

ICSB 2016 World Conference, June 16-18th, Stevens Institute of Technology, NJ

Abstract for Competitive Workshop

Track: Small Business and Small & Medium Enterprises

Fostering Globally Minded Entrepreneurs: Examining the challenges of cross-cultural enterprise through international video case studies

Introduction

The workshop will feature the output and results of a 2016 joint project undertaken by a UK and Chinese University. The two institutions received funding to jointly develop new curricula and learning outcomes for an entrepreneurship module, and to enact joint staff training to ensure the successful delivery of the new learning materials to students. Thus the workshop will include both the presentation of some of the materials designed to develop educators, as well as the actual learning exercises to be undertaken by students.

Background

Recent studies have argued that universities must expand their focus on employability to include opportunities for young people to expand their global and entrepreneurial competencies. Developing entrepreneurial skills helps students undertaking start-up enterprises and makes them more competitive in the job market (Bell, 2016; Smith et al., 2006). Entrepreneurial students have the creative capacity, self-efficacy, and the ability to thrive in the presence of uncertainty (Baum and Locke, 2004; Luthje and Franke, 2003; Robinson et al., 1991).

Despite the benefits of entrepreneurship, developing entrepreneurial competencies in students presents challenges (putting aside the debate about the efficacy of entrepreneurship education). It has often been argued that the approach must expand beyond the traditional lecture-based, passive format and incorporate additional elements such as active learning environments that include real-life examples and experiences (Arvanites et al., 2006; Jones and English, 2004;

Jones and Iredale, 2010; Zahra and Welter, 2008). However, embedding entrepreneurial development into higher education in this fashion presents educators with challenges including resistance from instructors, assessment challenges, cost implications, and a scarcity of resources (Smith et al., 2006).

Accompanying the implementation challenge is the challenge of preparing nascent entrepreneurs for the increasingly global dynamic of the employment and business market. As multicultural workplaces across countries and time zones are increasingly the norm (Moosmüller et al., 2001), the ability to engage in enterprising activities in this multicultural environment is key for nascent entrepreneurs and employees alike. The implications for students of globalized supply chains and increased mobility include the need to expand competencies beyond those suitable for the domestic market and focus on 'global competencies'. These competencies include cross-cultural communication, adaptability, openness, alacrity to engage with other cultures, and an ability to see things from another perspective (Levy et al., 2007) and are argued to be a key element in the success of a global business (Blasco et al., 2012; Diamond et al., 2011).

The project undertaken by the partners was designed to address these key issues to improve university learning environments and develop enterprising students with the global competencies required to navigate the current business climate.

The Project

The goal of the project was twofold: to jointly develop relevant innovative education material to develop enterprising and entrepreneurial competencies with a global focus and to enable the incorporation of the materials into existing business and enterprise curricula. Faculty from the two partners jointly developed joint learning outcomes. These learning outcomes guided the

creation of the learning materials, which included video case studies containing interviews with Chinese and UK small and medium enterprises (SMEs) at different stages of development. The learning outcomes centered on opportunity recognition to develop entrepreneurial students who understand the value of discovering/exploiting opportunities in other countries and the challenges thereto. By putting real-life Chinese and domestic businesses in UK classrooms, students are better able to develop realistic awareness and knowledge of the current climate both globally and internationally.

The learning material is meant to be disseminated to university faculty by encouraging the incorporation of relevant parts of the learning materials into existing modules. The materials developed are designed to be 'stand-alone' and to be used in a series of relevant entrepreneurship and enterprise modules. The videos are meant to be used at the beginning of the lesson and act as a mechanism to begin a conversation that sees students applying their readings and/or flipped lectures completed before the lesson. This incorporates the active learning style in digestible pieces, without requiring great overhauls of existing curricula and without great cost or effort to faculty who may be unfamiliar with these learning methods. The result, on the aggregate, is that students achieve the learning outcomes in conjunction with other learning outcomes, as a natural part of their existing course of study.

Workshop

Since one of the outcomes of the project is open-source learning materials, the workshop will open up with a discussion on open source teaching materials on entrepreneurship. The discussion will set the outputs of the project into context of what is available in the wider academic community via open source materials and discuss how these materials may be utilized and

incorporated into curricula. The relevance of these materials in international classrooms, which may have fewer opportunities to access materials behind paywalls, will be discussed. It is hoped that a discussion will come of this topic with the workshop participants adding their views on open source material and its role in the classroom.

Afterwards, the jointly-developed learning outcomes and background of the project will be outlined to the participants. The workshop will examine the ways that the partners have incorporated the learning outcomes into different modules and how they can apply to different areas of enterprise and entrepreneurship education.

The workshop will then have participants take part in a mini session using the case studies, as the students would do. The mini session will be outlined and the learning outcome will be covered at the start of the lesson. The workshop leader will then show two of the video case studies. One case study will feature a Chinese SME and the other will feature a UK SME. The workshop leader will then guide the participants through an interactive activity based on the case studies. The participants will participate in a brief group work session to discuss the questions. The lesson will move from descriptive activities (observations, compare and contrast) to more critical problem-based learning. The session will end with a discussion on how the previous activity linked to the respective learning outcome(s) and ideas for how the different lessons may be incorporated into modules presently offered.

The project is itself a journey into the challenges of working on a multicultural team through which two relatively disparate approaches to enterprise and entrepreneurship education were brought to the table in the course of the project. Challenges faced by both sides in undertaking the development of joint learning outcomes, including communication challenges, different

education philosophies, and different approaches to compromise will also be discussed during the workshop. Lastly, feedback on the case studies will be solicited from the participants and a discussion on the value of using case studies in the area of cross cultural entrepreneurship education will be discussed.

Resources and Tools Available to Participants

As one of the outputs of the funding bid, both sides agreed to disseminate the developed learning materials to other educators and institutions. Thus, much of the materials developed during this project are freely available for others to use.

The material highlights the challenges and opportunities embraced by the businesses at different stages of development in both the UK and China, giving first-hand accounts. The materials reflect the realities of the present, global business world and link directly to the learning outcomes. The materials will be packaged into sessions which generate the learning outcomes. During the workshop, the presenter will share information on how to access the outputs, which will cover ten taught sessions. The materials will include videos featuring UK and Chinese companies, suggested discussion questions/task, and suggested areas for further research and exploration. Some of these materials will be presented during the workshop, with the online location for additional entrepreneurship materials to be shared during the session.

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