

How are Educators Taking the Next Steps in Leadership and Entrepreneurship

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Abstract: How are educators taking the next steps in leadership and entrepreneurship teaching concepts? In recent years the development of leadership as a concept has taken different meanings in the educational field. The following paper will explain some practical approaches on how this concept it's been addressed in the classroom and outside in a different environment, as well as the settings of these courses to better equip the students with full understanding on a particular subject. Entrepreneurship has step up its game in fields that we were not used to see before. These entrepreneurial activities are directly linked with the leadership approach of an organization, start up, or school. Hence the importance of how to dive in into full understanding and delivery of the subject, not only through previous theories and proven concepts in particular organizations, but by the students putting themselves in a position of action, so that they can put in practice the knowledge applied. The author will examine responses of the students in entrepreneurship and leadership courses, from a University in China, from different majors, where cultural variables may be applicable as well. The study will have a qualitative approach, which will shed some light in the current practices from students and academics approach to the delivery of these subjects, and how to create a better learning environment incorporating theory and action plan, considering their major program and path in their own school curriculum. This paper aims to develop some understanding of innovative forms and approaches applied in Education, through the way of delivery some of the most important courses like Leadership and Entrepreneurship, since these courses could ultimately be applied to every sector of an industry.

Keywords: Leadership, Education, Entrepreneurship, Management, Studies, University, Approaches

1. Introduction

The following paper will elaborate on a recent action-research project, which was undertaken this current semester during my delivery of the course for the module of Corporate Entrepreneurship, at the Entrepreneurship Enterprise Hub in a University in China. The purpose is to critically reflect on the learning and professional development from conducting enhancement projects in a range of different settings, which will benefit the learning environment by experiencing different techniques and new teaching methodologies. This paper will carry out an extensive action research project that reflects on my own teaching practice and engages with pedagogic improvement, so that based in the results obtained, we can have a better idea on where to make some adjustments and take action in the future interventions (on-action, Schon 1983).

The paper will extensively review relevant literature and models for learning, and apply them to a wide range of change and improvement within a teaching context, which will benefit the students learning process since the results are tacit and more practical for increasing the understanding, not only during the classroom but beyond. This will lead to a constant reflection of the new knowledge acquired.

All of the above will critically reflect as well on the learning process, in the context of the Professional Standard Framework that is encouraged in this institution (UKPSF).

Action research is a type of research in which educators, rather than academics, inquire to their teaching practices, examine the results of these inquires, and learn how to effect positive change in classroom environments. Educators can work alone or collaboratively, and can conduct their research at the classroom, school, or other institutions. This will take a practical approach from the educator standpoint, where either during the lectures or tutorials, the results of teaching practices will rise to the surface, acknowledging some successful techniques and some others still with some room for improvement. This action-research is very interesting due the level of engagement increased by applying different tools and techniques. Although some of the schools taught in these examples are very technical, from a different range such as robotics, chips, manufacturing, cultural technology, among others, the use and understanding of soft skills in the entrepreneurial and corporate world seems to be well received among the student's community, as we will analyse in the following paper:

2. Literature Review - Justification

Previous research has demonstrated that different teaching techniques will vary according to different variables, and that the knowledge can be delivered depending on a wide range of circumstances which could enhanced the learning experience for our audiences. It is important to understand and read the room accordingly, the

setting for “inserting” the knowledge might constitute a successful learning experience, or not. Educators have to continuously improve teaching skills, methods, and techniques so that the students can enjoy a fruitful interaction during the class sessions. Teachers must become highly skill problem solvers while engage in complex teaching-learning activities (Henderson, 2001)

A successful teaching session cannot happen without an audience willing to participate and engage in the content delivered. For this reason, it is important to be aware of the students’ lens approach (Brookfield 1995), how are they interpreting and learning, and must importantly how do we know? How can we measure that? For this and more reasons, we should constantly adjust and look into evaluation activities and mechanisms that can help us to create a better teaching experience, as reported in the Professional Standard Framework from the UK, UKPSF, areas of activities, core knowledge, and professional values (See appendix A2, K2).

According to Brookfield’s Four Lenses (1995), one of the lenses is Colleagues’ perceptions, which we should seek in order to enlighten aspects that could be hidden. This is fundamental as well, given that many educators teach the same groups of students and their comments can be very insightful, enlightening some hidden corners that we might or might have not been aware of. It is a continuous effort that aims to understand different reasoning in a same classroom. Throughout their career, educators must continually refine their skills in the general areas of program designing, lesson planning, and classroom management (Henderson, 2001) (UKPSF: K1, K2, K3, K4, K5)

In order to understand the different approaches that an educator can take, it is important to highlight some of the possible scenarios where the students could be engaged or simply taken as audience, for example in scenarios where there is more engagement a research-tutored approach, or a research-based approach might be ideal. Where the students participate more as an audience, a research-led approach, or research-oriented approach could be used.

Zamorski (2002) discovered two ways students learn about research: being an audience or “recipient of research”, and being actively involved as student researchers. According to Zamorski (2002), academics staff discussed and interpreted the research-led teaching in terms of two principal pedagogical models: teaching informed by recent research outcomes, and teaching incorporating research as part of course content and pedagogy. (See figure 1)

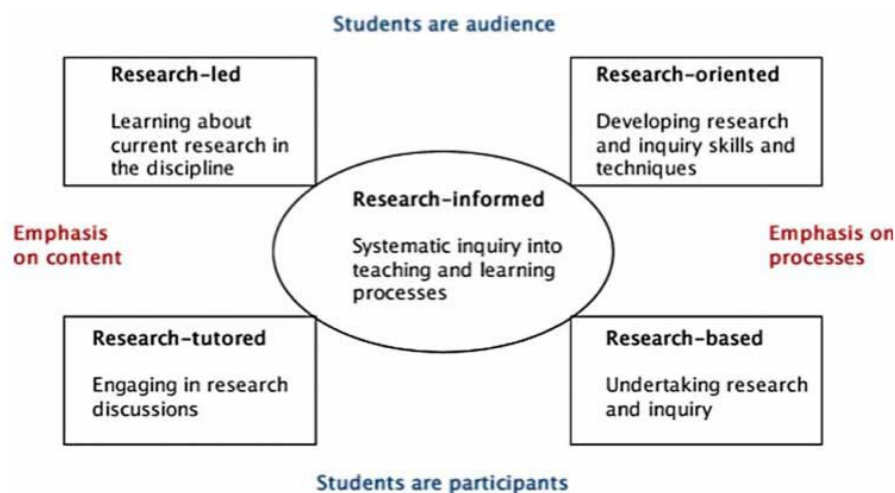


Figure 1: Research-informed

As we observe, different approaches can be taken when we incorporate our findings into the classroom. An ideal scenario could be a balance where students could also participate increasing their critical analysis about a specific topic, including not only research-informed, but tailor-made case studies according to their major where different techniques of encouragement could also be used.

Another approach is Inquiry-based learning, an educational strategy in which students follow methods and practices similar to those of professional scientists in order to construct knowledge (Keselman, 2003). It can be

defined as a process of discovering new causal relations, with the learner formulating hypotheses and testing them by conducting experiments and/or making observations (Pedaste, Mäeots, Leijen, & Sarapuu, 2012).

Project-based learning is another approach to increase not only the educational goals, but also the interaction and network among the students, which is something very useful and necessary in the Corporate Entrepreneurship module. In fact, their first summative assessment aimed to incorporate this precise element which increases their soft skills and experience, needed for overcoming obstacles in the students' future endeavors. A reflection of the experience can anticipate future issues from the same category (Debowski 2013)

3. Research Question

Numerous researchers and educators have tried to address the issue of student engagement and interaction.

Mostly based on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000) which categorizes student's motivation for any given task into intrinsic and extrinsic categories:

- Intrinsic: Moved to act for the fun or challenge itself, showing interest, excitement, self-esteem, creativity, etc.
- Extrinsic: Moved because of external stimuli—rewards, positive feedback, good grade, or to avoid unpleasant consequences

According to some studies this self-determination for constant inflow of knowledge could be linked to new teaching techniques, hence the research question:

RQ. When new teaching technologies are applied, would the students increase their participation and engagement?

The following methodology will explain how the instructor reached the results and how data collection was undertaken.

4. Methodology

Based in the previous literature is safe to say that internal and external stimuli will reflect on the participation in a given classroom. The notes of participation and engagement from students were not only taken from qualitative insights and observations from my own reflections and other tutors, but also from quantitative method by sharing a specific questionnaire with the students of the Corporate Entrepreneurship course. The survey reflects on questions intended for understanding and comparing what we considered were good teaching tools with the actual results by the students. By combining both methodologies we were able to understand to a higher degree how the students can further engage and participate during and after the class (in-action on-action, Schon 1983) when new teaching technologies/methods are applied, which is important for self-improvement, as observed in the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

5. Results

Firstly, a new tool was incorporated during the course, with the objective of continuing deepening on practical examples and theories and how these can be used in the real world. A Business and Entrepreneurial podcast was added to the Learning Mall Online platform (LMO), this audio tool contributed not only for increasing the level of understanding English, but most importantly, for discovering how some leadership theories were used and how people in the business world can navigate different scenarios by adapting to an ever-changing environment, which is crucial for this module of Corporate Entrepreneurship. A short series of 3 episodes were uploaded and shared with the students, showing the following results:


Interestingly, each one of the 3 episodes had over 500 views from students, for example episode 1 with a total of 769 views (see below figure 2). Considering a combined number of 350 students we can see that this new tool was well received, regardless of being only a formative task, not a summative assessment. After each episode was released, some of the discussions and interaction with the students would relate to specific decision-made processes, entrepreneurial and leadership styles in the podcast, for example what other approach would have been good to use in A or B scenarios, with X or Y circumstances.

Viewing an episode from: Steve Jobs - The Enlightenment

Episode [Comment](#) [Views](#)

Title Episode 1 Steve Jobs - The Enlightenment

Summary Ep.1 Traits and styles from Steve
Credits: Business Movers Podcast

Media file 

Duration 40 minutes 34 seconds

Author Antonio Benitez Garcia

Created Monday, 13 February 2023, 20:58

Last updated Friday, 17 February 2023, 10:08

Total views 769

Figure 2: Audio Podcast Views

It is meaningful to see how this trial of adding new tools and teaching methodologies sparked high interest in the students. From observations and data collection of the actual survey it was noticed that besides de audio podcast, other sources like videos or documentaries related to the topic were popular as well (see figure 3).

This newly incorporated tool as a formative teaching method captured the attention of students and triggered their curiosity by analysing different forms in which knowledge can be shared too. This reminds me the quote from Biggs (2002) “Students learn what they think they will be assessed on”. However, as we progressed through the course this formative element was added in a form of audio podcast (Dixon and Worrell, 2016), instead of summative assessment, where they would learn for achieving a grade (UKPSF, K6). What was good about the experience (Evaluation Step, Gibbs 1988) is that some students could indeed engage in a formative assessment as well.

What methods have you incorporated ? Core knowledge (K's)			What methods would you like be incorporated by the teacher? (K's)		
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	NO.	ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	NO.
Books from library or my own books	60.0%	39	Books from library or others	40.62%	26
Videos or documentaries about the topic	76.92%	50	Videos or documentaries about the topic	82.81%	53
Audio podcast	30.77%	20	Audio podcast stories about the topic	42.19%	27
AI Technology such as ChatGPT or others	40.0%	26	Other (please specify)	1.56%	1
Other (please specify)	3.08%	2			
TOTAL		137	TOTAL		107

Figure 3: Teaching Tools and Methodologies

Another interesting result was that different schools of the Entrepreneurial Hub EEH, might have different preferences in terms of their approach towards the study style. For example, some school might prefer a more traditional teaching approach, whereas some might prefer an approach closer to the actual experience of the instructor, in terms of their knowledge, and how beneficial is the learning process for the student. This can be confirmed by observations as well. It is therefore that the tutorials could have a tailor-made case study, or an activity for that particular school (see figure 4).

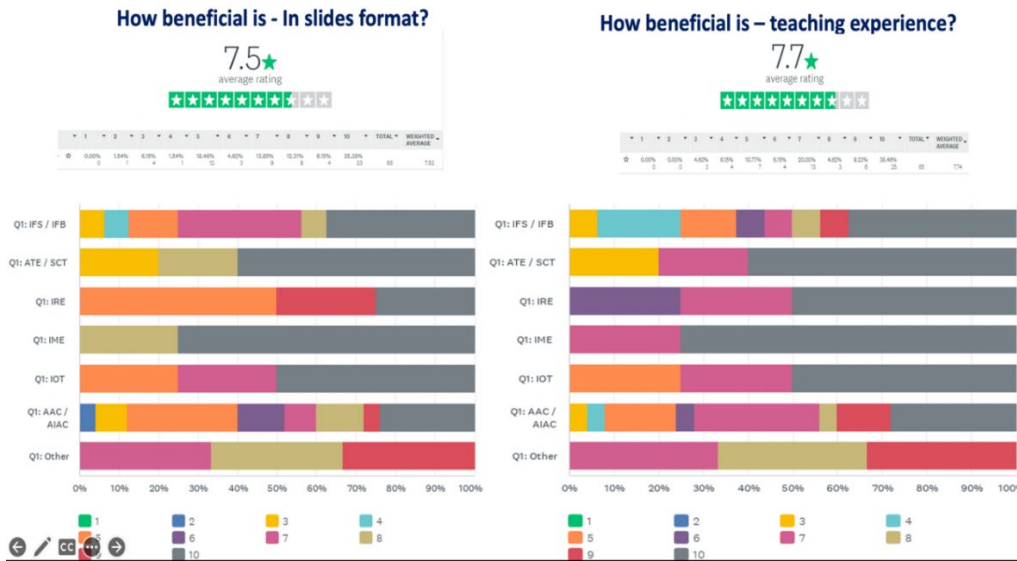


Figure 4: Breakdown by School

These are some of the examples of the results that help the instructors to constantly adapt to new teaching techniques and methodologies.

Another information retrieved is the interest about case-studies, research-led discussions, and project-led discussions, where students are willing to show their point of view mainly during tutorials where the groups are more segmented and project-led, as they had to discuss about their own practical experience and obstacles during their course work and summative assessment, this proved to be helpful and insightful.

It is important to mention that all the discussions would only work with the right setting in an open environment, where students are able to share their perspective. The instructor would have to put emphasis in maintaining and promoting participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners (V2), respecting individual and communities' values (V1) and acknowledging in a wider context the need for professional development (V3, V4).

This is particularly important because if we lack this element, the flow of knowledge would have more obstacles. Gratefully, we experience a good environment setting where students were comfortable to express and share their critical analysis on a given topic. (See figure 5).

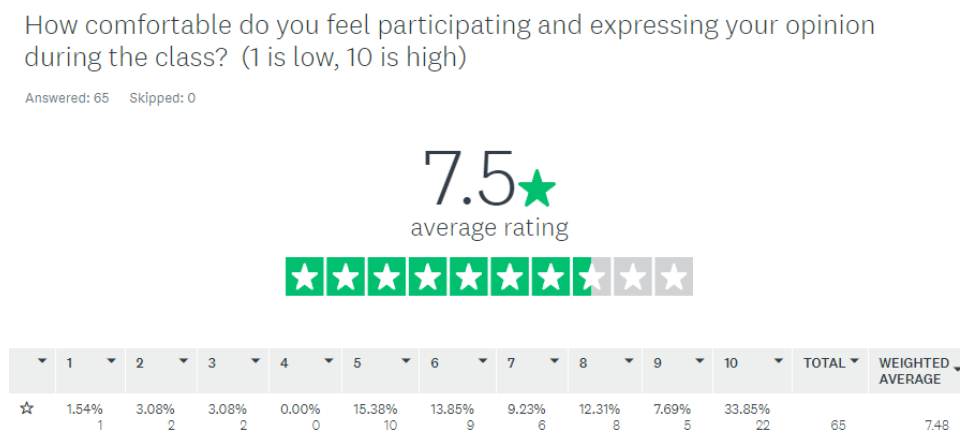


Figure 5: How Comfortable is Participation

6. Discussion - Conclusion

According to the feeling's evaluation analysis, based on Debowski (2013), we looked into what is successful having a wider potential, and what has a room for improvement, some suggestions were raised about the possibility of incorporating subtitles to the "audio". However, this audio would have to turn into a video to be

able to add subtitles for a better understanding. Therefore, a full understanding of the audio podcast was a bit challenging since English is not the student’s native language for the majority.

As we see below (figure 6) reflects what environment would increase the participation of the students during the class:

	1	2	3	TOTAL	SCORE
If I fully understand the topic	20.00% 12	53.33% 32	26.67% 16	60	1.93
If I relate to the topic and I am interested in it	38.33% 23	28.33% 17	33.33% 20	60	2.05
If I speak better English	41.67% 25	18.33% 11	40.00% 24	60	2.02

Figure 6: Score for Increasing Participation

According to the student’s survey, we can observe that the third sentence “speaking better English” and the second one “interest in the topic” would increase the participation in classroom. Hence the importance of the professional values (V1-V4) stated in the Professional Standard Framework.

The right combination of the above tools will create a solid environment, where when new teaching technologies are applied, they could lead to a wholesome learning experience. As stated by Fogg’s (2009) behavior model: motivation, ability and triggers (cited in Muntean, 2011): “motivation and ability alone are not enough to determine a behavior. A certain behavior needs a *trigger*, something to tell the user to complete the action in a certain moment, when users have both ability and motivation, it functions as a reminder.” For example, having extra formative tasks that continue sparking their curiosity beyond the classroom.

As part of the conclusion in the reflective cycle (Gibbs 1988) it is important to be aware of the needs of each student and become a tool so that they can find their own course, recognizing the implications of a professional practice (V4).

Based on the action-research results, it is suggested to continue applying the tools that benefit the best to the students, improving the rooms for opportunity and designing and planning more learning activities (A1), constantly supporting the learning process, for not only summative but also for formative assessments, providing feedback to the learners (A2, A2). Effective learning environment and guidance, as well as engaging in continuing professional development in subjects and pedagogic elements (A4, A5).

“Lecturers involved in their own professional development as teachers by investigating and reflecting on their own practice”

We have also seen that the subject material itself (K1) has to apply appropriate methods for teaching and learning, at the subject level and at the academic program level (K2), this will generate a cohesion among subjects, and a good strategy for syntegrative education. Constant methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching will only lead to increasing the quality of our teaching, and ultimately of the University’s. These methods used (K5) focused on the learning experience and quality assurance of the students (K6). These activities definitely promote higher participation and opportunity for the learners (V2), acknowledging a wider context which is crucial for the students in our major, having an entrepreneurial mindset will set them apart and increase the opportunity of insertion for a better society, recognizing the implications attached (V4).

The main question for this action-research was significant, focusing on teaching and learning practices that will have impact on students’ behavior and achievements. It was also manageable, bringing to surface many interesting insights from the results. The practical side of this action research is that the question is contextual, as it can be embedded in the day-to-day work of the instructor rather that a specific extra project, which could also be added, if it is in the interest of the learning process.

Overall, the action-research proved to be very helpful for my future class preparations and interaction with the students.

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Appendix

