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iEntAcademic Models and Lenses for Entrepreneurial Academics and Enterprise Educators

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Adapting ideas of framing and metaphor from the work of Lakoff and Johnson (Johnson & Lakoff, 1980) and lenses from Jesse Schell (Schell, 2008) the research will offer participants a set of lenses and models for entrepreneurial academics and enterprise educators. Presented as a set of cards or as a digital app version currently under development, it is intended as a working toolset where each model provides a set of questions that gives guidance and reference for academic, students and educators to apply to the processes and situations around enterprise.

Gibb’s (1988) The Enterprise Culture: Threat or Opportunity? Defines Entreprises as “The exercise of enterprise attributes in any task or environmental context.” He further defines the enterprise attributes as

- Initiative
- Strong persuasive powers
- Moderate rather than high risk-taking ability
- Flexibility
- Creativity
- Independence/autonomy
- Problem-solving ability
- Need for achievement
- Imagination
- High belief in control of one’s own destiny

Leadership

Hard work

and an entrepreneur as “Someone who demonstrates a marked use of enterprise attributes, usually in commerce or business” From Gibb’s definitions it could be argued that the business and commerce of Higher Education is Education, Research and Enterprise. Although much research has furthered the Gibb’s model, we see this as a valid start point for developing the models and lenses. Various typologies have been proposed in the past to describe different types of entrepreneur (Briley, 2002; Brennan, Wall, & McGowan, 2005; Dickson, Cokes, & Smith, 1998; Jones-Evans, 1999; Lundas, 1982). The research explores the notion that entrepreneurship is a mode of behavior in which different entrepreneurial types engage differently based on motivations, opportunity, working styles and environments and that therefore the individual must adopt different strategies and tools for success. By comparing different entrepreneurial types and their context and operational styles (within the HE environment) it is hoped to extrapolate models which can be adapted and applied as a set of tools or lenses. Once the individual’s entrepreneurial type and preferences have been assessed it should be possible to identify the lenses most useful to them.

References


Belcher, T., & Oakey, D. B. (2004). From knowledge to knowledge exchange: The have low use of university-based knowledge trading/exchange. The use of academic entrepreneurs as a key component of their discipline, using their social capital to be fully engaged in the academic environment. Prospector – a highly individualistic academic who’s main interest is the application of knowledge to problems outside academia using their own scanning network and tend not to engage with university systems.

Brooker – a highly social academic interested in inter-disciplinary knowledge trading or exchange and the application of knowledge in the wider entrepreneurial environment. They use all their social capital and network both internal and external entrepreneurship environment.

Sign up and Participate

Participants will be provided with a prototype card set and application to use in their everyday enterprise activities. It is intended that the participants will continue to apply the models and lenses by employing a Delphi approach an iterative design process will be set in motion. After each round of data the cards will be analysed and the application will be updated. It is hoped that the lenses will be applied to a variety of enterprise activities within the Higher Education environment. The lenses and research will be used to form models for Academic Enterprise, these when coupled with the lenses will provide an invaluable toolset. The interested parties will participate, develop and share best practice through continuous improvement.

Examples of Academic Entrepreneurs

- Prospector – an academic with a strong interest in interdisciplinary partnerships in the UK.
- Broker – a highly social individual interested in inter-disciplinary knowledge trading or exchange and the application of knowledge in the wider entrepreneurial environment. They use all their social capital and network both internal and external entrepreneurship environment.
- Entrepreneurial behaviour may not be quite so distinct as some suggest, a key difference being attitudes to risk-taking with traditional academics being generally more risk averse and therefore the nature of the work environment may be significant. Etzkowitz (2003) states that in research universities, research grantees function in a firm like way and share many of the qualities of a start-up company so the transition from academic to enterprise culture is less difficult and this may support spin out activities.

Conclusion

It is hoped that the research will lead to a set of valid enterprise models and lenses and analysis of other entrepreneurial approaches. The application will use a needs based recommendation agent providing the user with a set of lenses to facilitate the appropriate model. The user rates what is important in terms of enterprise and the app will present the user with a suitable tool kit.