneurship be taught? *Fortune Small Business*, 16(2/3), 34–51.
  - 10 Bygrave and Zacharakis, *op. cit.*
  - 11 Kuratko, D. F. (2005) The emergence of entrepreneurship education: developments, trends and challenges, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 29 (5), 577–598.
  - 12 Neck, H. and Greene, P. (2011) Entrepreneurship education: known worlds and new frontiers, *Journal of Small Business Development*, 49 (1) p. 58.
  - 13 Gibb, A. A. (1993) Enterprise culture and education: understanding enterprise education and its links with small business, *International Small Business Journal*, 11 (3): 11–34.
  - 14 Pittaway, L. and Cope, J. (2007) Simulating entrepreneurial learning: integrating experiential and collaborative approaches to learning, *Management Learning*, 38 (2) p. 229.
  - 15 Solomon, G. (2008) Entrepreneurship education in the United States. In J. Potter (ed) *Entrepreneurship and Higher Education*, Paris: OECD, pp. 95–118.

ices.<sup>16</sup> Third, the focus on the business plan which students write and then present – Dragon’s Den style – to a panel of entrepreneurs is now hackneyed and its effectiveness in influencing both entrepreneurial intent and subsequent business performance are questioned.<sup>17</sup> It is detached from the start-up process and therefore ignores the knowledge, skills and aptitude needed to launch and operate a new business venture.<sup>18</sup> Liñán et al<sup>19</sup> argue that “the business plan which is most often offered as entrepreneurship education is not enough. It may be useful to increase feasibility perceptions, but will not affect desirability.” It is also criticised for its disconnect from the reality of the market place and for being based on assumptions that are mostly untested. As Jones<sup>20</sup> argues, “why are we assessing proposals for possible success when we cannot actually know if the ideas contained within the plan would succeed?”

It is increasingly recognised that effective entrepreneurial learning has to be experiential.<sup>21</sup> This argument has been powerfully made by Neck and Greene (2011: 61) who argue that “teaching entrepreneurship ... requires going beyond understanding, knowing and talking: it requires using, applying and acting. Entrepreneurship requires practice.” Haase and Lautenschläger<sup>22</sup> note that “learning by doing and experiential learning constitute appropriate modes for instilling the

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- 16 Shane, S. and Venkataranan, S. (2000) The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of excellence, *Academy of Management Review*, 25 (1), 217–226.
- 17 Honig, B. (2004). Entrepreneurship Education: Toward a Model of Contingency-Based Business Planning. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 3 (3), 258–273. Lange, J. E., Mollov, A., Pearlmuter, M., Singh, S. and Bygrave, W. D. (2007) Pre-start-up formal business plans and post-start-up performance: a study of 116 new ventures, *Venture Capital: an international journal of entrepreneurial finance*, 9 (4), 237–256.
- 18 Dutta, D. K., Li, J. and Merenda, M. (2011) Fostering entrepreneurship: impact of specialisation and diversity in education, *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 7: 163–179.
- 19 Liñán, F., Rodríguez-Cohard, J. C. and Rueda-Cantucho, J. M. (2011) Factors affecting entrepreneurial intention levels: a role for education, *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 7, p 201.
- 20 Jones, C. (2011) *Teaching Entrepreneurship to Undergraduates*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, p. 132.
- 21 Rae, D. and Carswell, M. (2000) Using a life story approach in researching entrepreneurial learning: the development of a conceptual model and its implications in the design of learning experiences, *Education + Training*, 42 (5), 220–228. Minnitti, M. and Bygrave, W. (2001) A dynamic model of entrepreneurship learning, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 25 (3): 5–16. Lange, J., Marram, E. and Bygrave, W. (2012) Human assets and entrepreneurial performance: a study of companies started by business school graduates. Paper to the 2012 Babson Entrepreneurship Research Conference, Dallas.
- 22 Haase, H. and Lautenschläger, A. (2011) The ‘teachability dilemma’ of entrepreneurship, *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 7, 157.

entrepreneurial ‘know how’.” The NCGE<sup>23</sup> argue that “experience is crucial for understanding and embedding entrepreneurial concepts,” implying that it is necessary to underpin classroom teaching. Making the contrast with business plan-centred teaching Jones<sup>24</sup> argues that instead of writing a business plan “our students could be living their actual plan through ... working closely with customers and gaining instant feedback.” This is precisely the approach of the lean start up methodology pioneered by Ries<sup>25</sup> which is based on the idea of developing a minimal offering in order to commence a genuine conversation with the target market, with a view to building in features as they engage with the customer. A further advantage of experiential learning is that it can be designed to allow failure to occur – an important source of entrepreneurial learning<sup>26</sup> – but avoiding the financial and emotional costs of failing that would be encountered in the real world.<sup>27</sup>

Experiential learning approaches to entrepreneurship education have important implications for learning, requiring a change from a supply-led approach to learning in which students are taught something, expected to store it away and pull it out when required (what Handy<sup>28</sup> calls ‘warehoused knowledge’) to a demand-led approach to learning which support students in ways that are unplanned, emergent, short-term and non-sequential. This requires a ‘pull’ model of learning resources which enables students to access a range of learning sources when required.<sup>29</sup>

In summary, the argument is that “entrepreneurship education needs to go beyond the classroom and incorporate field based instruction and experience.” The focus needs to be on “experiencing entrepreneurship, aiming at the development of entrepreneurial ‘know how’”.<sup>30</sup> This is thought to be the most effective way in which to equip students with the competences needed to start a business, influence

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23 NCGE (2008) *Developing Entrepreneurial Graduates: Putting Entrepreneurship at the Heart of Higher Education*, National Council for Graduate Enterprise: Birmingham.

24 Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

25 Ries, E. (2011) *The Lean Start-Up: How today's entrepreneurs use continuous innovation to create radically successful businesses*. New York: Crown Business.

26 Cope, J. (2011) Entrepreneurial learning from failure: an interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 26 (6). 604–623.

27 Byrne, O. and Shepherd, D. (2013) Different Strokes for Different Folks: Entrepreneurial Narratives of Emotion, Cognition, and Making Sense of Business Failure, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, published online DOI: 10.1111/etap.12046.

28 Handy, C. (2003) In my opinion, *RSA Journal*, August, 6.

29 Rae, D. (2012) Action learning in new creative ventures, *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*, 18 (5), 603–623.

30 Hasse and Lautenschläger (2011) p. 157.

their perceptions and desirability of starting a business and having positive impacts on their self-confidence and creative capacity.

One experiential approach, particularly associated with Babson College in the USA<sup>31</sup> but also used elsewhere<sup>32</sup> is the business start-up class. This requires students, working in small groups, to undertake an entrepreneurial activity that generates financial value. Assessment takes the form of a reflective essay because “students must also reflect on their actions in order to learn.”<sup>33</sup> The following section examines the outcomes of this type of course.

### A Case Study of Experiential Learning<sup>34</sup>

A business start-up assignment was introduced into the first year entrepreneurship class in the Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland in the 2010–11 academic year. It was modelled on the Value Challenge, run by the Jim Moran Institute at the University of Florida.<sup>35</sup> Students worked in groups of three, four or five. Because of the size of the class this meant that there were a large number of groups (51 in 2010–11 and 71 in 2011–12). Groups were allowed to invest a maximum of £20 in order to minimise the downside financial risk. Some flexibility was introduced in 2011–12 by allowing groups to re-invest profits from initial trading. There were some obvious restrictions on what the groups could do, with anything associated with food preparation, children, alcohol, sex and gambling being prohibited. Each group donated their profits to a charity of their own choice. This proved to be very successful, giving groups an added motivation to maximise their profits. However, there was a downside, with some groups using this in their sales pitch, opening up the likelihood that their sales became a ‘pity purchase’.<sup>36</sup> The project ran over one term (10 weeks). Each group submitted a report and made a presentation. The report was in two parts: a reasoned description of what the group did, and a learning reflection.

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31 Neck and Greene (2011) *op. cit.*

32 Mason, C. and Arshed, N. (2013) ‘Teaching entrepreneurship to university students: reflections on an experiential learning experiment’, *Industry and Higher Education*, 27 (6), 449–464.

33 Pittaway and Cope (2007) *op. cit.*

34 This section is drawn from Mason and Arshed (2013) *op. cit.*

35 <http://www.wix.com/jmichallenge/jmichallenge>.

36 Hibbert, (2005) S. A., Hogg, G. and Quinn, T. (2005) Social entrepreneurship: understanding consumer motives for buying The Big Issue, *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 4 (3), 159–172.

The types of activities undertaken fell into five main categories

- Product-based activities: e.g. T-shirts, key rings, cook book, girls night in guide, girls night out kit, Mother's Day and Easter gifts, craft based products (e.g. Jewellery), music CD
- Events: e.g. 'new band' nights, quiz night, race night, fashion show, ceilidh (for international students)
- B2C Services: e.g. fast food collection service for students, laundry service, sale of pre-packed sandwiches, private dinner party waiting service
- B2B services: e.g. coffee delivery service to offices, social media consultancy
- Retail: e.g. buying in bulk and selling online – cosmetics, wrist bands, iPhone covers, stationary services

There were also a few examples of Web based activities: university smart phone application, web site for selling second hand books. These tended not to be successful.

The key decision for each group was whether to offer a service, make/sell a product, or organise an event. Many of the groups instinctively followed the practices of effectual entrepreneurship,<sup>37</sup> following the 'bird-in-the hand' principle of starting with what you have, choosing their business idea on the basis of an assessment of group assets: (i) What knowledge and experience did they possess? (ii) Who did the group members know (iii) What resources did the group possess? Others chose their activity on the basis of what group members were passionate about, another effectual entrepreneurship principle. This included fashion and music-related activities. Several groups had false starts, starting with an idea which they subsequently decided not to pursue.

Two further practices of effectual entrepreneurship could also be identified. First, on the basis of the affordable loss principle, many groups accessed the resources they needed through bootstrapping. Second, on the basis of the crazy quilt principle several groups formed partnerships to undertake their activity, creating financial value for both themselves and their partners. For example, the new band events gave exposure to new bands who played for free at new bands nights and on the CD and provided bar income for the venue. A fashion show created financial value

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37 Read, S., Sarasvathy, S., Wiltbank, R. and Ohisson, A. (2011) *Effectual Entrepreneurship*, Routledge.

for the group and visibility for the designer. A race night run in partnership with local football club generated financial value for both the group and the club.

The creation of financial value was quite limited with the average profit per group just under £60. However, returns were skewed, with 13% of groups generating over £100. The calculation of financial returns did not take into account cost of labour.

## Learning Outcomes

The learning reflections of the students suggested that the Value Challenge has had several learning outcomes. First, it reinforced classroom learning.

- ‘I have managed to put into practice many of the concepts taught throughout the class. I have seen that a lot of the theoretical learning was directly applied by myself in our real world business.’
- ‘The assignment has helped me understand some of the concepts of entrepreneurship better.’
- ‘The Challenge allowed me to understand concepts that I didn’t grasp from the class.’
- ‘Putting into practice what we learned in lectures.’
- ‘We feel the Value Challenge allowed our team to actively experience all of the lessons we had been taught in lectures and tutorials.’

A second outcome was that groups confronted many of the realities of starting a business. In particular, groups encountered the problems associated with the liability of newness. As one group noted, it “has helped our group to fully understand the liability of newness.” Several groups also experienced the power of bootstrapping.

- ‘We found bootstrapping a very significant factor and managed to negotiate a free venue, used resources that we already had and free advertising
- ‘Through bootstrapping we promoted our service through Facebook’, received free face paints, painted PR employees for [name of club] and printed our own posters advertising the service.’
- ‘As [name of student] had worked full-time with [name of company] a flier was designed and printed for no cost.’

However, pricing was handled less effectively, although some groups recognised this in retrospect. ‘We did not realise the value of our business in terms of what the customer would get out of our service, and therefore if we were to start again we could have put more thought into pricing and priced the service higher.’

A third outcome was that students gained experience of the real world of the start-up. Insights included the following:

- the scale of regulation and need for authorisation to undertake many activities;
- the need to find the ‘right’ person in an organisation to make a decision;
- the importance of negotiation: ‘We learnt that negotiation is an important part of business.’ ‘The main skill [we learnt] ... was negotiating skills. This skill was fairly new to all of us ...’ ‘We’ve also learnt, to an extent, how to negotiate ... We realise that negotiation isn’t about throwing a tantrum until you get your way but is about finding a middle ground that results in both parties being satisfied.’
- People are not reliable: ‘I have also learnt that entrepreneurs cannot trust verbal agreements as guarantees ... People will let you down’.
- Experience of selling: ‘the most fundamental of business skills’ because it permeates across every level of business’.<sup>38</sup>
- Experience of ‘pitching’ for resources or engagement: ‘The most important lesson we learned is pitching to potential sponsors and in particular giving an elevator pitch. None of us had pitched to businesses before and it was a great experience and crucial skill that we acquired.’
- The importance of impression management: ‘confidence is a key aspect when pitching your idea to people and coming across as experienced.’

Fourth, the assignment provided students with the opportunity to derive many insights about entrepreneurship. This included the following:

- the importance of passion: ‘You must be passionate about what you are doing.’ ‘Having passion in your venture is the number one key element that without it you are almost definitely going to fail.’ ‘I have learnt that passion

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38 Jones, *op. cit.*

is vital. An entrepreneur must be passionate about their product if they wish to succeed: a valuable lesson I will never forget.'

- The importance of being customer centric: 'It is about satisfying the customer, solving their problems.' 'We learned that entrepreneurs must pay attention to the customer ...'
- The importance of delivering on promises made: 'The way we have stuck to all our promises to [name of club] of what we would offer them has created a good company image. A strong company image is extremely important for a company that is looking to grow.'
- Time management: 'The biggest lesson learned from the experience is that time is an entrepreneur's biggest asset and must be treated with respect and used as efficiently as possible if you are to be a success.'

Finally, there was an opportunity to learn from failure. In this context, the lack of sales represented failure. In some cases this reflected over-ambition. Students in groups that failed to generate revenue also highlighted, with the benefit of hindsight, the importance of market research and distribution channels.

## Impact on entrepreneurial intent

It is important to bear in mind that the students were all in their first year and so a long way from thinking about life after university. So a clear impact on entrepreneurial intent might not be expected. In quantitative terms, students were, on average, likely to agree to the statement that the class had made them more likely to start a business in the future, with an average score of 3.67 on a five point scale (5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree). Significantly 1 in 5 strongly agreed with the statement. But, the course impacts were even greater on students' confidence in tackling unfamiliar problems (4.09), communication skills (3.94) and confidence (3.92).

The qualitative evidence highlighted mixed reaction. For some students the realisation was that 'it is surprisingly easy to start a business'. It was also recognised that 'you don't require a vast amount of money to start a business' and that 'even with little money great value can be created'. However, others recognised the challenges: 'there is so much effort and detail that goes into a small business like ours' with '... a lot of hard work, effort and determination ... needed to start a business' and that 'it takes a lot of patience and time to start a business'. There was also the

recognition that having an idea is not sufficient. What was crucial was that the idea has to be executed effectively. So, for many students the value challenge has increased their entrepreneurial intent:

- ‘It has made me believe that I am capable of starting my own business.’
- ‘The major thing I have learnt about myself from the Value Challenge is that I actually can start a business.’
- ‘I was able to see what it actually means to be an entrepreneur and what kind of problems he/she faces ... Now I feel confident that in the future I will be able to ... convert my ideas into a real business.’
- ‘I feel the idea of becoming an entrepreneur is much more accessible than I previously thought.’
- ‘It has increased my confidence levels greatly and made me more determined to start my own business in the future.’

The value challenge has two further positive impacts. First, it has impact on their personal development, with students reporting favourable outcomes in terms of organising skills, time and time management, learning to work in teams, trusting team mates, team communication skill development – communication skills, selling skills. Second, for some students there was an element of self-discovery:

- I learnt numerous aspects of myself that I would never have discovered if I didn’t take part in this task ... The challenge helped me discover self-confidence I never knew I had. This was discovered going door-to-door selling, asking for sponsorship and prizes [from companies].’
- ‘I’ve also realised that I’m more self-confident than I imagined.’

## Conclusion

The contemporary university graduate requires to have an entrepreneurial mindset and enterprising skills to successfully operate in a labour market increasingly dominated by project work, self-employment and freelancing and where starting their own business is seen as increasingly credible, desirable and feasible, offering the most effective way in which to make a living. Universities have been slow to recognise these needs, emphasising employability but not enterprise. It is now accepted that entrepreneurship is a learned skill and so can be taught. At issue is how this should be done. This paper has argued that entrepreneurship has to be

taught experientially and suggests via a case study that this is an effective approach both to learning and in developing entrepreneurial intent.



Due in particular to the deteriorated economic situation and the financial and economic crisis, unemployment rates in general have increased significantly, but the group that suffered most were young people.

The realities of job searching, economic mobility and career lifecycle approaches in a multi-cultural globalizing world are still relatively new

fields of work. Research has shown the limitations of existing practical approaches which tend to focus solely on generic linguistic or cultural skills and are not related to the needs of the present employment market.

This publication gives an overview on related topics and approaches on career training and entrepreneurship education in universities. Readers learn about the situation of young people through the lenses of the institutional economy and innovative approaches to overcome youth unemployment are presented.



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