

Entrepreneurship Curriculum and Pedagogical Challenges in Captivating Students' Interest towards Entrepreneurship Education

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is the intentional creation of an organisation for the purpose of adding value through organisation of resources. Entrepreneurship education is lifelong learning that involves creating the capacity for individuals and organisations to cope with, create and enjoy higher levels of uncertainty and complexity in all walks of life. Entrepreneurial curriculum contains information on how students can identify and shape opportunities, assess business concepts, develop operational plans, fund and launch ventures, grow new enterprises and case studies which should be discussed in the classroom to provide students with another venue for examining entrepreneurial strategies and learning about the successes and failures of new ventures (OECD, 2010). Entrepreneurship Pedagogy on the hand is the study of the methods and styles of teaching entrepreneurship. Different approaches are involved and these have to do with the different models that are used in teaching and communicating entrepreneurship education in our schools, institutions, organisations and society. Due to the fact that different methods are involved in teaching entrepreneurship education this has resulted to different pedagogical challenges. To ensure teaching effectiveness, there is need to encourage and motivate students through entrepreneurship curriculum. This study is therefore aimed to examine the relationship between entrepreneurship curriculum and pedagogical challenges in captivating students' interest towards entrepreneurial education.

Key Words: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Curriculum, Entrepreneurial Education and Pedagogical Challenges

Introduction

Desire for career readiness motivates students to go for programmes and courses that can help prepare and equip them with skills that they need to be employable immediately after graduation. This will help to proffer solution to the challenges Nigerian graduates are already facing in the labour market. Entrepreneurship education has been proved to be one of the courses that can help students to be career ready and focused. Entrepreneurial education is the communication of the skills, knowledge and motivation required to start and grow business successfully to students. The importance of entrepreneurship in enhancing human lives in terms of poverty alleviation, employment generation, wealth creation and economic vitality has given entrepreneurship worldwide recognition. As a result, entrepreneurship has been recommended and approved as one of the courses to be taught in our primary, secondary and tertiary institutions as entrepreneurial education or entrepreneurship development studies (EDS). A survey carried out by the National Universities Commission (NUC) showed that Nigerian University graduates lack basic job competence, oral communication and managerial skills (Nwankwo, 2004). Probably, the findings of this survey led to the recent recommendation for the introduction of entrepreneurial education to all Nigerian Universities both as a General Study (GST) and a Bachelor of Science Degree (B.Sc) Course. Evidences from Universities in the developed countries showed that entrepreneurial education has the potential to transfer and communicate to students the skills, ability and knowledge necessary for them to be able to identify potential business opportunities.

The objective of this paper is to examine the relationship between entrepreneurship curriculum and pedagogical challenges in captivating students' interest towards entrepreneurial education.

Conceptual Framework/Literature Review

Entrepreneurship is the willingness and the ability of an individual to seek out a new investment opportunity, establish an enterprise based on this and run it successfully either for profit making or social benefit (Udeh, 1999 cited in Emmanuel, 2010). Entrepreneurship is actually concerned with the identification of gaps and business opportunities in one's immediate environment and bringing together the necessary resources in an innovative way to fill these gaps and in the process gaining personal rewards (which may or may not be for profit motives). The three main concepts in entrepreneurship are evaluating opportunities, securing resources, and growing and sustaining the enterprise (Gottlieb and Ross, 1997). An entrepreneur is a person that utilizes the opportunity of instability, turbulence, lack and want to produce something new or modifies an existing one for profit motive (Bagby, 1988). Herbert and Link (1989) viewed an entrepreneur as a person that has some comparative advantage in the decision making process either because he or she has better information or different perception of events or opportunities.

Entrepreneurial Education

Entrepreneurship education is the purposeful intervention by educators in the life of the learner to survive in the world of business (Isaac, Visser, Friedrich and Brijlal, 2007). Entrepreneurship education equips students with the additional knowledge, attributes and capabilities required to apply these abilities in the context of setting up a new venture or business (Cheung, and Chan, 2011). It has its focus on life and action orientation primarily embodied in teaching students how to develop a business plan (Ronstadt, 1985). It develops and stimulates entrepreneurial process, providing all tools necessary for starting up new ventures (Postigo and Tomborini, 2002; Cheung and Chan, 2011). This concept of entrepreneurship education has passed through developmental stages (Kourilsky, 1995). According to Béchar and Grégoire (2006) the development of entrepreneurship education has been noted across the globe in several countries, including in Argentina (Postigo and Tamborini, 2002), in Canada (Menzies, 2005), in China (Li *et al.*, 2003), in France, Italy and Europe in general (Dubini and Iacobucci, 2004; Fayolle, 2000; Wilson and Twaalfhoven, 2005), in Austria, Germany and Switzerland (Klandt, 2004) and in Tunisia (Aloulou *et al.*, 2003) and others.

Entrepreneurship Curriculum

An entrepreneurial curricula contain information on how students can identify and shape opportunities, assess business concepts, develop operational plans, fund and launch ventures, grow new enterprises and case studies which should be discussed in the classroom to provide students with another venue for examining entrepreneurial strategies and learning about the successes and failures of new ventures (Kourilsky, 1995; OECD, 2010). Entrepreneurship and career education have some common variables that make them to be institutional strategies that aimed at improving educational outcomes by relating teaching and learning activities to the concepts of self development (Zunker 1994; Cheung, and Chan, 2011). Entrepreneurial curriculum contains information on how students can identify and shape opportunities, assess business concepts, develop operational plans, fund and launch ventures, grow new enterprises and case studies which should be discussed in the classroom to provide students with another venue for examining entrepreneurial strategies and learning about the successes and failures of new ventures (Kourilsky, 1995; OECD, 2010).

Entrepreneurship Pedagogy

Entrepreneurship Pedagogy is the study of the methods and styles of teaching entrepreneurship. Different approaches are involved and these have to do with the different models that are used in teaching and communicating entrepreneurship education in our schools, institutions, organisations and society. Factors that have influenced the development of entrepreneurship pedagogy include industrialization, privatization, need for youth empowerment and capacity building. A good pedagogy should be able to address the course teaching goals, emphasize the knowledge and learning

expectations, methods and means of course delivery, and forms of evaluation (Béchar and Grégoire, 2006). What operational element(s) and characterizes of the pedagogy must be addressed in the pedagogy.

Approaches of Entrepreneurship Pedagogy

These have to do with the different models that are used in teaching and communicating entrepreneurship education in our schools, institutions, organisations and society. Although numerous entrepreneurship courses still follows behaviourist methods, this according to (Neergaard, Robinson, Tanggaard, and Krueger, 2012) has been replaced by more experiential approaches that are inspired by e.g social learning theory and existentialist learning. Behaviorism was developed as a model of learning in the age of industrialism and modern mass education. Within this, students learn that at a lecture, there is one person who speaks, whilst all others are quiet Neergaard, Robinson, Tanggaard, and Krueger (2012). Aside behavioural method of communicating entrepreneurship, some other models are; problem-base learning (PBL), entrepreneurial learning with extracurricular activities entrepreneurs 'Told Us', transparency master for classroom, the incubators, case studies, action-learning based, free on-line teacher tactics, experiential learning, classroom approach, use of electronics media, and success and failure stories.

Entrepreneurship Pedagogical Challenges

Different methods and models are involved in the teaching of entrepreneurship education, this has resulted to different pedagogical challenges. There are often institutional pressures to offer pedagogies that yield concise, reliable and comparable metrics, so that we can measure the outcome in quantitative terms: how much do they know? How do they score on skill or vocation A, B and C? what method should be more appropriate to be used to communicate different skills or vocations? Is there any universally accepted method(s) to be used to teach entrepreneurship? All these questions have resulted to different pedagogical challenges in entrepreneurship education. Some of these challenges are addressed in this section;

Challenge One- Decision on the Right Entrepreneurship Curriculum

This has to do with what to teach in entrepreneurship education. Decision on the right Entrepreneurship curriculum has a way of helping out in captivating the interest of the students. This should be reflected on the contents of entrepreneurship education curriculum. The diversity nature of entrepreneurship demands that the contents of entrepreneurship education curriculum should be rich enough to contain all the topics that will help in developing students' entrepreneurial skills, attitudes and behaviours. This is important because the contents of a curriculum determine the methods of teaching (Neergaard, Robinson, Tanggaard, and Krueger (2012).The curriculum gives the students all the information they need, allowing them to concentrate on their project work based on literature and search for complementary competences (Dreisler,2007). The contents should therefore include; idea generation, opportunity identification, resource acquisition, management and Leadership, economic and entrepreneurship theories, youth entrepreneurship, gender issues in entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, negotiation skill, stress management, social entrepreneurship, family business, entrepreneurial succession, cyberpreneurship, technology entrepreneurship, globalisation, etc. This list is in exhaustive. The entrepreneurship education as a course is designed to prepare the students to start their own business when they graduate. The emphasis of the curriculum should be on enterprising attitude and behaviour. This means the content of the curriculum should be in such a way that students will be favourably disposed towards practicing entrepreneurship (Dreisler,2007).

Recommendation-To captivate the interest of students and for effective delivery of entrepreneurship education, the contents of the curriculum over the years must be consistent, properly coordinated and in constant review.

Challenge Two- Deciding on the Right Methods to be Adopted for Teaching Entrepreneurship Education.

How do we teach entrepreneurship education? This is important because what we teach and how we teach reflects deep beliefs not only about the nature of entrepreneurship but also about how it is best learned (Neergaard, Robinson, [Tanggaard](#), and Krueger (2012)). Adopting the right methods to communicate entrepreneurship education helps in captivating the interest of the students.

Recommendation- The methods of teaching entrepreneurship should include: Interactive learning, case studies, experiential learning, mentoring and coaching, use of visuals such as CDs, video clips, use of entrepreneurs, game theory, and drama, simulation and animation, competition on business plan and other important topics.

Challenge Three- Determining the Right Place to Teach Entrepreneurship Education

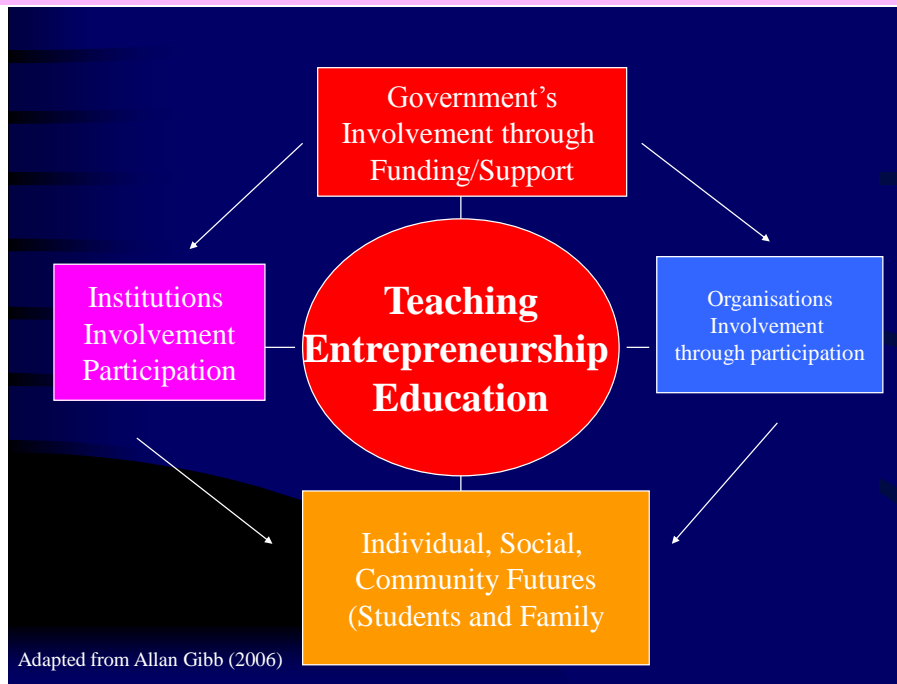
Entrepreneurship Education should be taught in the appropriate entrepreneurial environment. Right environment is a relative term. Understanding the needs of our organisations, institutions, community and society determines the right environment. Environment is our surroundings. That is the world around us. This might be micro or macro, internal or external, formal or informal, stable, complex or turbulent. Since entrepreneurship is for all irrespective of age, sex, race, height, education and family background, it therefore means that there must be the right place for teaching entrepreneurship. This is in line with the model of Shane (2003). Shane (2003) in his work, presented his understanding of the entrepreneurial process. The model explains the process in the following elements: Individual attitudes, environment, entrepreneurial opportunities, discovery, opportunity exploitation and finally execution. The important of each of these elements to the teaching of entrepreneurship education needs to be demonstrated as all elements are equally prominently in the methods of communicating entrepreneurship to the students (Dreisler, 2007). For instance, environment as it is assumed that students at all levels will be able to study their own environment and its effect to their course.

Recommendation- Entrepreneurship programmes and modules for higher institutions must be designed towards developing students' entrepreneurial ability to identify and exploit opportunities in their environment.

Challenge Four-Determining Who Teaches Entrepreneurship Education

The right persons to teach entrepreneurship include teachers, administrators, entrepreneurs, mentors/advisors, professors, students, leaders who have proven testimonies on entrepreneurial success in different entrepreneurial ventures. Mastery experiences involve participating in activities that bring about a more competitive, risk-taking, self-reliant and/or ambitious attitude and therefore they have a definite positive influence on - efficacy and other entrepreneurial characteristics (Neergaard and Krueger, 2012) and Neergaard, Robinson, [Tanggaard](#), and Krueger (2012). Experience is therefore very important in the teaching of entrepreneurship. This is the major difference between Western entrepreneurship pedagogy (where money is really invested in the teaching entrepreneurship) and that of the emerging economies. In the later, particularly, in American institutions of higher education, entrepreneurs are brought out of entrepreneurship and into the classroom to teach entrepreneurship classes. Using this method, the emphasis will be on bringing in real-life entrepreneurs to talk to the students in the classroom to share their experiences first hand with students a practice that also referred to as 'Master Class' (Neergaard, Robinson, [Tanggaard](#), and Krueger, 2012).

Recommendation:- Among the persons enumerated for teaching entrepreneurship, students entrepreneurs must be given opportunity for expression of their knowledge, skills and belief as regards entrepreneurship education among their contemporary within the higher institution context. This will help for easy transference of the experience required for the practice of entrepreneurship to students.

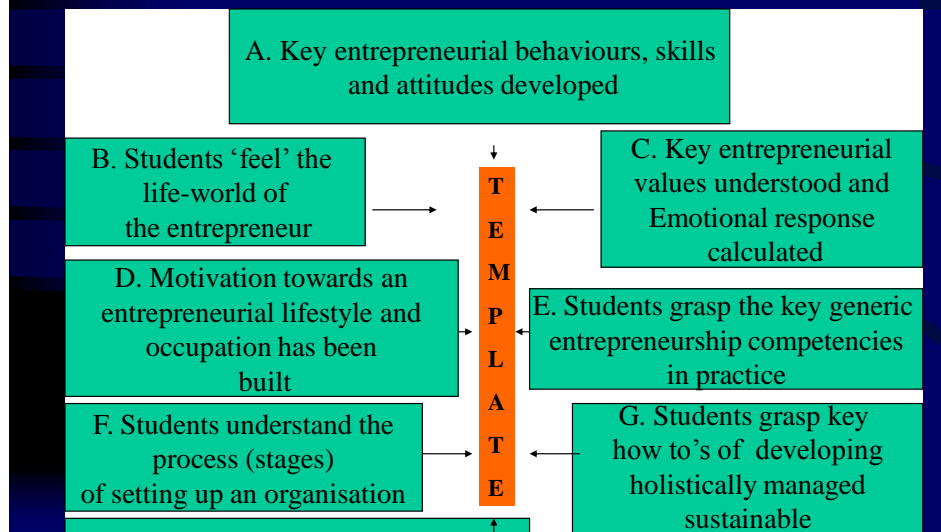


Challenge Five- Determining the Outcome of Entrepreneurship Education among the Students

Expected key outcomes of entrepreneurship education among students include; (i) Key entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attitudes developed, (ii) Students ‘feel’ the life-world of the entrepreneur (iii) key entrepreneurial values understood and emotional response calculated (iv) motivation towards an entrepreneurial lifestyle and occupation has been built (v) sstudents grasp the key generic entrepreneurship competencies in practice (vi) Students understand the process (stages) of setting up an organisation (vii) Students grasp key on how to holistically develop and managed sustainable entrepreneurial organisations (viii) Students understand the relationships they need to develop with key stakeholders. Students differ in their preferences; hence their entrepreneurship education outcomes differ. For some of them, the most important outcome is the effect entrepreneurship education has on their competencies, attitudes, behavior or lifestyle, especially if they have a burning desire to start their own business. For others, the most important outcome is the effect of entrepreneurship education on their networking system (Dreisler, 2007). The value their relationship is able to establish is more important to them than the business itself.

Recommendation:-The understanding of the effects of these elements on the students will help in developing the model and the course contents that relate to students’ attributes and opportunity, which is where the business idea unfolds and is tested.

EXPECTED KEY OUTCOMES OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AMONG STUDENTS



Challenge Six- Producing Entrepreneurial Graduates

Constant evaluation of entrepreneurial education helps to determine the outcomes of entrepreneurship education in captivating the interest of students. This affects the students' entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attitudes development, their involvement in the real world situation, their understanding of key entrepreneurial values and emotional response, their motivation towards living entrepreneurial life as they grasp the key generic entrepreneurship competencies in practice, understand the process (different stages) involved in setting up an enterprise and how to develop holistically the management and sustainability of the enterprise and ensuring sound relationship with the stakeholders.

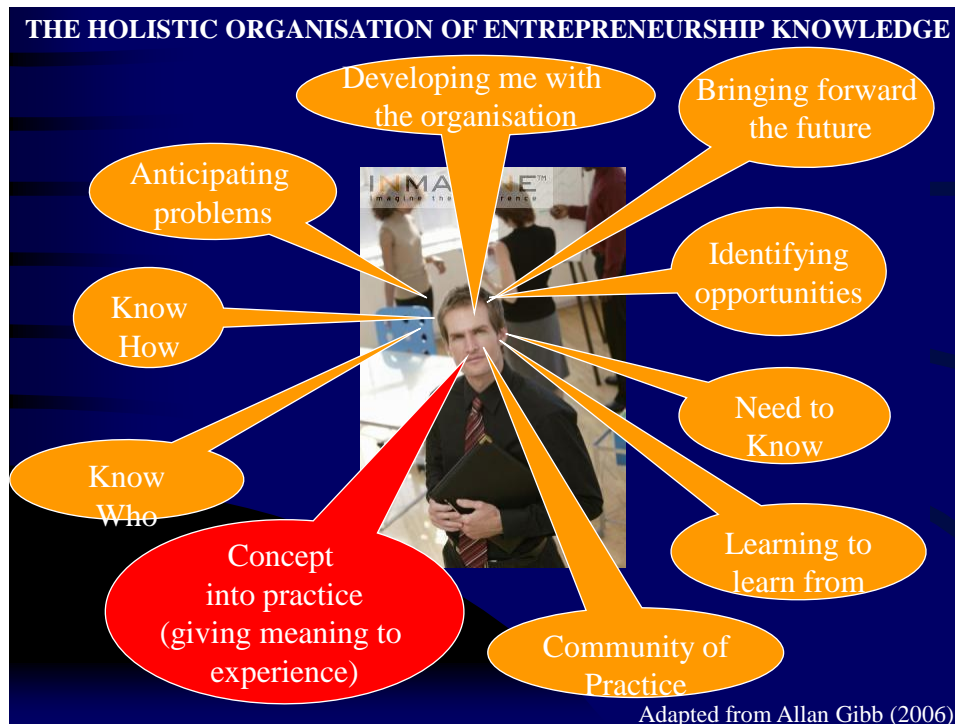
The major challenge facing the teaching of entrepreneurship education is applying the contents of entrepreneurship programmes to the real world situation in providing the 'missing ingredient' of real insight into ways of: living the Life of an entrepreneur, acting, thinking, feeling, organising, communicating and learning entrepreneurially for the sustainability of the enterprise. Ironically, students are sometimes denied the opportunity of exhibiting the life of an entrepreneur as they are not allowed to practice entrepreneurship while in school.

Recommendation:- Students' life style on whether in the campus or any where else should reflect that of an entrepreneur. That is why they need to practice entrepreneurship irrespective of their resident.

Challenge Seven- Organizing Entrepreneurial Knowledge Holistically

Entrepreneurship knowledge must be holistically organized and delivered. Organizing a holistic entrepreneurial knowledge is the responsibility of ALL. The institutions, governments, industry, corporate bodies, individuals, educators, and parents must ensure that students are exposed to real life situation. Institutional practices regarding the allocation of resources for developing and sustaining pedagogical initiatives of entrepreneurship education, the degree of institutional autonomy, centralization of education system, presence of national policies towards entrepreneurship education Béchard and Grégoire (2006). The holistic concept helps to incorporate the interests, feelings and attitudes of students into the entrepreneurship curriculum. This is important so as to carry them along in all aspects of entrepreneurship education such as curriculum development, review of course outline, motivating of students towards entrepreneurship studies, delivery of the course to students and living a life style of an entrepreneur on the campus. The essence of this is to give students the opportunity to be more pragmatic and practically orientated instead of viewing entrepreneurship as a theory course.

Recommendation: There is therefore the need to change the mode of delivery of entrepreneurship education from the tradition of Top-down approach to bottom-Up approach. The difference between the two approaches is that the first starts with the students while the later starts with educational curriculum.



Challenge Eight - Using Pedagogy as an Instructors/Educators Personal Development Tool

To be able to teach entrepreneurship effectively, an educator must use entrepreneurship pedagogy as a 'Personal Development Tool'. A development that has seen new ideas, creativity, environmental adaptation, professional challenges, joys and disappointments (Dreisler, 2007). Why? Because you cannot give what you do not have. An entrepreneurship instructor's life must depict an entrepreneurial life style. This will enable him or her to develop the confidence required for the delivery of the course. Until an instructor is ready to live the life of an entrepreneur in principles and in practice, the delivery of the course content cannot be done effectively. The works of Chinonye (2009) and Neergaard, Robinson, Tanggaard, and Krueger (2012) show that positive correlation exist between entrepreneurial traits and life style. Within entrepreneurship education, there are certain characteristics such as self-efficacy, risk taking, innovativeness, proactiveness etc. that have become extremely popular: they are conceived of as easy to measure and reasonably valid Neergaard, Robinson, Tanggaard, and Krueger (2012). As Bandura (1997) would say that we need to understand the mental models that entrepreneurial traits such as self-efficacy influences. If we change the cognitive maps of what is feasible and desirable, then we will also change the model and methods of what and how students perceive as an opportunity and especially whether or not they will act on that opportunity is given opportunity to do so (Bandura 1997; Dreisler, 2007; Neergaard, Robinson, Tanggaard, and Krueger, 2012).

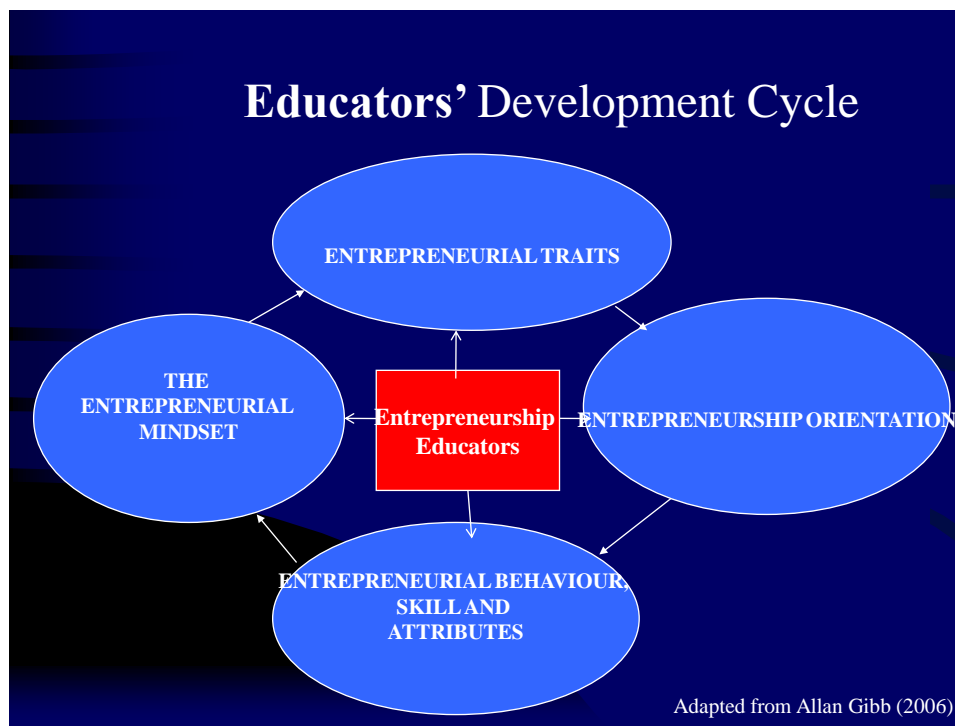
Recommendation:-The understanding of this fact will help to change the approach of delivery of the entrepreneurship as course from theory based to action/ problem learning based which positions the teacher to be a role model, and the process therefore has to be a teacher-cum-entrepreneur

Challenge Nine- Developing Staff and Teachers to be Entrepreneurial in their Approach

Constant organising capacity building programmes for developing staff and teachers to be entrepreneurial in their approach. Why capacity building? Organizing capacity building programmes for staff and teachers' development is important in order to equip them with the right entrepreneurial

mind set required in the academic environment. This is necessary because, you cannot give what you do not have. There is a relationship between an entrepreneurship instructor's trait, his or her orientation and life style. Teaching entrepreneurship education at a university is a very personal activity that is closely connected with the teacher's research interests, experience, age, interests in students, the course, etc. Teaching is also influenced by the climate and conditions at the institute offering the educational activities (Dreisler, 2007). The ideal model in entrepreneurship pedagogy is the cooperation of the instructor based on shared attitudes towards development. The entrepreneurial process in line with Scott's model should describe how a teacher has gone through a cycle, from experimenting, crossing discipline barriers, promoting, implementing, up to the present stage of acquiring entrepreneurial experience before getting involved in teaching the course (Shane, 2003; Dreisler, 2007).

Recommendation:- The instructor as a guide need to develop his or herself to match with the demands of the course as prescribe in the curriculum. Educator's conceptions about teaching themselves, the students and the knowledge to be taught must be reflected in the pedagogical framework so also the institutional practices regarding the allocation of resources for developing and sustaining pedagogical initiatives (Béchar and Grégoire, 2006).



Challenge Ten- Constant Review of Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum

One of the challenges of entrepreneurship education as a course and its learning provision requires evaluation and feedback. How and in what way should feedback be provided? In line with the Moodle and/or WebCt virtual study environments, feedback is provided in an evaluation field located underneath the student's personal (Tervonen, 2007). Creating a long term vision, focus and sustainable capacity by constantly reminding ourselves of the pedagogical challenges of entrepreneurship education is important. This is to ensure that entrepreneurship education offers what it is supposed to offer to students.

Recommendation:- Entrenching the models of entrepreneurship education that have worked can help to captivate the interest of the students in the course. For Example, Covenant University entrepreneurship model has proved the importance of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian educational system.

Entrepreneurship Education at Covenant University

Entrepreneurship Development Studies (EDS) at Covenant University is one of the custom built courses. It is a one unit course which is being offered by all the students irrespective of their discipline and at all levels for both Alpha and Omega semesters. It is designed in such a way that it has both theory and practical aspects. The theoretical aspect is structured to cover all the basic concepts as regards business idea generation and how to start and run business successfully. While the practical aspect covers about twenty one different fields such as fishery, snail farming, fashion designing, water production, pastries, wood works, making, leather works, computer maintenance, metal fabrication, public speaking, news casting etc. Under the practical aspects, students are given the opportunity to choose different vocational areas before graduation from the University. If it is a four year programme, they will cover four different vocational areas and six different vocational areas for a five year programme. The practical aspect starts from year three to run through year four or five depending on the years of the programme. The syllabus is designed to accommodate all business areas that will benefit the students either science, art or science. Topics that have to do with life challenging issues are given utmost attention. Different resources persons /practitioners are engaged to teach the practical section, while the lecturers who have pass through the University Train the Trainer's Programme (TTP) in entrepreneurship education are usually engaged to teach the theoretical section.

Conclusion

This study focused on the entrepreneurship curriculum and pedagogical challenges in captivating students' interest towards entrepreneurship education. The research works of Kourilsky (1995) ; Béchar and Grégoire (2006); Postigo and Tamborini (2002); Menzies, (2005), Dubbini and Iacobucci, (2004) were used to draw conclusion on issues of entrepreneurship curriculum and the pedagogical challenges involved in captivating students interests towards entrepreneurship education. To proffer solution to these challenges, recommendations were made based on the nature of the challenges.

The Way Forward

- (i) There is need to carry out constant entrepreneurship education evaluation programme to measure the effects of entrepreneurship education on students' learning, attitudes and behaviors.
- (ii) Universities authorities must make up their minds on a particular method they wish to stick to in the delivering of entrepreneurship as a course to students towards the realization of their entrepreneurial university vision. Choosing a particular method will help to develop learning programmes in which knowledge and application of knowledge are given equal weight (mutual knowledge and competence creation).
- (iii) A platform should also be created in our universities to establish networks including entrepreneurship and "outside" actors.
- (iv) Universities should make entrepreneurship an inter-disciplinary course and a requirement for graduation and organize entrepreneurship programmes according to a contingency principle. That is, in each specific situation consider and choose the most sensible line of action to adopt in delivery of entrepreneurship education in the university.
- (v) There is need to organize programmes such as entrepreneurial week and awards in other to carry the students along in the entrepreneurship programmes.
- (vi) Also allowing students to practice business on campus, being involved in the teaching and designing of entrepreneurship curriculum could help in captivating their interest in the course.

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