Application Of Innovative Teaching Methods In Teaching Of Entrepreneurship In The Nigerian Polytechnichs

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Abstract: Entrepreneurship education is intended to communicate and instil skills, abilities, understanding, and values required to identify business opportunity, establish and start new business project. It involves translating an idea into reality. However, selecting the appropriate teaching methods required meeting up with the course objectives and the needs of the students had become a challenge to lecturers in the Nigerian Polytechnics. Thus, this paper discussed the concept of entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, pedagogical approaches in teaching entrepreneurship education, and finally the implications of the paper on both the practitioners and policy makers were discussed.

1.   Introduction

Entrepreneurship education has constantly feature as a topic of discussion in local and international level conferences due to its influence in alleviating unemployment and other socio-economic challenges hindering sustainable growth globally. Inclusion of entrepreneurship education into curricula of tertiary institutions had its roots in the United States of America as far back as 1947 (Hornsby & Kuratko, 2003). Different from Nigeria where it is a new development that emerged in 2006 (Akhuemonkhan, Raimi, & Sofoluwe, 2013). Within a few decades (1947-1980s), over 300 universities had introduced entrepreneurship education into their curricular. By early 1990s the number of tertiary institutions running entrepreneurship programmes increased to 1,050.

(Kuratko, 2005). Nigeria embraced entrepreneurship education with a view to fast-track her economic growth and development. This is evident as it reflects in Nigeria's national policy on education (1998) revised (2004) which states that education is the most important tool for driving change, as ultimate changes can only take place in a society through educational revolution that influence on the intellects (Olagboye, 2004). At the initial stage of entrepreneurship education development, there are a lot of arguments on whether entrepreneurship can be taught or not. Similarly, majority of researchers in entrepreneurship argued the effectiveness of teaching entrepreneurship education most especially at the tertiary levels of education.

In Nigerian polytechnics, entrepreneurship curriculum is not effective, because it does not reflect the learning needs of the students, thus the need for improvement. Also, lecturers lacked relevant entrepreneurial skills, knowledge or training and teaching approaches were inappropriate (Bukar & Timothy, 2014). Hence, this paper will explain the issue of teaching entrepreneurship and end with a few recommendations in order to improve entrepreneurship pedagogy in Nigerian polytechnics.

2.   Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is a process of learning that begins as early as elementary school and continuing over all levels of education. According to (2012) entrepreneurship education is focused on rising youth with the passion and several skills. It is intended to decrease the risk related with entrepreneurship thought and guide the firm productively via its early stage to the majority. Akpan et al. (2012) pointed out that entrepreneurship education is intended to communicate and instil skills, abilities, understanding, and values required to identify business opportunity, establish and start new business project. It involves translating an idea into reality, instead of talking about how to do it. Garavan, Costine, and Heraty (1995) emphasized that entrepreneurship education is the process of or chains of activities aimed at enabling an individual to integrate and develop knowledge, talents, skills, values and understanding that are not only related to a narrow field of activity but which also allow a wide range of challenges to be clear, examined and resolved. It emphasizes on teaching learners with the passion and desired skills required to establish an entrepreneurial firm and guide the firm effectively right from its early stage to maturity stage. Also, it pursues to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings (Maria, 2010). By acquiring the knowledge of entrepreneurial action, these students or

potential entrepreneurs would be able to understand how and what it means and takes to own a business, generate ideas towards the attainment of anticipated goals and objectives (Parsons & Stephenson, 2005).

Based on the above discussions, entrepreneurship education is the systematic development of skills, knowledge and attitudes needed by an individual to perform effectively in a given business or work-related opportunities for improved performance of a country's economy. The aims of entrepreneurship education therefore, are: to increase the performance of current economy, to reduce the education period for one to partake completely in the business setting, to assist in developing the capabilities of individuals for the economy to meet most, if not all, its prospective requirements for the economy.

3.   Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria
The system of education in Nigeria which was inherited from the colonial masters is lacking provisions for entrepreneurship education. The colonial system of education was intended to assist colonial masters to break the communication gap between the colonial masters and the Nigerian populace in order to assist them administer the country without much hitches. Importance was placed on producing clerical and administrative officers, teachers, clergy and other liberal arts graduates who would simplify the colonization process (Ladipo, Akhuemonkhan, & Raimi, 2013). During the post-colonial era there were no much efforts by the indigenous governments to restructure our education curricular. Even though Nigerian educational institutions have been growing with geometric proportion, the restructuring of the curriculum is at low phase (Bridson, 2015). Akinyemi (1987) explained that Nigerian educational sector continued to remain as factories for producing white collar jobbers disregarding producing people with entrepreneurial skills and mindset. Stahli (1992) supported the above opinion when he maintained that in many ways the education offered currently to business students does not suit itself well to the active and experimental learning styles and needs of adult learners and future entrepreneurs.

In an effort to making the Nigeria's education innovative, creative and to meet the needs of the industries, the National Universities Commission, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) were authorized by the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) to introduce entrepreneurship education into the curricula of Nigerian tertiary institutions (Akhuemonkhan et al., 2013). This is with a view to provide a realistic method of addressing the prevalent problem of joblessness facing the country. Entrepreneurship education has since been made a compulsory course for all students at the tertiary levels of education regardless of students' areas of specialty (Yahya, 2011). According to Oyelola (2010) the policy thrust of entrepreneurship education in the polytechnic system is for the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by students, so as to be gainfully employed or employer of labour after graduation.

The role assigned to the universities, polytechnics and colleges of education through their respective highest supervisory agencies is principally the tasks of communicating and realizing government's policy on entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. The anticipated results from the assigned role consist of: forming entrepreneurship study in all institutions of higher learning and establishing the curriculum for the course, development of teachers guide, (Oyelola, 2010).

4.   Pedagogical approaches in Teaching Entrepreneurship
According to Blenker, Dreisler, Færgeman, and Kjeldsen (2006) because there is no single specific definition of the concept of entrepreneurship, there is disagreement among researchers on what should constitute the aims and objectives of the teaching and learning processes. Samwel Mwasalwiba (2010) remarks that even though it is not a tough decision for polytechnics to run entrepreneurship related courses, however, it is a challenge to lecturers to select the teaching approaches that relate to their course objectives, settings and even the kind of students in the program. One of the primary concerns in entrepreneurship is how it should be taught. Desai et al. (2010) established that there are four objectives for the teaching of entrepreneurship. These are (1) increase awareness and understanding of new venture process; (2) introduce entrepreneurship as an option of career; (3) understand functional business relationships, and (4) recognize or understand traits and characteristics of entrepreneurs. The teaching methods should take into consideration these objectives. Fatoki (2014) noted that the teaching methods for entrepreneurship can be classified into two. (1) The traditional (passive) methods which comprise normal lectures, seminars, reading, business plan, project works. (2) The non-traditional, innovative methods (active) methods which are more action-based. Innovative teaching methods seek to improve students' creativity and logical way of problem solving. The active techniques expect the teacher to simplify learning, not to control and apply methods that empower students' self-discovery.

Postigo, Tamborini, and Dumas (2003) distinguishes two sides of entrepreneurship education: (1) Education about entrepreneurship: This involves developing, building and learning the theories related to entrepreneurship and firm creation and the impact

of entrepreneurship to economic growth (2) Education for entrepreneurship: This trains current and prospective entrepreneurs on the entrepreneurial process, providing all the tools and skills essential for the establishment of a new venture both within and outside an existing organisation. Education about entrepreneurship is mainly based on the concept and transmission of knowledge about the field, while education for entrepreneurship focuses on the learning experience and the development of competencies, skills, aptitudes and values. The teaching methods used for both areas of entrepreneurship education differ.

Hytti and O'Gorman (2004) argue that there are various techniques to deliver entrepreneurship education and this is determined by the objectives of such education. If the objective of entrepreneurship education is to raise the understanding of the concept and meaning of entrepreneurship, the most appropriate way to achieve the objective is provision of information through public channels such as mass media, seminars, or lectures. On the other hand, if the objective is to provide individuals with entrepreneurial skills, which are applicable openly to work, the most suitable way is to provide education and training that would allow individuals to be involved directly in the entrepreneurial process. In addition, if the objective of entrepreneurship education is to prepare individuals to act as entrepreneurs, the most effective technique is to facilitate experiments by trying entrepreneurship out in a controlled environment, for instance through business simulation or role playing and other non-traditional methods of teaching entrepreneurship.

5. Innovative Methods

According to Gibb (2005) the pedagogy of entrepreneurship education is focused on students' role in learning, the learning conditions are flexible, collaborative, centered on multidimensional knowledge development. Teaching of entrepreneurship is aimed at producing graduates with mind sets, talents and competences to recognize and shape opportunities and develop business ventures (Harry Matlay & Henry, 2013). But, standard methodologies for teaching entrepreneurship are increasingly being criticized due to their ineffectiveness in the realization of positive outcomes. Gibb's (1993) described the teaching methods being used as non-enterprising in both content and delivery. Some of innovative approaches in teaching entrepreneurship include:

1) Experiential Learning.
2) Problem Based Learning.
3) Practice Based.
4) Simulation Games.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning denotes to learning by doing or from the doings of others. It is based on the notion that entrepreneurship theories, principles and concepts can be learnt by students by applying themselves to tasks and events rooted in real-world practice (Morris, Kuratko, & Cornwall, 2013) Entrepreneurship ought to be part of the school curriculum, and the curriculum should be experience-based. If entrepreneurship is to be taught to students, the best way of doing so is to give them the experience of being entrepreneurs themselves (Kourilsky & Esfandiari, 1997).

Experiential learning was built upon the works of some great social scientists and philosophers of the 20th century (Chell, 2001). These themes stem from the work of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget (D. A. Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001). It is common to all three traditions of experiential learning to lay emphasis on development towards a life of purpose and self-direction as the guiding principles for education. The association for Experiential Learning Association (ELA) defines EL as a practice in which a student can generate knowledge, skills and principles from direct experience. Experiential learning theory explains learning as the process whereby knowledge is generated through the transformation of experience (A. Y. Kolb, 2005).

Entrepreneurial learning is experiential in nature (Mason & Arshed, 2013). Neck and Greene (2011) asserts that there is the need for entrepreneurship teachers to go beyond the levels of understanding, knowing and speaking. Rather, it requires usage, application and acting. Entrepreneurship requires practice. Mason note that learning by doing and experiential learning encompass suitable approaches for inculcating the entrepreneurial knowledge. According to Harry Matlay and Henry (2013) experience is central for understanding and entrenching entrepreneurial concepts', denoting that it is required to strengthen classroom teaching. Experiential learning methods to entrepreneurship education have significant implications for the teachers by transforming their role from conveyors of knowledge to that of promoters, facilitators and supervisors whose job lies in organizing suitable learning experiences for students (Mason & Arshed, 2013). Specifically, it requires a shift 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 (2003) calls 'warehoused knowledge'.

Problem Based Learning

Koschmann, Kelson, Feltovich, and Barrows (1996) defined Problem-Based Learning as student centered Learning methods, learning is done in small student groups, ideally 6-10 people, facilitators or

tutors guide the students rather than teach. A Problem forms the basis for the organized focus of the group, and stimulates learning; the problem is a vehicle for the development of problem solving skills. It stimulates the cognitive process and new knowledge is obtained through Self-Directed Learning (SDL).

Example of Problem Based Learning was practices in Polytechnic, Singapore. The objective is to help students formulate their own ideas about starting a new venture and experience the realities of the business world, albeit in a risk-free and safe environment (San Tan & Ng, 2006).   Sexton, Upton, Wacholtz, and McDougall (1997) state, entrepreneurship students can be described as independent individuals who dislike limitation, limit and the routine. They are capable of original thought, particularly in a situation of uncertainty and ambiguity. These assumptions led Sexton and Upton to propose that entrepreneurship courses should be moderately free and pose challenges that need innovative solutions under circumstances of ambiguity and risk. Wee and Kek (2002) concluded that, the problem based learning curriculum is a collection of critical entrepreneurial incidences that are needed by the students. The acquisition of the critical entrepreneurial knowledge and appropriate talents through the Problem based learning entrepreneurship education would make the students to become effective entrepreneurs (Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008).

Practice Based Learning

Practice-based learning as the bringing together of self-knowledge, expertise in practice and formal knowledge as it involves the investigation and solving of real-world problems that are experienced in practice (Grissmer, Flanagan, Kawata, Williamson, & LaTourrette, 2000). According to Postholm (2008) practice-based learning goes beyond problem solving to obtain new knowledge and facts and developing critical systematic problem-solving and application talents that leads to new sustained learning.

According to Hynes, Costin, and Birdthistle (2010) entrepreneurship education required a change in pedagogy from the traditional classroom didactic structure to a system of learning which conveys the business into the educational institution as a substitute to placing the student in a company environment (Birdthistle, Rozell, Scroggins, Guo, & Fuentes, 2011). An example of practice based learning is the business consulting programme at the University of Limerick. The programme offers a significant avenue for introducing students to the everyday management problems and the heterogeneity of business decision making and processes, where students acquire an improved understanding of the role and skills essential for a manager, consultant and by a project manager (Birdthistle, 2011).

Simulation Games

Learning games that simulate the real world appears to be gaining impact in entrepreneurship education. Serious games and simulations provide an opportunity for students to play in simulated world that reflect reality playing, observing, building and thinking about entrepreneurship (Jones, 2007). Today's games require 50–100 hours to be mastered, which equals the amount of time a student expend on a semester-long programme. Simulation games reflect a selected portion of reality with a specified precision. The better the reality imitation in a game is, the more the phenomena and higher level of relations intricacy between them are incorporated by its scenario (Pink 2006). Research on the usage of simulation games in students' education proves that a well-designed game should essentially decrease the class time required to teach a particular idea (Klassen & Willoughby, 2003). Simulation games guarantee strong motivation of the game participants towards active learning instead of passive receipt of lectures' content. The use of serious games is part of the method approach; it allows students a different environment to practice entrepreneurship. It is a playful approach for serious results.

Balan and Metcalfe (2012) identified some teaching methods that engage entrepreneurship students through the use of an established measure of engagement, some of the methods he found significant in engaging entrepreneurship students include: Team based learning, one business idea and entrepreneur presentations among others. The teaching methods are discussed below:

Team Based Learning

This is an approach using shared learning, where students learn material in advance of a teaching session. At the start of the class, students take a separate multiple-choice test on the suggested topic, after which they complete the same test as a group, using scratch and win cards to provide instant feedback. This would eventually lead to the creation of a motivational outline that boosts team collaborations and creative teamwork. It also includes a process for students to provide positive feedback on team contribution to other team members (Michaelsen and Sweet, 2008).

One Business Idea for Each Class

Under this method, the lecturer identified a single business idea for each class, and class would be assigned to address that specific idea (instead of them to recognize and develop a business idea of their own, which is the traditional approach in these courses). The business ideas for these classes were new technology consumer products or services that are not obtainable in the local market. The idea of adopting a single business idea for a class was based on

Michaelsen and Sweet (2008) suggestion that group learning is improved in a situation where by all students are aimed at solving the same problem. The method offer a shared focus for classroom exercises and consultations, which would provide the students with an opportunity to learn from their peers and at the same time expose them to a variety of creative understandings of a single business idea.

Entrepreneur Presentations

In this method, practising entrepreneurs were invited to narrate accounts of their business practises during seminar sessions. These seminars provided the students an opportunity to learn through storytelling and learning by exposing them to the experiences of others, learning method that is associated with much of the learning that happens during our lives outside a formal educational setting, and that is endorsed by a number of educators (Balan & Metcalfe, 2012).

Implications

The discussions above conclude that effectiveness of innovative teaching methods in the entrepreneurial pedagogy is of vital importance and should be developed in the polytechnic system. Certainly, the teaching methodology should be centred on students rather than the lecturers. Also, as stated by Rasmussen and Sørheim (2006) this paper indicates that innovative teaching methods can be accomplished in various ways depending on the needs of the students. The polytechnics should utilize the methods discussed in the paper according to the capability of the institutions such as the skills of the lecturers, especially in applying innovative teaching methods. Moreover, the essential learning materials, comprising up-to-date facilities and apparatus should be provided for a motivating and robust learning situation so that the products of the polytechnics will be job creators rather than job seekers. Lastly, for polytechnic students to gain the appropriate entrepreneurial skills, suitable teaching methods that would engage students to acquire hands-on skills should be used.

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