



Fuelling the Fire Starters

by Carol Langston

The development of enterprise and entrepreneurship skills within our young people has received increasing focus over the past 20 years, and is now seen reflected in global, European, national and local policy. The current policy discourse in the EU and the UK suggests that the education sector should be 'embedding' entrepreneurship education across all levels of the system (EU, 2006 - 2015, QAA 2013, 2014, BIS 2014, Scottish Government, 2014). Educators are key actors in this relationship, as they are often the most direct link between policy makers, institutions, employers, and our students. It is widely accepted that educators need to encourage this entrepreneurial spark and light a fire, but who helps to fuel the fire-starters?

My Story

This story focuses on my experience of developing a staff training programme for educators seeking to develop entrepreneurial outcomes in others and to embed entrepreneurship education (EE) within their practice. I will share how my links with the Coneect programme have been influential in that journey.

Background

I live and work in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, a region which covers 44% of the country. This area is larger than Belgium and Luxembourg, but has a population of only 466,112 (2011): less than 9% of Scotland's total population. Our small, dispersed population, mountainous landscape, poor transport network, and distance from markets present our students and businesses with real challenges but also real opportunities. Scotland has a long and distinguished history as a nation of inventors and entrepreneurs, but

we are also viewed as a nation not currently fulfilling its potential (REAP 2014). Entrepreneurship and innovation have been identified (Scottish Government, 2014) as key priority areas to promote a greater culture of ambition in Scotland and encourage much needed growth.

I am based at Inverness College UHI (ICUHI), one of the largest partners in Scotland's newest university, the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI). In 2010, we established CREATE, an entrepreneurial learning centre to deliver enterprise and entrepreneurial learning for students, academics, and businesses. We quickly found that although it was vital to work closely with our students to inspire and support their entrepreneurial activities, we could only achieve significant impact across Scotland by engaging more intensively with educators, to increase their capacity and confidence to take on a more active role in EE and support the development of an enterprising mindset and culture within the learning environment.

For me, entrepreneurship is all about valuing opportunities - identifying, creating, nurturing, exploiting, sharing, and enjoying opportunities with my students, fellow educators and the wider business and local community.

My challenge was to create a staff development programme for educators. The new programme, to be funded by the European Social Fund along with other

"I am finding the programme to be very inspiring and stimulating. During our residential week, using expert input from visiting academics and entrepreneurs, as well as building on the obvious passion of the Create team, the programme focussed on providing an opportunity to explore and see how we could apply an enterprising mind-set across our whole curriculum. There were quite a few 'light bulb' moments for me personally, and I have returned enthused and highly motivated to use the strategies and tools we examined to help develop enterprise and entrepreneurship in our college"

Curriculum Manager, Young People and Communities

partners, would be designed to give our busy educators a broad appreciation of the concerns discussed above, while encouraging them to develop a range of learning and teaching strategies to meet these demands. Early in the development, we had to decide what to include in the programme, and ensure that the underpinning philosophy really was entrepreneurial: we had to practice what it preached! It was important that we actively supported educators' professional development with challenging and thought provoking content, using a 'for' and 'through', rather than an 'about', entrepreneurship approach.

Research on the range of approaches to EE, combined with the staff development that I had been fortunate to experience first-hand at MIT, Babson College, and the National Centre for Entrepreneurship Education, allowed me to form an outline of what would be a sound conceptual underpinning and approach for our Scottish programme. The vital elements, which I felt would fit well with our national culture and education system, included the seminal work of Allan Gibb on learner-centred education, as well as various works on mindset and self-efficacy.

Working collaboratively with the National Centre for Entrepreneurship Education, the Scottish Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Educators' Programme (SEE) was born. The newly developed programme focused on the interlinking enterprise learning themes of enterprise, employability, entrepreneurship, and innovation, which are proving fundamental to educators at all tertiary levels in Scotland.

Learning Aims and Outcomes

Overall, our vision was to create a programme of immersive professional development, that would support educators to develop their capacity in four key elements of EE (Adapted Masteries of Entrepreneurship Education, NCGE 2007):

Philosophy – through appreciating the value and articulating the relevance of EE.

Pedagogy – by making effective use of teaching and learning methods to meet key outcomes.

Networking - through proactively harnessing and developing relevant networks to create enterprising opportunities;

Being Personally Enterprising – acting as a role model, and personally demonstrating enterprising behaviour in the educational environment.

On completion of this programme, the educators are able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of contemporary entrepreneurship and enterprise education systems.
- Develop and apply innovative and creative learning and teaching approaches, to meet defined entre-

preneurship and enterprise outcomes.

- Apply their knowledge of entrepreneurship and enterprise education in an effective manner, producing work (e.g. pedagogic practices and curriculum design) which aspires to incorporate contemporary research and development findings.

Lessons Learned

The SEE programme is now completing its third delivery and we have received exceptional feedback from educator participants and other connected stakeholders. However, I am keen that we continue to learn and develop, that the programme does not stand still and is always informed by new thinking and practice. With this in mind, I joined the Coneect programme for its first run in Munich in 2013

"During the last two years I have had the pleasure to contribute to the SEE programme. I have the good fortune to work with educators and train the educator programmes throughout the world. Without doubt, my experiences at SEE have been the most enjoyable and rewarding thus far. The development of the SEE programme embodies world's best practice in the field of entrepreneurship education. Current thinking in this domain is enthusiastically embraced and shared amongst the participants, and the participants themselves are co-leaders of the programme. Entrepreneurship education in Scotland is heading in the right direction through encouraging programme directors and staff from non-business disciplines to engage in this form of educational development. Carol and her team should be congratulated for the visionary approach they are taking to support the development of entrepreneurship education in Scotland".

Dr Colin Jones, University of Tasmania, Australia

to be inspired and challenged to question existing approaches. I was also keen to meet new entrepreneurship collaborators. I achieved these aims, and much more.

Coneect encouraged me to reflect on how we currently work with educators to develop personal entrepreneurial capacities, and on the wider challenges and opportunities that we experience internationally in EE. Based on the various workshops and approaches that I was exposed to, I adapted and incorporated some new learning and teaching methods within the SEE programme (in particular placing a stronger focus on 'mindset'/entrepreneurial cognition (Dweck and Krueger – See Resources), and on integrating more creativity and design thinking (Brown, T– See Resources). In fact, I enjoyed the session on Human Centred Innovation so much that I invited Florian Huber from the Strascheg Center for Entrepreneurship to take part in our revamped programme in Scotland in February 2015! Florian's session was enthusiastically received, and

What does an Entrepreneurial Educator need to be?

"The educator becomes an entrepreneurial animateur, not only in the classroom. Finding and utilising opportunities for change, building networks, harnessing stakeholder support and creating innovative pedagogies all require entrepreneurial initiative. The practice and development of entrepreneurial behaviours is arguably therefore a core competence for entrepreneurship educators."

Allan Gibb (2010:149)

since then many educators have integrated more design and innovation thinking techniques within their own programmes.

The SEE programme has recently undergone a longitudinal evaluation, which has reported significant benefits, highlighting: the International Expertise; introduction of pedagogies leading to innovation and ideas creation in colleges and universities; improved enterprise learning and teaching strategies; enhanced information sharing and partnership working for the benefit of wider communities.



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My principal role is working directly with academic and support staff to support enterprise and entrepreneurship curriculum and non-curriculum developments, and ensure a supportive climate for students seeking to develop businesses. I am Programme Director of the Scottish Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Educators programme (SEE). I have benefitted from Entrepreneurship Development programmes at both Babson College and MIT, and am currently researching the experience of FE and HE educators working in the field of Entrepreneurship Education. I have published within the field of strategic

business and enterprise, and developed a key discussion paper for Scotland's Colleges on an Enterprise Education, and was part of the editorial team that developed the QAA Scotland guidance (2014), Creating Entrepreneurial Campuses. I work closely with regional and national partners to embed enterprise and support entrepreneurship amongst the institution's students and staff, and the surrounding region. I currently serve as director of Highlands and Islands Social Enterprise Zone, and am a member of the Strategic Advisory Group of the Bridge 2 Business Project (Young Enterprise Scotland).

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