

Evaluation report about

ENTREPRENURSHIP EDUCATION IN *DUBLIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY*

Dublin. Ireland.



From: *Lasma Licite*
European Funds Management

To: R.Methorst

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...Ireland remains one of the leading countries in Europe in terms of entrepreneurship and almost one in 10 of the adult population is actively planning or has recently set up a new business...

...Ireland is also ranked as number one in terms of cultural perceptions of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs are highly regarded in the society...

...MSc in Business & Entrepreneurship is a good course with a dedicated staff of lecturers...

...I believe this course prepared me for entrepreneurship quite well as I have medical degree, so all info was new and interesting to me...



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INTRODUCTION

The Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) *is one of the largest and most innovative educational institutions in the country*. It provides full-time and part-time programmes to over 22,000 students across the whole spectrum of higher education. DIT undertakes this work in an innovative, responsive, caring and flexible learning environment, with state-of-art facilities and the most advanced technology available. It is committed to providing access to higher education for students of different ages and backgrounds, and to achieving quality and excellence in all aspects of its work. This commitment extends to the provision of teaching, research, development and consultancy services for industry and society, with due regard to the technological, commercial, social and cultural need of the community that it serves.

The Faculty of Business is the *largest business school in Ireland* and it provides a range of entrepreneurship modules across the Faculties of Business, Science, Art, Engineering, and Food and Tourism. The Faculty of Business also offers a one-year **MSc in Business and Entrepreneurship**, which is dedicated to transforming science, engineering, social science and technology graduates into leaders who will guide and create tomorrow's businesses. In doing so, it addresses Ireland's need to remain competitive by cultivating cross-functional, entrepreneurial graduates. The MBA programme also offers a dedicated stream in Entrepreneurship.

DIT provides a number of entrepreneurship support organisations targeting a variety of audiences. The **Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship** was established to offer the different **minority groups** (ethnic, grey, disabled, gay, female, prisoners, travellers, Irish-speaking, socio-economically disadvantaged) in Ireland equal opportunity through entrepreneurship education and training. The primary objective is to bring significant benefit to its target audiences by researching the need of these minority entrepreneurship groups, developing appropriate training programmes and materials, and delivering these programmes in the most effective manner for each individual group.

The Project Development Centre (PDC) was established in 1983 to encourage and stimulate the development of indigenous enterprise by offering an innovative programme to graduates who wanted to start their own business and has since expanded its range of programmes to cater for a broader range of audiences. Nowadays it is *one of the leading centres for enterprise and innovation*.



The Bolton Trust was established in 1986 by staff of DIT and continues to provide space and related to a wide array of small companies. ¹

For more information on the Faculty of Business visit www.dit.ie.

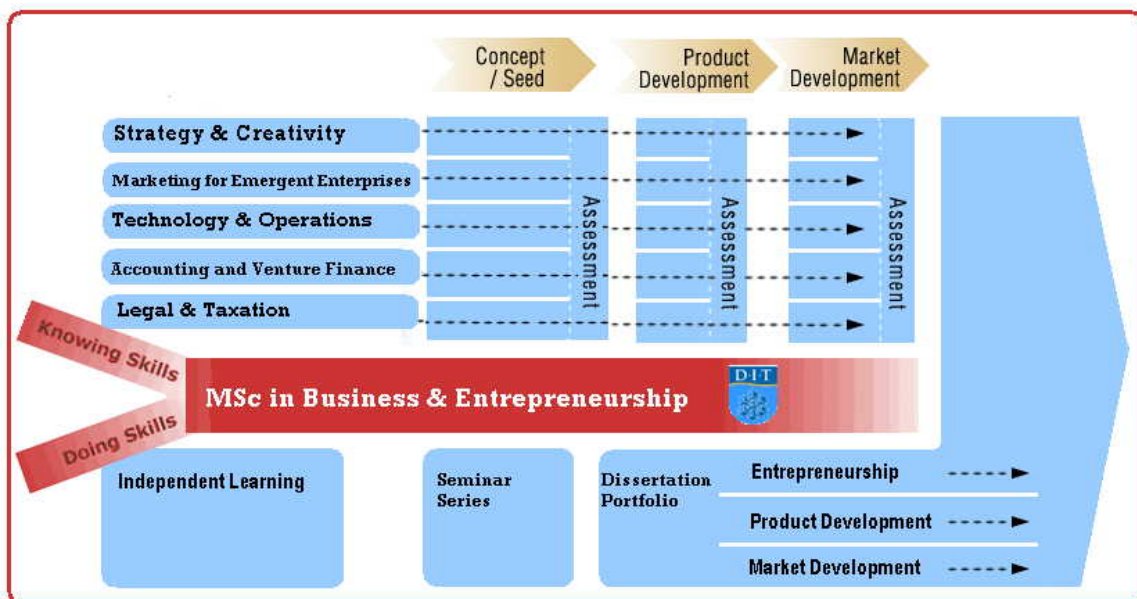
¹ Thomas M. Cooney & Rickie A. Moore, "European cases in entrepreneurship", Blackhall Publishing, 2007.

1. ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTS

1.1. MSc IN BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Course Description:

The MSc in Business and Entrepreneurship is an exciting one-year programme dedicated to transforming Science, Engineering, Social Science and Technology graduates into leaders who will guide and create tomorrow’s businesses. It aims to achieve this through providing participants with the acumen to successfully move ideas and innovations into commercial practice. In doing so, it addresses Ireland’s need to maintain competitiveness by cultivating cross-functional, entrepreneurial graduates. This course draws on the unique capability and reputation of the Dublin Institute of Technology, which was founded from the fusion of Ireland’s oldest and most successful Business and Technology Colleges.



Course Content:

Studies in **Semester 1** cover the subjects of Strategy, Marketing, Technology and Operations Management, Venture Finance and Law. Such accelerated learning is designed to give participants the conceptual tools needed to analyse business situations and to undertake business planning. In tandem, participants engage in the initial stages of dissertation work through seminars dealing with Entrepreneurship, Business Development and Product Development.

Building on learning from the first semester, studies in **Semester 2** cover the subjects of Creativity, Marketing, Technology and Operations Management, Accounting, Law and Taxation. In tandem, participants move to greater engagement with their dissertation research through more focused seminars and guided supervision. Such supervision continues to mid-June, at which point participants work on their own through to submission of the dissertation in early Semester. Submission of the dissertation marks the end of the programme.

An added feature of the programme is the **international study trip**, which in previous years has been to Prague. This study visit comprises a range of seminars delivered by a range of business people, including representatives of Enterprise Ireland, and visits to small, medium and large indigenous and foreign enterprises, as well as cultural activities of interest in an around the location of the trip.

Assessment:

For each of the five taught streams (comprising a module in each of the two semesters), individual and group coursework accounts for 60% of the assessment and there are two exams per subject worth 20% each. The dissertation portfolio is supported through group-based supervision and is assessed on the basis of the final submitted document, with the option of a viva.

Duration of course:

The course takes 52 weeks of a participant's life, with 24 weeks dedicated to class tuition. These 24 weeks are currently organised into three full days of lectures (Tuesday, Thursday and Friday), and there are range of other ad-hoc activities that require participation throughout the year. So, while there is space for other activities over the year, participants are reminded that this is a full-time programme and that a full-time commitment is both necessary and expected.

Skills/competences:

The course is aimed at graduates from Science, Engineering, Social Science and Technology related disciplines who:

- ⇒ wish to acquire the **business skills** to identify and exploit business opportunities;
- ⇒ aspire to **leadership** positions in knowledge-based industries;
- ⇒ need to acquire **business knowledge** to start and operate new ventures;
- ⇒ desire to be **effective catalysts** in rapidly changing innovative and competitive organisations.

Entry Requirements:

Prospective participants must have a good science, engineering, technology, or social sciences degree (2H2 or higher) from an Irish third level institution or its equivalent from an overseas university. **A key feature of the programme is that participants come from a wide and varied range of disciplines.** In the past they have been drawn from such diverse backgrounds as Computer Science, Architecture, Tourism, Culinary Arts, Mechanical Engineering, Printing Management, Clinical Measurement, Economics, Geology and Media Production.

Award:

Graduates of the course are eligible for the award of Master of Science (Business and Entrepreneurship) of the Dublin Institute of Technology.

Learning outcomes:

The course provides students with the skills and orientation towards enterprise creation, either in an existing business or as a start-up. Graduates will have enhanced career prospects for a wide range of posts in Irish and International businesses.

1.2. THE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (PDC)

PDC is a new style **incubator** which was initiated by the Dublin Institute of Technology in 1983, and operates under the Directorate of External Affairs. It has been instrumental in **encouraging and stimulating the development of indigenous enterprise through a range of activities.** Today the PDC is **one of the leading centres for enterprise and innovation.** The PDC helps entrepreneurs bring ideas to life and, over the past 10 years, has helped launch over 250 companies. The PDC focuses largely on two groups:

- ⇒ knowledge-intensive start-ups with solid potential;
- ⇒ academics looking commercialise their research.

The PDC provides a comprehensive range of services and products:

- ⇒ skills development programmes,
- ⇒ incubation space and facilities,
- ⇒ business counselling,
- ⇒ funding,
- ⇒ access to research and development expertise.

These services/products enable entrepreneurs to start-up and grow global businesses. Through its network, the PDC helps innovative companies to access markets, strategic partners and venture capital.

Development programmes:

PROSPECT is a training programme that helps researchers from the DIT to commercialise their research. The programme offers workshops, business counselling and consultancy to provide the necessary skills and know-how to develop a commercialisation plan for academic research.

Options include:

- ⇒ setting up a campus company either on your own or with a partner;
- ⇒ patenting your research;
- ⇒ licensing or selling your technology to an outside company.

The *PROSPECT* programme includes a 9-month series of workshops. Supported by a panel of experienced mentors and consultants, workshops focus on issues such as:

- ⇒ intellectual property rights and legal issues;
- ⇒ business basics, including business planning, marketing, competitor analysis and raising finance;
- ⇒ commercialisation routes;
- ⇒ patenting and licensing;

Participants on the *PROSPECT* programme come from a range of universities and Institutes of Technology around the country. The *PROSPECT* team successfully launches over 30 businesses annually and supports a network of about 300 companies.

Incubation space and facilities:

The PDC's **Hothouse Programme** offers participants **incubation space** and facilities for one year. Based in the entrepreneurial and dynamic environment of Docklands Innovation Park, the Hothouse Incubator gives participants the opportunity to base themselves alongside fellow entrepreneurs, business experts and others who understand the start-up process. The Hothouse Incubator offers participants a hotbed of ideas from which their businesses can thrive. Participants have access to full broadband communications, professional reception services and meeting rooms, along with a range of office facilities.

Investment & funding:

The Small Enterprise Seed Fund, an initiative of the PDC Network and the Bolton Trust, is a designated Business Expansion Scheme (BES) Fund. Managed by Castle Hill Fund Management Ltd., the Fund raises monies from private investors to provide seed funding to a portfolio of young growth-oriented businesses. The Small Enterprise Seed Fund has invested over €2.5 million in more than 22 projects. The Fund invests in the €60,000 - €125,000 range. The Fund invests in small companies that are at the early stage of their growth cycle where promoters have demonstrated an ability to bring a product/service to market.

1.3. INSTITUTE FOR MINORITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The **Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship** was established to offer the different **minority groups** in Ireland equal opportunity through entrepreneurship education and training. The Institute has been funded in the first instance through a TERS Funding Grant awarded by the DIT. Minority Entrepreneurship has been broadly defined by the Institute to be inclusive of those communities who are generally regarded as being outside of mainstream Irish society in terms of entrepreneurship. The following groups are: ethnic, grey, disabled, gay, female, prisoners, travellers, Irish-speaking, socio-economically disadvantaged.

The primary **objective** is to bring significant benefit to its target audiences by researching the need of these minority entrepreneurship groups, developing appropriate training programmes and materials, and delivering these programmes in the most effective manner for each individual group. Through broader understanding of entrepreneurship, people benefiting from the work of the Institute have a greater opportunity to maximise their economic potential by either starting their own business, recognising the opportunities that exist for them within the workforce and making it happen, undertaking social entrepreneurship activities, or becoming catalysts for entrepreneurial activity within their own communities. The Institute is also keen on developing partnerships with other organisations who work with minority communities so that together, major changes can be achieved.

2. INTERVIEWS WITH PERSONS INVOLVED IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP COURSE

Definition of entrepreneurship:

Mostly persons from DIT consider entrepreneurship in the sense of new venture creation is too narrow a definition. “*Entrepreneurship is way of thinking, way of behaving,*” says Thomas Cooney. People must think about expanding the term “entrepreneurship” to include all activities which are connected with entrepreneurship.

Another definition of entrepreneurship is mostly connected with **innovation** and **generation ideas**. For example, Anthony Hughes defines entrepreneurship as “*somebody who is innovative and possibly more of a risk taker than others.*” Fiona Maciver says: “*For me, entrepreneurship is some kind of very creative idea...creative, innovative, different idea; using your creativity, driving your business forward through that.*” Claire McBride explains entrepreneurship as “*the ability to form and grow an idea, product or company and make it commercially available.*”

The **commercial** side is emphasized not only in Claire McBride’s definition, but also in Tony Buckley’s as well: “*Entrepreneurship is activity of a person or a group of people to seek out and take advantage of commercial opportunities.*”

Brendan O’Rourke keeps to the traditional explanation of entrepreneurship and highlights **start ups but small start ups**: “*I think it is best to associate entrepreneurship with small start up forms.*”

The words which are connected with entrepreneurship are:

- Creativity and innovation
- Good enterprising skills
- Drive
- Risk taking
- Value creation
- Passion
- Motivation
- Resources
- Spirit of Adventure
- Intellectual commitment
- Vision
- Execution
- Reward
- Profitability
- Autonomous
- Get up and go
- Team
- Independence
- Commercial
- Market driven
- Opportunity
- Inventiveness
- Moral and ethical
- Business idea
- Mindset

Starting up a business and being entrepreneurial:

The MSc in Business and Entrepreneurship is **not only about starting up a business, but also about being entrepreneurial. It includes both sides.** Faculty try to include both sides because some of the people will be entrepreneurs, but some will support services for entrepreneurs.

The **different subjects** areas --- law, accountancy, taxation, theory of entrepreneurship, market development, etc. --- are aimed at aiding participants in acquiring and using different **knowledge and skills** in order to succeed in their own businesses/careers. They also can be successful in companies and organizations for which they work because they can use the acquired skills and knowledge in generating ideas, conducting market research, developing new products, etc.

It is important to give such an overview and knowledge because a good number of students coming to this programme have specific business ideas that they would like to execute on completion. They need to **build an awareness that they will be successful** and won't fail. Acquired knowledge will help them to cope with this.

Skills/Competences:

Participants on the programme can also improve several skills. The focus is to develop and improve skills that may be weak to begin with. As was said before, participants do not come from a business background. As such, they must acquire **knowledge about the business** world.

One of the skills participants acquire (and/or build upon) is that of **analytic skills** to help in analysing opportunities. Also they become **aware of complex environments** they face. Participants also acquire (and/or build upon) the ability to **think critically** and **conduct research**. *“If you are a good, logical researcher then you will find more information. If you find more information, you will be able to make better decisions. So hopefully they will make better decisions,”* says Tony Buckley.

Brendan O'Rourke considers the programme is different from a start your own business course in the sense that it **requires people to be quite critically reflective on entrepreneurship**: *“It's my own strong belief that it will be more likely a niche creativity and perhaps allow people to be more responsible.”*

There is the possibility to bolster **presentation skills** because in most of the subjects they must present their ideas, tasks, etc. Participants also acquire some kind of **confidence** in their own

ideas, but they aren't dreamers, they acquire **critical thinking** as well. As noted by Fiona Maciver: *"From meetings with guest speakers they can start to believe to their selves that their ideas can succeed as well. Market orientation and managing gives ability to critique yourself in terms of theoretical knowledge. It's not a kind of little bubble that they have this idea which definitely will succeed. We give them understandings why not, why this idea is not going to succeed."* Tom Cooney also notes: *"I do believe that I engender or awake in them an entrepreneurial mindset; I will help them to identify their capabilities and I suppose I will give them a belief that they are capable of doing it. This course won't change the behaviour immediately but over time it certainly will. On a programme I want to give them life skills. It doesn't matter what career they will do, even work for somebody else, **having the entrepreneurial mindset is a wonderful attitude to have, and it's wonderful characteristic.**"*

Faculty involved in the programme were asked to choose **5 of the most important skills** (from the list was given) they considered important for entrepreneur. They mentioned almost all the skills from the list in different order. The 5 most important (the most often mentioned) were:

- ⇒ recognizing and seizing opportunities,
- ⇒ international orientation mixed with market orientation,
- ⇒ reflection,
- ⇒ problem analysing
- ⇒ self-confidence (self-efficacy).

According to answers the most important was **recognizing and seizing opportunities**: *"Someone who is an entrepreneur has to be open to opportunities and make things happen. Finding opportunities can happen in social clubs, in sport clubs. For example, in sports club you need new dressing rooms. Then recognizing that and doing something about it is being entrepreneurial. One student asked me a very good question: "How do I train myself to recognize opportunity?" My answer was: "If you are open to opportunity, then it is always available." For example, I am not particularly creative, I am just open. I think that's the key,"* says Thomas Cooney.

The second most important was **market orientation mixed with international orientation**. In Ireland entrepreneurs are looking it together because Irish market is so small: *"I think a lot of our entrepreneurs in Ireland are not big inventors. We tend to take something that is done*

somewhere else and make it better, faster, cheaper. It is about looking at what opportunities exist in the market,” says Claire McBride.

Another important skill is **reflection**: *“We need to reflect on what we do and learn from reflection and feedback,” says Tony Buckley. Brendan O’Rourke, for example, asked students to keep individual diaries: “They don’t need to show me it. They must do it by themselves. They must write what they like, dislike. I might give 5 minutes at the beginning of class to write some definition and then they can see how their skills have changed. They can test themselves.”*

Then a lot of respondents mentioned **problem analysing**. According to Anthony Hughes students need to get a good academic foundation around the particular issue they are looking at. That’s why they must analyse different problems.

Finally, **self-confidence** or **self-efficacy**: *“It is so important to be in charge of yourself. You are like a champion or a leader of what’s going on, so you need to be efficient,” says Brendan O’Rourke.*

Respondents mentioned that all skills are very necessary and it is hard to choose just 5. So they also mentioned **teamwork**. According to Anthony Hughes, an entrepreneur has to be able to work with others: *“I know that some entrepreneurs would appear to be very egocentric. But to be more successful you have to be able to motivate other people.”*

Very significant is **planning and organizing** or time management, where a person should be able to plan the day, plan the business, plan funding and organizing all of that. *“I worked with entrepreneurs who are the most brilliantly innovative people ever made. They can make components for aircraft, but they can’t actually decide which piece of market opportunity they are going for, etc. And there is no ability to prioritise, plan, forecast, even write proposal. It’s reality,” says Claire McBride.*

Of course **communication** is invaluable. *“You have to be able to communicate your idea to your public and to your employees and to be able to have these communication skills is just ability to operate your idea,” says Fiona Maciver.*

Faculty mentioned **result orientation** as well. *“People, who write their goals, are goal oriented and they are far more successful. I think too much time (particularly in Ireland) we spend measuring people’s inputs rather than outputs. Like employers want to know has the employee turned up at 9 o’clock and did not leave until 5, but they have might have done nothing for that time they were there. Someone maybe turns up at 10 and leaves at 4, but has done really good work. They might be a better person for you. We measure input not output but I prefer output,” says Tom Cooney.*

Anthony Hughes mentioned another skill which is important to entrepreneurs, but which wasn't mentioned in the given list: **ability to influence people** up the line. Very often very good ideas don't get taken up. There are some students who are working very well alone and they can have a good idea but they can't manage to capture it and communicate it. Sometimes they are very introverted people. *"Sometimes we can read a lot about creative people, especially in American texts, that they should be mavericks. Well...possibly yes, but the problem with mavericks is that they don't get on well in companies. A lot of good ideas don't get to the top,"* say Anthony Hughes.

Claire McBride mentioned **financial and accounting** skills. The ability to read financial information, calculate margins, and be able assess market potential is also important. Fiona Maciver mentioned **creativity, innovation** and **expertises**.

Participants can improve these skills during this entrepreneurship programme because:

- ⇒ there are **variety of subjects**, giving them broad knowledge and skills;
- ⇒ faculty use **different teaching methods**, allowing them think and analyse things in different way and improve skills.

Feedback from students:

Generally faculty expressed the view that students are **satisfied** with this course. For example, Anthony Hughes said: *"They find it allows them to do something in different way and it let's them think differently."* Brendan O'Rourke also is sure that students feel satisfied with their choice: *"I have a sense that students are satisfied. I don't think they feel robbed."*

The programme is also very **challenging** for them because students come from non-business backgrounds, eg, Science, Engineering, etc. *"The assignment which was designed was very challenging. It required them to do something very practical, which is the new product development study along with the literature and research,"* noted Claire McBride about her area, New Product Development.

Faculty consider that students find the programme very **stimulating**. A good number of students come to the programme with ideas about what they want to do. *"They are very focused people and seem to take a lot from this course. They want to learn everything: marketing, finance, etc. They are really interesting students,"* says Tony Buckley.

Fiona Maciver has heard from students that they **enjoyed the guest speakers** very much: *"There was a guy who had 2 failed companies behind him and one successful who was currently*

operating. And students said that guest speakers gave them hope for their own business and if your first business fails, you always are able to come back and be successful in the future.”

Teaching methods:

⇒ New venture creation.

Student groups (2 or 3 persons in group; undergraduate) have to run a venture for charity. They should organize any event they want and all money they earn goes to charity of their choice. It gets them doing things for real and also gets them thinking about helping other people.

⇒ Dog racing sport.

Every year Tom Cooney takes a class (undergraduate) to this event as a field trip. It builds team spirit very quickly and also shows that the lecturer is interested in them thinking beyond the classroom.

⇒ Guest speakers.

Guest speakers tell **bad news as well as just good news.**

⇒ Case studies.

Students have to analyse case studies and present them using appropriate theory. Faculty have written a book with Irish case studies and European case studies. (*C.Henry, P.McGowan “Irish Cases in Entrepreneurship, Volume II”, Blachall Publishing, 2007*)

⇒ Video materials.

⇒ Multimedia.

Materials from www.youtube.com; Chinese websites: www.alibaba.com

⇒ Non-traditional exercises.

Students must imagine that they are on a Desert Island, the boat is being washed to the shore, and they must tell the lecturer why they should be put on the boat and survive. The exercise is for one hour and they have to do it in groups. Students have to make a presentation for 10 minutes for something creative they have done. They can sing a song; they can do a play. They can do whatever they want, but it must be original.

⇒ Visiting and analyzing companies to get to know their experience.

In the product development module on the master programme, students have to choose a company or one specific product and discuss: what kind of innovative, creative idea did the company have; how it has used this idea; how it developed the idea; how it became successful in the marketplace; etc. In the business strategy module on the master programme, students have to analyse the strategy of existing company.

⇒ **Reflection – individual diaries.**

For example, students have to keep individual diaries, which they don't need to show to the lecturer. They must write from first day what they like, dislike, etc. Sometimes at the beginning of class, the lecturer asks them to write some definition and then they can see how their skills have changed. They can test themselves.

⇒ **Real life examples.**

⇒ **Idea generation.**

In the creativity module of the master programme, students work in groups of three or four. This year, one of the groups had a chef, somebody who was good in marketing, and someone who knew about food science. The chef cooked some scallops in the class, the next who came was interested in food science and nutrition and he talked about this process, about eating scallops, etc. And the marketing came down and talked about how they actually applied it, about commercial setting, about website, etc.

⇒ **Critiquing of literature.**

3. ANALYSIS OF STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

The 2007-08 MSc in Business & Entrepreneurship cohort comprises 20 students, of which 10 completed the research project student questionnaire. The majority of these students had an aim, some kind of idea to set up their own business, when coming onto the programme. Coming from different background, they plan to start up their business in very different fields – hospitality, sport psychology, food catering, health care education, property sales. One of students mentioned that he would like to open a restaurant.

In **defining entrepreneurship**, students put emphasis on innovation and creativity: “*entrepreneurship is innovative and creative operation with the entrepreneurs on his/her venture*”; “*it is process by which innovation and creativity is used to develop a profit making scheme*”; “*create and implement new or existing idea to target market*”; “*self generation of profit in business venture*”.

Students think there is a **clear focus on entrepreneurship** because “*most subjects are focused on how you would open a business.*” They also consider that the programme also develops the core skills necessary to compete in an entrepreneurial environment.

They highlighted that during the course they have acquired different practical skills. Most mentioned **innovative thinking** and **creativity** (which was also one of the preconditions of successful entrepreneurship according to their definition). Also they have acquired different **knowledge** – about marketing, conducting research, idea generation, etc. One of the respondents mentioned: “*I learnt how to successfully set up a company and what pitfalls to avoid.*” Another said: “*I have learnt a lot of theory about how certain situations may arise in business environments and how to analyse those situations and act upon them.*”

In terms of skills important for entrepreneur, the majority of students noted the following as occurring or covered in the programme – **market orientation, recognising and seizing opportunities, communication, teamwork, analysing problems, leadership, planning and organising, result orientation, strategic orientation, vision** and **emotional stability**. Also, one of the students mentioned that **determination** is important for entrepreneurs.

Some of students mentioned that they would like to get more practise and meet more entrepreneurs as guest lecturers in the class because theory is at a really high level with practise still a little bit missing.



The general **feedback is very good**: *“I believe this course prepared me for entrepreneurship quite well as I have a medical degree, so all the information was new and interesting to me.”* Another student said: *“A good course with a dedicated staff of lecturers”*.

4. STRONG AND WEAK POINTS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN DIT

The consideration of strengths and weaknesses about entrepreneurship education in DIT is based on interviews with people are involved in the MSc in Business & Entrepreneurship – Faculty, course director Paul Donnelly and students.

STRENGTHS

- ⇒ Courses are **interesting, exciting**. The MSc in Business & Entrepreneurship is different to traditional third level educational programmes.
- ⇒ **Students are very focused on entrepreneurship**. Most of the students came to this entrepreneurship programme with some kind of specific idea of a business they would like to go into in the future. And the more experience students have coming in, the stronger are the outcomes.
- ⇒ **Students** come from **different backgrounds** - Science, Engineering, Technology, etc. It means they are able to share skills, to learn from each other. Also it reveals that there is not only one way of thinking.
- ⇒ **Broad base of subjects**. If students didn't have any experience in business areas, they can get it. They have to study various different components that can be useful – accounting, taxation, marketing, strategy, creativity, etc.
- ⇒ This entrepreneurship programme makes students **think/reflect realistically and critically** about/on their ideas. It encourages **critical thinking**. For example, market orientation and managing fosters critique of themselves and their ideas in terms of theoretical knowledge.
- ⇒ **Encouragement to set up their business**. From meetings with guest speakers they can start to believe in themselves that their ideas can succeed as well. And if first time they will fail, there will be other opportunities to try again.
- ⇒ DIT combine **academic and practical knowledge** and they have found **good balance** in it.
- ⇒ Good **mix of people** – between academic and practical. A lot of faculty are entrepreneurs as well and can tell about examples from their experience.
- ⇒ The programme **is comprehensive**.
- ⇒ DIT has been very successful in **developing programmes together with industry**. DIT engages with industry with a view to incorporating learnings from such engagement into its

programmes. A lot of programmes are co-designed with industry. DIT **probably is the biggest business school in the country in dealing with industry.**

⇒ **Mix of the best experiences from other countries.** Irish people borrow from everybody – they have taken experience from USA, from Canada, Europe.

⇒ MSc in Business & Entrepreneurship is very **innovative**. They have **experimented with different ways of doing things**.

⇒ **Different and innovative teaching methods.** Lecturers use a lot of case studies, video materials, multimedia, practical examples, students visit and analyse real companies, etc.

⇒ There is also **the trip to Prague** for students. The aim of this is to get a sense of entrepreneurship in another environment and also possibilities that can exist for people in DIT looking for ideas and opportunities abroad.

⇒ A number of support areas exist within DIT that are focused on entrepreneurship.

- One is the Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship which provides **entrepreneurship support to different minority groups** - ethnic, grey, disabled, gay, female, prisoners, travellers, Irish-speaking, socio-economically disadvantaged. **They are the only Institute in Ireland in doing this.** It is very good because entrepreneurship is available to so many people, but not everyone has the same understanding, the same access to this. This is good way how to attract people who haven't thought about entrepreneurship before.
- Another is the **Product Development Centre**, where people can get credits, etc. Places and funding are available within an incubator setting for people with ideas for setting up a business.

WEAKNESSES

⇒ Not enough has been done at a masters level with entrepreneurship education in other programmes. It would be useful to **develop more entrepreneurship programmes across to different faculties**. An example of this is a Product Development course run collaboration between Faculty of Business and Faculty of Engineering.

⇒ DIT **doesn't have a common entrepreneurship policy strategy**. All of things which they are doing are separate and in separate locations.

⇒ **Lack of linkages in DIT's own system** – lack of mentoring, support for their graduates, etc.

⇒ **No exams on research methods**. It is essential because every master student if they want to do their PhD studies will be faced with the question from every university: what research subjects you have done? It would be desirable to formalise research methods.

⇒ Great **distance between people who operate enterprise policy and entrepreneurs**. They both can learn from each other. DIT could help to **create networks** where **business starters and business policy makers had relationship** with each other.

⇒ Some of students mentioned that practise is till missing. It would be better to make the programme even **more practical**.

5. AUTHOR'S VIEWPOINT ON DIT

Nowadays, DIT is one of the largest educational institutions in Ireland and it has introduced a lot of innovative things, especially in entrepreneurship education. DIT has established a number of things aimed at developing entrepreneurship education in Ireland, such as:

- The MSc Entrepreneurship & Business, aimed at non-business students;
- The Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship, focused on different minorities;
- The Project Development Centre, which provides incubator space and financing to aspiring entrepreneurs to realise their ideas.

First of all I was agreeably surprised with the master programme for non-business students. I am not surprised anymore that the best entrepreneurs aren't actually business programme graduates, but graduates from different faculties as these students have brilliant business ideas. And in this programme they can improve the skills considered important to be good entrepreneurs.

I was really surprised with the variety of teaching methods used in this programme and from my point of view, thanks to these methods, students can acquire not only knowledge but also practical experience. I think DIT has found a good balance between the academic/theoretical part and practice. This is probably also because DIT has great collaboration with industry. This is an example of value to other universities when it comes to entrepreneurship education.

I think the job Tom Cooney is doing is wonderful because in the Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship they are thinking also about people who can be great entrepreneurs, like retired people and disabled people. These programmes for minorities are great in breaking down barriers! Also of great value is the work of the Project Development Centre. Nowadays it is one of the leading centres for enterprise and innovation.

But from my point of view, DIT should encourage closer collaboration between all people involved in entrepreneurship (Project Development Centre, Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship, lecturers from entrepreneurship programmes, etc.). Everybody has the same aim: improve and develop entrepreneurship education. And the results will be more successful if they will sit together and develop a common policy on entrepreneurship education.

APPENDIX

“IF YOU ARE OPEN TO OPPORTUNITY, THEN IT IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE”

(T.Cooney.)

Name of the person being interviewed: *THOMAS M.COONEY*

About person: One of the leading authorities on entrepreneurship education in Ireland.

Director of the Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship and Research Fellow at DIT. Vice-President of the European Council for Small Business (ECSB) and a Council Member of the Irish Academy of Management (IAM).

He has researched, presented, and published widely on the topic of entrepreneurship, including editing two books – “New Venture Creation in Ireland” (with Shane Hill) and “Irish Cases in Entrepreneurship”.

Date: 14.05.2008.

Educational institute: The Dublin Institute of Technology

Involved in entrepreneurship course: Lecturer in Entrepreneurship.



How can you define entrepreneurship?

I think entrepreneurship is way of thinking, way of behaving. The idea of entrepreneurship - being only about new venture creation - is too narrow definition because you can have it in many different contexts. You can have entrepreneurship, for example, in public sector organizations. So... we need to think about expanding what we understand with term “entrepreneurship” to include all activities which are connected with entrepreneurship.

Can you mention 5 words which you connect with entrepreneurship? First five which comes in your mind!

Opportunity, resources, team, risk and ‘mindset’.

I PART. WORK IN THE “INSTITUTE FOR MINORITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP”

You are Director of the “Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship”. Can you tell about these programmes for minority groups!

We designed and delivered tailored entrepreneurship programmes for people from different minority communities. We defined minorities broadly; it’s not just ethnic minorities. We also include prisoners, the Romany community, and people with disabilities. We got 8 different disadvantage communities that we work with. We delivered tailor programmes to each of these

because we recognized that you can not have a broad programme that suits for all of these communities because each of them has different challenges. So we try to work with.

Tell me more about activities you are doing for minority groups!

For example, last month we run one day seminar here about business opportunities for people from Eastern Europe. We worked with Eastern Europe group, particularly the Baltic States. We invited them and delivered work shops and things like business planning and accessing to finance to encourage people from Eastern Europe start up their business. A lot of activities happened there.

Can you tell more about these programmes for minority groups?

For example, I went to prison to give the programme because 50% of prisoners in Ireland are back in prison within 4 years. The main reason why they are back to the prison is because they can't get a job. So the idea is that we give them starting up a business programme that they can think about something for themselves. We give them training on how to find the idea, how to promote their business, how to fill in, etc. The biggest difficulty with all of these communities is self esteem because many of them are coming to entrepreneurship from a negative experience such as racism, discrimination, prejudice. So if you have a problem with self esteem than starting up a business is not necessarily a good idea. So the way we designed the programme... how we call it is **“build the person, build the business”**. So we start with building the person. There is a lot of person development work and then we start building the business idea because it just our belief that **you can't have a good business if you don't feel good about yourself**. It's about all these programmes.

I will speak in conference in Estonia next week about experiences of delivering starting own business programme with prisoners.

Also I just finished the programme with women from the Romany community. The programme was designed specially for them because literacy is one big challenge for them.

How long are these programmes?

Usually 8 weeks. When I am saying 8 weeks, it means one workshop of 3 hours per week.

Where do you get funding for these programmes? From EU funds?

It could be from EU but more it is some kind of public funding.

Have you notice how these programmes change people?

Not yet because we only started. The last year was the first year. It is too early. **We are the onliest in Ireland who is doing this.**

Where did you get the idea of these programmes?

We have been very lucky in Ireland with economical growth of last 10, 15 years but I just felt that not everyone was benefiting from economical well-being and as I said earlier when you asked me to define entrepreneurship, I just think **entrepreneurship is available to so many people but not everyone has the same understanding, the same access to this.** What I am trying to do is to give people the option to start their own business. I am no trying to change them or force them. But I want to say to people in these communities: “When you look at your life, when you look at your career options, here is one option for you that you may consider.”

One of the problems with entrepreneurship is that **people are afraid by the world and they are frightened of what they think is entrepreneur.** There are a number of misconceptions around the town, which we are trying to get rid of it. **“Entrepreneurs are born not made - is rubbish. Entrepreneurs have to be clearly creative – is rubbish. Entrepreneurs have to be independent and law actors – is rubbish. Entrepreneurs have a lot of money. It is also wrong.”** So... people believe to those misconceptions. And they think you have to been born as entrepreneur, for example. They will look at someone like Richard Branson and say: “Here is typical entrepreneur and I couldn’t be like him therefore I couldn’t ever be an entrepreneur.” The problem is that very few people in the world could ever be like Richard Branson. He is unique, he is very exception. But all the around us, around our community, villages and towns are lots of examples of people from very normal background, very normal people, who started their own businesses and were successful. And those are the people we should be celebrating. And those are the people we should be saying: “Look! There are the entrepreneurs and you can be like them.” That’s where the idea came from.

Another example is about people with disabilities. The rate of employment for people with disabilities is appalling. The rate of pay they receive is appalling. When people with disabilities get vocational training nobody ever talk with them about starting up their own business. But setting up their own business could actually be the best possibility for them because they can work from home using technologies and do what they want at home. They don’t have to worry about public transport, access to buildings, they don’t need to worry about hospital appointments because

they can choose their own hours, they can walk when they want. They don't need to worry about discrimination. So there is huge opportunity for people with disabilities to have a very good economic life through their own business. But nobody ever gives them such option. So, that's what we are trying to do.

When did you start to deliver these programmes?

The Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship was established in 2006 but we spent a lot of time with researches because one of the things we wanted to do with each community, was to do research – identify their needs, identify the best way of delivering the materials, pilot programme and then delivery and see what happens. But you can only do it properly if you do the research first. So we did a lot of research in 2006 and then we started to delivering programmes in 2007 and now we are expanding these programmes to 2008.

Which will be the next target group? What are your plans for future?

One of the things we want to do with ethnic communities is to start work separately. At the moment we are working with all ethnic communities together. For example, there is a high percentage of Polish people in Ireland – so to work with polish people alone. We are talking with Warsaw University about delivering programme together. We will give them accreditation there and here. If they will take the programme and decide to go to Poland they will have certificate which will also be valid in Poland. So not just starting up a business in Ireland but also starting up a business in Poland. I would like to work with the Baltic States. Also would like to work with Chinese community, Nigerian community. That's one thing I would like to do.

Another group with which we would like to start working is the grey community - people over 50. A lot of people are retired earlier but still feel very young and energetic. There is a huge amount of knowledge and experience and there is no reason why people can't find a new career. They have finished their career, they are pensioned, children have grown up, they have spare time and spare money. And many of them are looking for challenge and the challenge could be maybe home base business.

And another group with which we just started to work is gay community. That's very different.

How many people are participating in these programmes and how do you find them?

Usually we aim for 15 people per programme. We always work in partnership with organizations from those communities, who help to those minorities. It is because of 2 reasons. First it helps to

identify potential participants. Secondly, we are really good in entrepreneurship education but we are not good of understanding the different challenges that people from these communities injure. For example, people with disabilities. I can't stand in front of group of people with disabilities and say: "I feel your pain. I understand your challenge." Because I don't. I don't have this disability. Therefore I can't say that. But what we do, we team up the people from disability organizations. We bring in people from these communities who can talk about it.

The same is with prisoners. We work with organizations who work with prisoners because I don't understand them. So we work together with these people in that programme. One workshop I might deliver, other maybe they deliver, sometimes we work together in one workshop. It gives some kind of balance between business expertise and understanding of challenges. There are also experts on personal development from different organizations.

How many people from DIT are involved in these programmes?

Just 6.

What kind of feedback have you received from these minority groups after programme?

The general feedback is excellent, superb. But we encourage people to identify where we can improve these programmes. There are 2 things. First you should never stop looking to improve your products and services anyway. Secondly, finding out how we can better tailor, better design our programmes for people we are working with because it is very, very new territory and we must learn very quickly. We make lots and lots of mistakes. But that's the entrepreneurship.

II PART. WORK IN THE DIT AS LECTURER IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

You are also lecturer in Entrepreneurship at the DIT. What kind of teaching methods do you use to make entrepreneurship course exciting and interesting for students?

On undergraduate level we run entrepreneurship only on business courses. We do some interesting staff within that. For example, 3 years ago one of my programmes was *New venture creation*. I managed to persuade management that students should **have no exam at the end of year but instead they must run venture for charity**. They are breaking into groups of 2 or 3 and go and organize any event they want and all money they earn goes to charity of their choice. That's the

exam because it is entrepreneurship. I like that it gets them doing things for real and also it gets them thinking about helping to other people.

How do they earn this money?

For example, they would run music event and charge people to go to it. They would get a band who people don't know. They would advertise to people that all money they will get they will give to charity. Other examples could be sponsored walks, sponsored cycles, pop quiz would be popular. One group with the best performance earned 6000 euros.

In a group of about 30 students in average they will normally earn about 13 000, 14 000 euro and they give it money to charity.

For how long time is this task?

It's part of semester programme. They spend early part of semester of thinking of idea, preparing and organizing and then at the end of semester they run the event. Then they write their lovely experience. And then there is no exam because it is already like exam. My argument is: **if you teach entrepreneurship you don't learn entrepreneurship sitting in the exam.**

In DIT is master programme *Business and Entrepreneurship* where are studying students with different background education - Science, Engineering, Technology, etc. How do they cope with it?

It's a different environment because the assumptions you make with business students and their level knowledge, basic business ideas... this group don't have, they are not exposed to business education previously. So in many ways you've got to go back from your starting point. And also business students can move faster as well. So the starting point and the pace are quite different. But in many ways they are more interesting because they are coming from diverse backgrounds and they've got diversity of thinking and when they talked to you about different ideas... their ideas are very different from business students! **They tend to be more imagines group and it makes it more interesting, more exciting and more challenging.** I found much more willing students, much more positive about entrepreneurial education. I enjoyed the challenge and diversity!

Another thing is that we have international students, particularly Chinese students. I love that as well. For example, in my class I said: the student sitting next to you must be from different

country because in class students are sitting in the same groups all the time. Changing places just helps to build integration, helps to build team spirit as well.

I have taken a class to **dog racing** sport. It is very popular sport in Ireland and it is in stadiums where you go and gamble. It is great, great fun! So every year I take a class to these events. I do it early because it is really big fun and as I said to one of the classes: it is a feel trip and it is risk taking because you are gambling money but what I like, **it builds team spirit very, very quickly and also shows that I am interested in thinking beyond the classroom and I am interested in them.** And I like to build the idea that you are an entrepreneurship class and you are different, you are special, unique. It's not necessarily being true but it is what I am trying to get across. Yes, that you are special and you need to be treated specially. And in return I expect them to work harder with me and because you do these little things you build class bond very quickly, strong interaction with students and generally they respond very, very positively.

Maybe you can reveal other interesting teaching methods which you use in teaching process?

Another important thing is that class has got to be dynamic, multifaceted. I have got lecture materials what I want to deliver but also **you need to have guest speakers, particularly from their community.** For example, on undergraduate level the speakers I will get in either will be expert in that area in area where I am not, for example, intellectual property would be one.

I get people, the entrepreneurs, to tell the bad news not just good news. What is also important with guest speakers that approximately half of my students now are female which has changed from 10 years ago. So it is important to get **female guest speakers.** As I said it is more difficult because previous years I didn't have so many female students and also the number of female starting up a business is still quite very low. But it is important to make that effort.

When I have international students I try to identify entrepreneurs from that community to bring them in. So... guest speakers, case studies. Yes, I use **Irish case studies.** (*Gives a book*) Here is a book with cases. Previously we tended to use American cases, in the past, but our students can't rely to American cases. Now we have Irish cases. This organization INTRE established it 4 years ago. It is Ireland network of teachers and researches on entrepreneurship. We set it up to improve entrepreneurship education in Ireland. So we use Irish cases or now we can use European cases as well. Also I have some video material. (*Gives it as well*) So we use some video materials.

One more example, in week 1, when they come in, we start up by doing an exercise: **they are on Desert Island, the boat is being washed to the shore, and they must tell me why they**

should be put on the boat and survive. The exercise is for one hour and they have to do it in groups. What I like about this task is that when they come in the class they are expecting traditional lecture and they get something completely different.

In week 2 they have to come in and make presentation for 10 minutes for something creative they have done. They can sing a song, they can do a play. Do whatever they want. I don't care, but it must be original and it is really, really great fun!

In week 3 usually we go to dog racing. At this stage they have recognized that programme they are taking is quite different from sitting in a classroom for 2 hours and listening somebody to talk. I try to change it all the time, to keep an interest and keep it exciting. You've got to organize all of different elements but **the most important ingredient for good lecturer is not knowledge but I believe it is enthusiasm.** If you are enthusiastic about your teaching and about your work then it comes across to students.

III PART. ENTREPRENURSHIP & COMPETENCES/SKILLS

Can you select from this list 5 skills that you find most important for an entrepreneur? And can you explain why these skills are important?

1. Recognizing and seizing opportunities
2. Leadership
3. Teamwork
4. Self confidence
5. Result orientation

Recognizing and seizing opportunities is number one. I think someone who is entrepreneur have to be open to opportunities and make things happen. Finding opportunities can happen in social clubs, in sport clubs. For example, in sports club you need new dressing rooms. Then recognizing that and doing something about it, is being entrepreneurial. So that's probably the most important.

One student asked me very good question: "**How do I train myself to recognize opportunity?**" My answer was: "**If you are open to opportunity, then it is always available.**" Like I find it in education; I am very open to ideas and opportunities and looking to do things. People come to me

with ideas and opportunities and I never short their ideas. **I am not particularly creative, I am just open. I think that's the key.**

One of the things we do very early in the programme is to talk about generating business ideas because there is a kind of perception that you have to have this magical idea and if you don't have this magical idea then you can't be an entrepreneur. And I make a point that **only 4% of business that start are based on ideas that are truly new, so 96% are based on ideas that already exist.**

Leadership is next. Leadership is also about – leaders are born or made. I think leaders can be made. I think leadership is about knowing what you want, having a vision, knowing how you will get it and then going to make it happen. If you have these ideas in your head then you should share those with people. Those who are interested in it, they will follow you. I find it in organizing simple events, you must tell people: “We will have this event on this time, day, and here is what's going to happen.” And people will follow. So setting leadership is very important.

Team work is next. There are stories about lone heroes. That's wrong. For example, Bill Gates, great Microsoft, started with Paul Allen. So you can't go through. You can't be alone; you need to work in teams to make success.

Self-confidence is number four. We are working on it even more particularly when we are with minority communities where the bigger issue is on self-esteem. We are working on building a self-confidence, we are dealing with rejection that it's not you they are rejecting but it is sales they are rejecting.

Result orientation is number five. Research shows that people, who write their goals, are goal oriented and they are far more successful. I think too much time (particularly in Ireland) we spend measuring people's inputs rather than outputs. Like employers want to know has the employee turned up at 9 o'clock and did not leave until 5 but they have might be done nothing for that time they were there. Some maybe turns at 10 and leaves at 4 but has done really good work. They might be a better person for you. We measure input not output but I prefer output. That's why I selected result orientation.

Can students improve these skills during your entrepreneurship subject?

I never believe that taking my programme... that these are magic once, that makes and turns person in entrepreneurs but I do believe that I engender or awake them in entrepreneurial mindset; I will help them to identify their capabilities and I suppose I will give them believe that they are capable of doing it. It won't change the behaviour immediately but over time it certainly will. On a programme **I want to give them life skill**, it doesn't matter what career they will do, even work for somebody else, **having the entrepreneurial mindset is wonderful attitude to have, and it's wonderful characteristic.**

What are the strong and weak points of entrepreneurship programmes in DIT?

I really like what they are doing in Northern Ireland, in *NICENT*, in Queens because I think business students probably are not the best entrepreneurs. Engineering and Science students are probably better potential entrepreneurs - different thinking and they've got ideas. Every year students have to do a business plan. The standard of business plan of business students is excellent but the idea was... like they can't come up with really good ideas.

Couple years ago I organized business plan writing between Faculty of Engineering and Faculty of Business. Engineer students had great ideas but they couldn't write a business plan. What we did? We organized speed dating events between faculties and we brought them together. It's been so much successful. But **I would like to see much more entrepreneurship programmes across to different faculties.** We run one course *Product Development* which is collaboration between Faculty of Business and Faculty of Engineering which I think is really good course. But we are not doing enough for that.

At postgraduate level we got masters in business entrepreneurship, very good programme. My only negative comment on this is that it is too theoretical. **I think there is not enough practice.** For example, I would like to see students doing something like charity event. So... it is too theoretical. Also masters level are not doing enough entrepreneurship education in other programmes.

We have the learning centre. That's an advice centre available for anyone - for students and also to general public - if they have an idea, if they are thinking about starting up their business; it is good to have it within the school. We also have Hothouse programme which is very good, Project development centre which is kind of incubation, space for people with ideas. So we do that.

We are doing quite a lot and quite interesting staff but... we are doing not enough. **We don't have common entrepreneurship policy strategy.** All of these things which we are doing are separate, in separate location. We don't meet to talk; we don't meet to discuss how we can work

together. **We don't talk and don't create strategy.** So I think that's the opportunity for us to develop.

The strong points I think... Courses are interesting, exciting, they are different to traditional third level educational programmes. That's the strength and that's the feedback we get.

We have problems with **low attendance.** We don't have full attendance rates in class. I think it's not unique, all universities have that problem. My attendance rates are always very good. **What students said to me is that they want to come to my class.** That's the strength.

The weakness is that we should have linkages in our own system, we should have mentoring, support for our graduates, we should support, being available behind the classroom.

***“I GOT A SENSE THAT THEY WERE STEPPING OUTSIDE OF
PARTICULAR WAY OF THINKING”***

(B.O'Rourke.)

Name of the person being interviewed: *BRENDAN O'ROURKE*

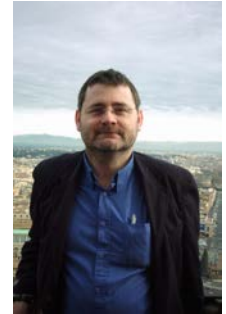
Date: 12.05.2008.

Educational institute: The Dublin Institute of Technology

Involved in entrepreneurship course: MSc in Business & Entrepreneurship

Teaching area: Business Strategy course

Length of course Strategy & Creativity: 24 contact weeks (12 weeks for Strategy)



How can you define entrepreneurship?

I tend to think that it is best to associate it with small start up firms. So if I have to give a definition I would say it's to do with organization creation. I recognize that small start up firms sometimes may not be enterprising in the way that we would like to be and that also you have enterprise within corporations. And the course where I am involved certainly has both of those in mind. But as scientific definition I think it is probably easier to tie with these small and recent start ups.

Can you mention 5 words which you connect with entrepreneurship? First five which comes in your mind!

Risk taking, inventiveness and creativity together, passion, autonomous and moral and ethical.

You are teaching Business Strategy. Is this course and that programme in general more about starting up a business or being entrepreneurial?

I think it's about doing both. There are elements of business plan. I teach them Business Strategy and that is very standard strategy. It's done in combination with somebody who teaches the creativity. I think most people will be tending to set up their own businesses.

There might be also people who work for policy making bodies or policy implementing bodies and what we want to do is to give them a sense that there are critical academic studies of how entrepreneur policy operates. From my own perspective, in my own research I look at how small form founders use the discourse of entrepreneurship and strategy.

Are there defined skills in entrepreneurship course?

Yes, there is. We spent a lot of time talking what kind of skills we want to develop. Certainly we want skills which are weak strengthened. Strategy documents, strategy arguments, if I talk about my particular area. But I think we are all very keen to say these masters on entrepreneurship is

different from a start your own business course in sense **that it's a masters which require people to be quite critically reflective on entrepreneurship.** It's my own strong belief that it will be more likely a niche creativity and perhaps allow people to be more responsible.

Can you select from this list 5 skills that you find most important for an entrepreneur? And can you explain why these skills are important?

1. Recognizing and seizing opportunities
2. Strategic orientation
3. Self efficiency
4. Emotional stability
5. Reflection

Recognizing and seizing opportunities is number one. I think it is very hard and it's very fundamental thing what entrepreneurs do. That's why it is number one. My view on strategy is that strategic thinking, strategic planning is important for seizing opportunities. And strategic planning is preparing your mind to see the opportunities.

The second one I put ***strategic orientation***, maybe because I think I wanted this balance between idea recognizing and seizing opportunities. Obviously it is in the particular module I teach and in the whole programme as well.

Third I chose ***self efficiency*** because I think when you are in a small start up situation, which I tried to define as an entrepreneurship at a start, (even if you are an entrepreneur within a corporation) in that early stage it is so important to be in a charge of yourself. You are like a champion or a leader of what's going on, so you need to be efficient. I could put something like leadership next but it can be very ambiguous and it is also too narrow of things what I said.

Number four is ***emotional stability*** because I think champions and entrepreneurs need to be balanced. I think this is a skill which can be learnt. There are too much stress on being very committed and that comes from trying to be optimistic all the time

Reflection, critical reflection can be number five. Sometimes it is seen as something what maybe only policy makers and sociologists should be concerned but actually I think entrepreneurs are

quite interested in that because it impacts them directly. When you talk to small firm entrepreneurs they are really concerned: “Am I being a really of noxious boss to my employees?” A lot of them express that’s why they left big organizations, they wanted to avoid that. Of course a lot of them are conscious they reproduce the same things themselves. And I think critical reflection is the key part of what they should learn.

Can students improve these skills during this course?

Yes, for example, recognizing and seizing opportunities. Within strategy there is a good history and set of techniques about strategic thinking. For instance, the discussion of scenarios that can give rise to seeing opportunities that you otherwise wouldn’t see.

In terms of self efficiency...I think by getting them to work into teams, by talking with them, getting them deliver materials to deadlines, by stretching them. You will often give them quite a challenge to attain something and as they attain that, the weaknesses and their self management will come up.

Emotional stability... I think there is a lot of that in any masters.

Reflection is something we just require them to do. **They have to keep individual diaries. They don’t need to show me it.** They must do it by themselves. I ask them to write it from first day. I think probably they don’t rather it is probably just an occasional activity. They must write what they like, dislike. I might give 5 minutes at the beginning of class to write some definition and then they can see how their skills have changed. They can test themselves.

How long is this course?

Strategy & Creativity is 24 contact weeks all together. Strategy I take for 12 and then creativity takes another guy. And it would be 12 weeks. But all marks would be added together.

What kind of assessments do you use?

I would give them a group project that would worth 30%, exam would worth 20% and another guy did the same.

For the group project basically I ask them to take the company. I ask them to define the company from the start of the year and I would ask them to do the **strategy analysis for existing company.** And then I give them feedback on it. This assignment has been given to them at the beginning of year plus they must keep **reflective diary.**

At the end of year is **exam**. And exam is quite academic. Very discursive – can you discuss this, and this, etc. I am always saying to them: “As more examples you can give, the better.” Also they must give arguments of different statements. They did response to that and most of them were able to give critical feeling, **I got a sense that they were stepping outside of their particular way of thinking.**

What kind of teaching methods do you use? Do you use interactive approach?

It's quite easy to make it interactive because there are only 15 students in class. I stop and ask them to work in groups for different examples.

So you use group works. Do you ask them to present their ideas as well?

No, I don't ask them to present their project. Next year probably I will teach Creativity as well and then I will ask them to do presentations.

You are more focused on analyzing, making them to think.

Yes... yes.

What are the strong and weak points of your subject and course in general?

Ok, let's start with myself. There is a tension because I must teach them the language of strategy but they also need critical side. That's the tension, I am not sure is it very well handled by me at the moment. It will be interesting to see how it will work next year.

It's hard in the same time to be very enthusiastic about particular theories and then to turn around and show the weaknesses of that theory . I try to get that balance rise and try to find a proper way of doing that. In some ways I try to encourage people to be very good and I say: “Porters 5 forces (which they need to know) are smart.” But you don't want to turn around 5 minutes later and tell what nonsense it is. But I have recognized that this is skill as well. It is delicate balance. People need to be able use these things and then to be able stand out of them. I am not sure I've got right yet now.

Group and individual work is always a problem. I think in group work they learn a lot. I use it but it means that 40% of my marks are group marks. You can see that it can be problematic. It has never been on this course but it will be sometime.

The overall strengths and weaknesses.

Very interesting is that course welcomes students who haven't got business background. So it is interesting to watch sometimes. There is not one way of thinking.

Also I think we haven't had that kind of recruitment we would like from people who are going to policy agencies because there are a great distance between people who operate enterprise policy and entrepreneurs. They both can learn from each other. That was one the aims of the course were to have that kind of linkage.

Maybe you have to invite guest lectures to make this cooperation closer?

Yes, we do. But I think if we could get into the recruitment we can make the differences because sometimes very stupid decisions are made by bureaucrats. And likewise very stupid decisions are made by entrepreneurs.

I think if we could help to create networks where business starters and business policy makers had relationship with each other, it would be really useful. That's the weakness I see in recruiting we have in the course.

Certainly from my research experience entrepreneurs are sophisticated human beings. We need sophisticates and we have very sophisticated entrepreneurs and they are crying out for serious training and serious challenges. My view is that we should insist if it is the masters' level of education that they receive academic, independent research capability. And I don't think we are doing it fully yet in this course.

But I think students are very happy to come here and students do get critical skills, I just think the danger is that you become too like just a start your own business course. And therefore you don't give students what they deserve.

Have you received feedback from students?

Yes, we receive feedback every year. You receive interesting comments. Some of the feedbacks are very useless. For example, some of students say, they want more economics. But in general I get sense that students are satisfied, I don't think they feel robbed.

What is unique in this course, what makes it different from other universities with similar courses?

I think we have attempted to have quite academic field and quite critical field. Sometimes maybe you don't see that, you have entrepreneurship courses which really just reproducing enterprise.



We do combine academic knowledge and practical as well. I think not a lot of masters in enterprise do that.

We (DIT) have a very good Product development centre already where people can get some credits, etc. If you have idea for setting up your business you can be subsidized.

I am involved also in encouraging enterprise competitions in other undergraduate courses.

“WE BUILD THEIR CONFIDENCE IN MOVING FORWARD AS ENTREPRENEURS”

(P.Donnelly.)

Name of the person being interviewed: *PAUL DONNELLY*

About person: Course Director

Date: 13.05.2008.

Educational institute: The Dublin Institute of Technology

Involved in entrepreneurship course: MSc in Business & Entrepreneurship

What’s the aim of this course MSc in Business & Entrepreneurship?

It’s not geared towards those who already have a business background (ie. a business undergraduate or taught graduate) because the assumption we would have is that they would already be well placed in terms of having knowledge to find areas of business and to be able to put together a business idea and to start it on their own. **It is more geared to those who come from non-business background – Engineering Science, Social Sciences, Technology and so on.** I suppose giving them something very focused, they will start to think more about ideas coming from their own respective backgrounds and they will think how can they turn these ideas into businesses themselves.

There will be some who are interested in working in large organizations to get experience there, but my sense from talking with students is that they are thinking of starting their own businesses. Most students we get come straight from undergraduate into the course.

Can you explain the structure of this course?

It is one year course, structured into 2 taught semesters and 1 semester (summer) to become more heavily engaged with and complete the portfolio dissertation. There are **5 modules** per semester. The idea is that it is grouped in 5 areas – Strategy and Creativity, Marketing for Emergent Enterprises, Technology and Operations, Accounting and Venture Finance, Taxation and Law.

In addition to that there is **portfolio dissertation** which comprises 3 parts (with 2 linked parts). Two linked parts are the Business Plan and New Product Development. The other component is a mini entrepreneurship dissertation. That’s something we are currently reviewing because we can see what the students certainly see - where the market, the business and new product development plan fit together – but the entrepreneurship element of the portfolio presents difficulties in that it seems to stand apart. So we are looking, at the moment, to see what we are able to change.

There are also **seminars** that might be organized. Seminars are very much linked with the portfolio dissertation.

There is also a **course trip**, which, so far, has been **Prague**, to get a sense of entrepreneurship in another environment and also possibilities that can exist for people here looking for ideas and possibilities abroad.

The programme works 3 days a week – Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. We leave Mondays and Wednesdays free for them to work on course work and on their own ideas.

How many credits receive students for this programme?

Each module strand is worth 10 credits (100 marks) and the portfolio dissertation is worth 40 credits (400 marks). That's 90 credit overall – 50 credits for the module component and 40 for the dissertation component.

What is concept seed?

It's just a way of trying to get a sense of building on ideas, which then flows on to giving an understanding of product development and market development – a process of stages. This links with the dissertation, where the first semester is all about ideas, while the second semester is then building on an idea through product and market (business plan) development.

In this programme all subjects are compulsory or there are optional as well?

No, in this programme all subjects are required.

Do students have internship?

No.

Do you invite guest lecturers?

That's very much up to the faculty team teaching on the programme. If they know people they would like to bring in, that's very much up to them.

Do you use interactive learning in this course?

Teaching strategy depends on the preferred style of each person teaching on the programme. Each has her/his own style, learning strategy. My sense is that they use variety of teaching methods.

Have you received feedback from students about this course?

Every year for every module students complete feedback. This feedback is aggregated and put into reports to Faculty Executive. It's about every single programme, about every single module that we deliver in the faculty. In general, students are satisfied with the course. I haven't heard from students that they had different expectations and they have not looked for changes.

You said that in this master programme *Business and Entrepreneurship* are studying students with different background education - Science, Engineering, Technology, etc. How do they cope with this course?

Essentially they feel relatively comfortable. Some may have more abilities in some areas, for example, those from a technical background might be more adapted in accounting and finance because they are more comfortable dealing with figures. Those who come from non-quantitative backgrounds can feel more comfortable in dealing, for example, with marketing. But I think you have that in any course, any programme - people who like particular things and feel comfortable with particular things.

Do you organize some competitions - business plan, business idea competition, etc.?

We don't within the programmes but certainly there are various competitions. One, for example, is Enterprise Ireland and Seamus has encouraged students to develop their business plans for that competition.

At undergraduate level there is a competition run by the Bolton Trust for entrepreneurship, for those with business ideas at undergraduate level. That encourages undergraduates from business to mix with undergraduates from other faculties to develop their ideas. But sometimes, of course, you have all business students or all engineering students.

Can you select from this list 5 skills that you find most important for an entrepreneur? And can students improve these skills during that course?

1. Market orientation
2. Communication
3. Planning and organizing
4. Self-confidence
5. Reflection

All of them are important; it's hard to pick just 5. All of these skills are reflected in this course. Some are very specific. For example, **market orientation** can be improved through the Marketing for Emergent Enterprises module. In other modules, that notion (market orientation) would also be present, even in law and taxation.

Communication is very important. It is about communicating ideas – if you don't have finance you must communicate about it; it is also communication with customers, communication with employees, employers, etc. Communication is not only talking itself but also about listening. Students must make presentations, talk about their ideas.

Planning and organizing is very, very important because if you don't plan and organize you will be out of business. It also permeates all of the modules. All year, they must plan and organize their work. If they don't do that then they will be behind, they will be missing things, etc. It is about practicality again.

Self-confidence, obviously - to be able to stand up and talk about your idea. People will ask the questions and you will need self-confidence to be able to deal with them.

Reflection. You are standing back and looking at things and learning from that – from mistakes, from what went well, etc. And again it is in the course. For example, case studies are good reflective exercises.

Is there a big competition on this programme?

We have only 30 places in the programme. We get people who already have a master degree. This year, we have received applications from people with PhDs and who have partial studies towards a PhD.

What are the strong and weak points of this course?

The teaching team is very **dedicated** and the modules we have fit with **what people would need to help them in moving forward** as entrepreneurs, as individuals or within organizations, etc. **It builds their confidence in moving forward as entrepreneurs.**

The portfolio dissertation has strength certainly in relation to product development and the business plan because it is **very practical** and students are automatically **engaged in research** to develop that task.

I guess the area where we have a question mark is the entrepreneurship element of the portfolio dissertation because it is more academic and doesn't fit as easily with the other two elements. Should it be a very academic component? Or should it be very practical?

Students are leaving with the **sense that they have accomplished something**, that what they have received meet their needs. That's good feedback for us.

Another strength for the programme is that **we are really the only programme in Ireland** that is offering something very specific. Others are offering options in relation to entrepreneurship but I think we are the only full programme specific to entrepreneurship.

Appendix 4

“THE MORE EXPERIENCE STUDENTS HAVE COMING HERE, THE STRONGER ARE OUTCOMES”

(C.McBride.)

Name of the person being interviewed: **CLAIRE McBRIDE**

Date: 14.05.2008.

Educational institute: The Dublin Institute of Technology

Involved in entrepreneurship course: MSc in Business & Entrepreneurship

Teaching area: New Product Development

How can you define entrepreneurship?

The ability to form and grow an idea, product or company and make it commercially available.

Can you mention 5 words which you connect with entrepreneurship? First five which comes in your mind!

Commercial, innovative, drive, execution, market driven.

What's the aim of your subject?

The aim effectively was to provide students with process they would need to follow to bring a product from its original conception through a business plan, through research, market testing, etc.

The best practise industry, methodologies for doing that.

What teaching methods do you use to achieve the aim?

There would be everything from critiquing of literature in terms of the best practise, critiquing actual company or product service cases and developing their own product or service.

Do you also invite guest lecturers?

Yes, people who had built products or services; generally in smaller companies rather in larger companies.

Can you tell about assignments?

The assignment largely is based around developing new product or service, business case, literature review, around best practise, what exist in market place and that kind of thing and effectively evidence that the product had gone through various life cycle stages of a new product.

In this master programme *Business and Entrepreneurship* are studying students with different background education - Science, Engineering, Technology, etc. How do they cope with it?

With difficulty. But for some of them certainly it is challenge because it is something they haven't done before. It can be quite difficult to conceive of a product or service and bring them through stages, is quite difficult to do it in real practise, in real company with real budget. So it is quite difficult for them to do it.

They are studying real company cases, the best practises.

What kind of skills students improve during your subject?

The main one is about commercialisation. A lot of us can have ideas about what we would like to do and what products in market would be accepted and embraced but... you know, its classic definition of innovation but commercial success means that you need to make a profit. It's about costs, goods, materials, etc. The practical side. Because I think people very often look at product development as on something as component of innovation but innovation can be whatever you meant it to be yourself. But to clarify what idea really might start then you must look towards the stages and say: "What was the market there, what's the competition, what's the value proposition, etc."

Have you received feedback from students? Are they satisfied with this course?

I think they find it challenging for this year. The assignment which was designed was very challenging. It required them to do something very practical, which is the new product development study along with the literature and research.

What are the strong and weak points of this entrepreneurship course in general?

The more experience students have coming in, the stronger are outcomes because if you are looking at someone who is relatively experienced, it is very difficult for them to apply because everything is very abstract. My own view about entrepreneurs is that they need to have exposure to real world business. They need to actually have got in their hands a little bit dirty in a real world before they can truly grasp what entrepreneurship in a combined to theory application sense in third level institution can actually do for them. Otherwise it is very abstract.

So experiences is critical, that's both – strong and weakness - depending on where the participant is coming from.

I think the more likely student is to start or continue their own business, the more useful it is and the more applied it can be.

From strength perspective for someone even exiting the programme and going into international environment where they don't need to be responsible for portion of whether there will be product line or something like that. They will have a good portfolio of what is needed to make business successful from thing like writing a business case to coming up with ideas to driving the market and that kind of things.

Can you select from this list 5 skills that you find most important for an entrepreneur? And can you explain why these skills are important?

1. Market orientation (+ international orientation)
2. Planning and organizing
3. Recognizing and seizing opportunities
4. Strategic orientation
5. Self efficacy

Well I think *market orientation* combined with international orientation is first one. In Ireland we are looking it together because our market is so small, we don't see it differently. I think a lot of our entrepreneurs in Ireland are incremental. We are not big inventors. We are restrictors either.

We tend to take something what is done somewhere else and make it better, faster, cheaper. It is about looking what opportunities exist in the market. So that's one.

Planning, organizing fundamentally. We can call it time managing. Well, being able to plan your day, plan your business, plan funding and organizing all of that. I worked with entrepreneurs who are the most brilliantly innovative people ever made, they can make components for aircrafts but they can't actually decide which piece of market opportunity they are going for, etc. And there is no ability to prioritize, plan, forecast, even write proposal. It's reality.

Recognizing and seizing opportunities are part of market orientation. How do I target my market? What's my value proposition? And how do I look at competitors' landscape? Maybe there is opportunity; maybe there is so much competition. How can I be a little bit unique? What proportion of service or product do I need to offer in terms of making sure that I stay competitive?

Strategic orientation is part of what I just said. I would say strategic orientation and result orientation are probably the same. There are tactical things everybody has to do. Then you are saying: "OK, my business looking at a plan... I will have a half million next year. But where do I want to be in 3 years time? And what does my team look like to get there? What competitions do or not do? Which countries do I target or not target? How do I position myself?" It's tactical, it's strategic in terms where is the profit, where is the competition, etc. Some of them are related as you see.

Can students improve these skills during this course?

Yes. Also if I could pick more I would pick team work because there is quite a lot of group work involved. Self confidence... things like making pictures to the bank, founders, etc.

Communication... couldn't get through the programme without it. Negotiation in terms of team work is part of what they are doing all the time.

There is nothing here inappropriate. It's very difficult to prioritize. I just thought ok, let's not be too detailed about.

Are there any skills you want to add to this list?

I think financial, accounting. The ability to read sheets, calculate margins, be able to make assessment of market potential.

Appendix 5

YOU MUST MOVE OUTSIDE OF PARADIGM!”

(A.Hughes.)

Name of the person being interviewed: *ANTHONY HUGHES*

Date: 14.05.2008.

Educational institute: The Dublin Institute of Technology

Involved in entrepreneurship course: MSc in Business & Entrepreneurship

Teaching area: Creativity

Length of course Strategy&Creativity: 24 contact weeks (12 weeks for Creativity)

How can you define entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship I would define as somebody who is innovative and possibly more risk taker than others.

Can you mention 5 words which you connect with entrepreneurship? First five which comes in your mind!

Creativity is one. Intellectual commitment, independence... Good enterprising skills and vision or skill to get a big picture.

What's the aim of your subject? What do you want to teach to students?

What I hope to get across of students essentially is need to be creative. But creativity is very difficult concept to define. But I suppose trying to put some shape on it and trying to get people look at things in a very different way, that essentially would be my starting point. How do I do

that? I take some part of unusual approach from point of view of university discourse because I think university discourse is far too limiting. There are a lot of reasons why I said that. The one of the reasons is that the approach of university is to operate from perspective of saying: “These are the people, the authors who have developed certain ideas in that area.” The problem is that these are given texts, recommended to students on courses what I would describe as canonical texts. It’s like canon, law. This is the essential material you have to read. This is important for students to read good academic literature but the danger or problem in university discourse is: it ties mind.

To be more specific in a lot of courses that you find (certainly in Ireland and maybe a lot of parts of the world, including Latvia and Holland) the ideas that have found in entrepreneurship in Ireland come from United States. The difficulty in USA with generation of ideas is that they rely almost exclusive on discourse of behaviour science. That’s what I am trying to say to students that **you must move outside of that paradigm**. You need to know what’s in behaviour science, there is some good stuff but you must go further.

There are 2 main reasons what I am trying to do. One of them is to **make them aware of the unconscious and make them aware of literature in that area**. They also find it very difficult because they are not used to that.

The other thing is that I believe there are a lot of materials in the area of creativity which comes from unconscious. So what I am trying to do first of all is **to open them up, and then to stimulate them to be more free thinking in their approach**.

How do you do this? Do you use some interactive teaching methods?

Yes, I do that. I do combination things. Basically in my lessons I give them some readings, unfortunately, but some of them are good anyway and stimulate them to think. In first assessment I gave them some readings. They are quite difficult and let them think.

In the second assessment they worked in groups and I told them that they can do what they want to do. I had some very good results and some not so good results.

What do you think, you can teach creativity or person is born already creative?

I think everybody has creative spark. I am not sure that you can necessary teach creativity as such but what I think, you can try to open your minds, to think up.

The class which we have comes from different streams. We have various people in the class. We have somebody who is medical technician, woman who is geologist; another is specialist in

human resources and so on and so on. To give you demonstration I'll tell you what they did in one project.

Students were working in groups – three or four. One of the groups had a chef, somebody who was good in marketing, some of persons knew about food sciences. So they did a project and it was very good. The chef cooked some scallops in the class. It was really nice! The next who came was interested in food science and nutrition and he talked about this process, about eating scallops, etc. And the marketing came down and talked about how they actually applied it, about commercial setting, about website, etc. It was quite good.

The task was to build up a new product?

No, they should have just an idea. They could do a product but it is the next stage, the application of idea. I was much more interested in idea generation. It was one of the assignments.

Another group did very interesting stuff also. Graffiti. But they had some very clever stuff done, they explained what was it about and so on and so on. And also the guy who was in this group was medical scientist and he was looking on whole question - graffiti in ancient times, how it developed, how it came out during the centuries. It's not even what they get from now; I am more interested in some kind of strange ideas, to some way "get out of the boxes".

Tell me more about other tasks and teaching methods which you use in lessons!

I talk about different teams, different approaches to things. One of things: I talk about difference between American and Japanese approach to creativity. It is suggested in some readings that Japanese workers are lot more creative than American workers. Americans say that Japanese copy everything but this maybe depends how you call it. But I think Japanese are much more open and encourage their workers to see everything as opportunity and make suggestions to manager. So they can come up with idea, and then have to come out with solution to idea. If you have idea, you give it to your boss and mostly you get lost. I don't know how it is in your country but certainly in Ireland the climate would be: "Don't baden me, I am too busy!" That's important issue.

The second question is: What methods are used? Again I would have certain disagreements with behavioural approach. They use things like - no brainstorming techniques and stories, no dreams. I think it is very super visual level. I think it has a place. They are much more rigorous.

Another thing I am doing and they like this, is lecture on renaissance and baroque. My basic point here would be that creativity just didn't happen but then out of point in time at the end of the renaissance baroque came along. This represents the major changes.

Do you invite guest lecturers?

I don't. But it is very good idea. The reason I don't is that there was a difficulty in terms of funding. Not on this course now but I lecturing some other courses and there was difficulties with funding with guest lecturers the last couple years. But this is good idea actually.

Have you received feedback from students?

Generally they say they find my class very frustrating and forced. This entire staff with unconscious they find difficult but when they begin to crop with it they begin to enjoy it. I think their favourite points is that they find it does allowed them to do something in different way and it let's them think differently. They find in the settling that I leave them with project with any guidelines. They find it difficult. But they do it very well in the main.

Have you compared their creativity at the beginning and at the end of course?

Yes, in terms of their approach. Some of them coming from scientific background will find this subject a little bit out here. But in generally I think they switch in. I feel they can do a lot more if they had more time. But I think at the end they are more open.

Can you select from this list 5 skills that you find most important for an entrepreneur? And can you explain why these skills are important?

1. Analyzing problems
2. Reflection
3. Teamwork
4. Recognizing and seizing opportunities
5. Market orientation

First I chose *analyzing problems* because they need to get a good academic foundation around the particular issue they are looking at.

Reflection. This is described as time and process. My point of view would be that whenever they are addressing problem they need to use a process, need a lot of time to think about it and work it through. In other words I don't think that ideas just come out of the nowhere. Nothing comes from nothing.

I would put **teamwork** as third one. The importance for entrepreneur is to be able to work with others. I know that some entrepreneurs would appear to be very egocentric. But to be more successful you have to be able to motivate other people.

Recognizing and seizing opportunities. It really comes out of reflecting and then trying to think through and see what opportunities are there.

Market orientation. They need to develop a product or service, to be financially successful they must look on the market.

Can students improve these skills during your subject?

Yes, yes, yes. I think the reason is because I give them rigorous academic readings and I give mark them in their exams, assignments - on ability to critic these reading, to take critical approach on and to bring some practical application into it.

Teamwork is very important, I always saying to my students: “If you have problem in the group, this is your problem and you have to go in.” So I mark them again. They work together as a project.

The market orientation and recognizing.... It’s more marketing exercise. But again, they do favourite staff on course and I don’t get on marketing and there is a lot of staff done on it but I see good improvement how they do it.

Are there any skills or competences which you would like to add to this list?

I suppose one specific which comes in my mind is **ability to influence people** up the line. Very often very good ideas don’t get taken up. There are some students who are working very well alone and they can have a good idea but they can’t manage to catch and take it up. Sometimes they are very introvert people. Sometimes we can read a lot about creative people especially in American texts that they should be mavericks. Well... possibly yes but the problem with mavericks is that they don’t get on well in companies. A lot of good ideas don’t get to top.

What are the strong and weak points of your subject?

I think there are probably three 3 strong points. First of all it is very **innovative**. Another strong point is that I have done **experiment of different ways of doing** this. I have some success and

failures of course. Another strength of my subject is **emphasis on unconscious** which is very different from what they are doing and making, it makes them aware of maser discourse and university discourse.

The weaknesses of my subject... I suppose I am looking from point of view of university discourse. Sometimes students don't see it as being theoretically challenging. There is tension between trying to encourage creativity and making things rigorous. I think that's an area could be improved, developed further in coming years.

The other weakness of my subject is lack of linkage with other subject of course.

Do you try to encourage students to start up their business as well?

I don't. That's up to them to decide. I am more interested to make them more creat *Appendix 6*

***“WE WANT TO LET THEM SEE THE WORLD THROUGH
ENTREPRENEURS LENSES”***

(T.Buckley)

Name of the person being interviewed: **TONY BUCKLEY**

Date: 14.05.2008.

Educational institute: The Dublin Institute of Technology

Involved in entrepreneurship course: MSc in Business & Entrepreneurship

Teaching area: Theory of entrepreneurship

How can you define entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship is activity of a person or a group of people to seek out and take advantage of commercial opportunities. There are lots of issues around this course – female, male entrepreneurship, gender entrepreneurship and all the factors that influence that. But it is really somebody who has tolerance for risk and manages the risks and takes advantage of these opportunities. Opportunity secrets would be the way we could find the entrepreneurship.

Can you mention 5 words which you connect with entrepreneurship? First five which comes in your mind!

Risk, reward, opportunity, value creation and profitability.

You are teaching theory of entrepreneurship. What issues covers your subject?

Yes, I teach theory of entrepreneurship and things are built around the entrepreneurship. This is the basis of their dissertation, the mini dissertation they are doing at the end of year. So from September to Christmas we are dealing with theory topics about entrepreneurship, I cover about 7

topics which include – female/male entrepreneurship issues, licensing, franchising, all different forms how to grow up you business. Second semester we are working on, how to do your dissertation which is 10000 words dissertation on entrepreneurial related subject. This is part of their portfolio dissertation.

Can you tell more about this portfolio dissertation?

It's an idea that came from Canada, so it is Canadian model; we have adapted it for Irish situation. Dissertation consists from 3 parts. The first one is academic, 10 000 word mini dissertation on entrepreneurial topic, second part is business plan for business idea and the third part is new product development project. They all can be related or all can be different. So it's a choice. One of the things we expect from entrepreneurs is that they can deal with conflicts, diversity and all of these things that are... why it is given in this way. They must make a decision: do they want to do it together or separate. That's the innovation in the programme. We want to see how it develops.

What's the aim of your subject?

If you think about business topics like accounting, finance, legal, marketing, etc. you have to study entrepreneurial theory, that's cement point. **We want to let them see the world through entrepreneurs lenses, glasses, that they see the world as an entrepreneurs** and are constantly looking for opportunities and recognizing opportunities and see people who have recognized opportunities. That's why it is important to understand, for example, the history of it, the things are right, how different people handled the entrepreneurship (singly or in groups), who did the better performance, etc. If you want to be entrepreneur or you want to be a part of franchising system, you must look on different things - different methodologies, different moralities are important.

This course before Christmas is quite interesting; it's theory of history, what they might think about it and what we believe it to be. So it's quite academic but lots of academic and practical examples. We do some research methods after Christmas with dissertation. What we ask them to do is to present to us for the start of the next semester their research proposal, it's about 15 000 – 20 000 words maximum. Some have done well once but some have done not so good once. But we need to help them with thinking.

So you are working with them all year.

Yes, all year. This is something we need to think about. For example, should we have an examination, I don't know. I am not sure. We need to get them to think not under the pressure, just to think about their ideas. It's some kind of proposal. And then they give their final submission in September and then we keep dissertation log for them, just about meeting: how the meeting has progressed over time, etc. At the end of the year we will have a log and you will have proposal: good/bad and we have the final work. We give them plenty of time to think, plenty of time free and it really depends on them how they use it. Some of them use it good, some not so good.

Can you tell about assignment which consists of 3 parts?

Business plan is separate – it's Seamus part. Then we have *New product development* by Fiona Maciver. Over all the marks of dissertation – 50% are from mine subject, 25% - from Seamus and 25% - Fiona.

It means that this course together is assessed by these 3 assignments?

Yes, which are equal on a master course with one full dissertations which is typically 20 000 words. One year master courses here in college normally consist of 8 subjects and dissertation. They have 8 subjects and dissertation which is in 3 parts. That's the difference but they all should adapt the same thing. We call it portfolio dissertation. That's some kind of innovation in that programme.

Can you tell about teaching methods which you use?

My module originally was developed by Dr.Tom Cooney in DIT, he is specialist in entrepreneurship. What Tom wanted to do was to provoke in students an interest in this area, some of misconceptions that may have. That's what about this module is.

We have small workshops, we discuss, I introduce a lot of new concepts including the history of entrepreneurship. We built this module on the history and how it has been picked up and how it has changed through the years and what they think is entrepreneurship and what we believe it is.

What do you do to make this course more practical because there is a lot of theory, history?

Examples, real life examples. Usually bringing real entrepreneurs and asking them examples. That's how we make it real and practical.

Then you invite also guest lecturers, don't you?

Yes, we do occasionally; bring guest lecturers if we can. This year was the first time for me, so I didn't have a time yet but... yes we will bring guest lecturers. Sometimes it can be good but sometimes not so good. Normally what I would like to do is to give case studies to these people, so then they can study objectively. Sometimes they have very good presentations but sometimes they don't and they not cover areas we would like. So I am very careful with bringing guest lecturers. Sometimes as part of dissertation we try to organize meetings with new entrepreneurs who would be happy to talk with them. That would give them more ideas, perhaps. And then we have successful case studies.

I see that case studies are very popular in DIT.

Yes, I think it comes perhaps from Harvard module. Everybody thinks we should have these case studies. I tend not to use them a lot; I use small case studies. I give them small case studies not big once. I also use multimedia, materials from *www.youtube.com*. There is fantastic Chinese websites called: *www.alibaba.com* Fantastic! It is virtual market place for small Chinese SME, small enterprises who have access to worlds market. It operates like *ebay*. Students must make sense of materials. There are lots and lots of materials for them!

We have influences from USA and we also have European influences because Ireland is between both of them. It washes from USA and washes from Europe.

In this master programme *Business and Entrepreneurship* are studying students with different background education - Science, Engineering, Technology, etc. What do you think about it?

We are wondering: should we just take people with no business backgrounds or people with business background? Because people with business background has advantage, big advantage over others. Maybe we should start focusing on people from no business background (for example, technical backgrounds) who want to look for entrepreneurship.

How do these students with no business background cope with this programme?

They seem to cope well but there is a lot of diversity, a lot of confusion. But they need to be able to do these tasks.

Have you received feedback from students?

Yes, generally they find it very stimulating. Number of students has come to this course with ideas, business plans what they want to do, and they are very focused people and seem to take a lot from this course. They want to learn everything: marketing, finance, etc. They are really interesting students.

Is this course more about how to start up a business or being entrepreneurial?

It's covering both because some of the people will be entrepreneurs but some will support services for entrepreneurs, so we must take everybody into this.

What kind of skills students can improve during this course?

Number of things and one is better analytic skills. You can look on opportunities and analyze opportunities, also the awareness of complex environment they are facing up, the ability to think critically and also hopefully to be better researchers. **If you are good, logical researcher you will find more information. If you will find more information, you will be able to make better decisions.** So hopefully they will make better decisions.

Can you select from this list 5 skills that you find most important for an entrepreneur? And can you explain why these skills are important?

1. Recognizing and seizing opportunities
2. International orientation
3. Analyzing problems
4. Result orientation
5. Reflection

Entrepreneurship for me is the whole idea of *recognizing and seizing opportunities*. If we can do that, then we can do the second - *international orientation* because Ireland has a small market so we must look on it.

The third one is *analyzing problems*; we would hope that they are able to analyze things better.

Result orientation. Entrepreneurship is also an action. Recognizing and seizing opportunities and implementing what they want to do.

Reflection for me is important because activity of reflection is just activism. We need to reflect on what we do and learn from reflection and feedback. The rest is also important.

Can students improve these skills during this course and in which way?

Recognizing in structured way opportunities, problems and finding the way to solve them and finding the advantage of opportunities. And research skills come to it. And also better knowledge about entrepreneurship.

What are the strong and weak points of this course?

Strong point is that **it is comprehensive**. The weak part is perhaps structure. Maybe the topic needs more time; I will look for feedbacks from students to see.

The interesting thing about course is dissertation. I think it is good idea but it is important... that academic piece they do for me is important because... Every master student if they want to do their PhD studies which is possible now, the first thing every university will ask is: what research subjects you have done? At the moment we don't examine them on research methods. Maybe we **need to formulize research methods**. Yes, I would like to see research methods formulized. It's the really only major change I would like to have.

We have good mix of people – between academic and practical. We take academic theories and try to employ them. We feel we have found good balance. This college have been very successful, the idea of **how to develop the programmes. We bring people in here from industry and they tell what they want and then we mach that to our structures**. In a lot of universities they would say: we do it this way and you will do it this way. And they will say: No, we don't want to do that. But you will say: but that's the way we do that. We are much more flexible. **A lot of problems are co designed with industry**. That's why industry loves us. We have, for example, postgraduate's diplomas; we have continuous professional developing diplomas with pharmacy chains, with big retailer, with all the different sectors. That's the biggest strength. **We are probably the biggest business school in the country in dealing with industry**. Even if we want to get some guest speakers, we have so many contacts. That connection with industry and connection society we value.

What makes your course unique comparing with other universities where the courses are similar?

Maybe I am wrong but there is not equivalent course in Ireland. I don't think that universities here have quite taking entrepreneurship in way we have. I think they are only starting masters now in entrepreneurship and the part is struggling on what this topic is all about. It's very young, not many areas, not many universities have programmes in this area. Maybe we are earlier in this area.

Like good Irish people we borrow from everybody – we take from USA, from Canada, Europe. That’s what small country should do.

Appendix 7

“IF YOUR FIRST BUSINESS FAILS, YOU ALWAYS ARE ABLE TO COME BACK AND BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE FUTURE”

(F.Maciver.)

Name of the person being interviewed: FIONA MACIVER

Date: 14.05.2008.

Educational institute: The Dublin Institute of Technology

Involved in entrepreneurship course: MSc in Business & Entrepreneurship

Teaching area: Product Development course

How can you define entrepreneurship?

For me entrepreneurship is some kind of very creative idea... creative, innovative, different idea; using your creativity, driving your business forward through that. I guess lecturing the course I have been talking about specific entrepreneurs, creative people. I try to make students work practical, think about ideas what is entrepreneurship, innovation because ideas of innovation and entrepreneurship are very linked together.

Can you mention 5 words which you connect with entrepreneurship? First five which comes in your mind!

Creativity, innovation, multivation, “get up and go” and business idea.

You are teaching Product development course. What’s the aim and structure of this course?

Product development is one third of what students are doing for their dissertation. So they are producing a business plan, they are doing literature review of entrepreneurship and they are doing product development. Their literature review is 50% and 25% are for business plan and 25% for product development.

During the first semester I came with lectures in which I was introducing product development, product development process and kind of differences between products and services. During the second semester it's been more dissertations driven and also with practical elements what was discussing earlier. We were using case studies; they were choosing 6 key studies. Students had to work in groups and to debate. We gave them case studies to analyze and present them using the theory which was introduced into the first semester. The first semester was some kind of this and then trying to make practise by using case studies. It's some kind of course was structured. Another point is that dissertation is 60% of their final mark.

Can you tell more about teaching methods you use in this course?

I encourage creativity very much within the course. The first semester was kind of theory driven but we tried to have discussions in the class about various types of products. These practical examples make students more able to rely to the theory.

And then students were asked to choose a company which is particularly interesting to them and do a presentation of this company. They must **choose a company or one specific product** and discuss: what kind of innovative, creative idea had the company, how it used this idea, developed, how it became successful in market place. So... these practical examples again. This is the part of the most discussions in the class. After they had done that we give some 10 minutes of presentation, they have discussion amongst. They make questions and answers to the questions.

Then in the second semester we use case studies and presentations. They are asked to present maybe 40 minutes case studies. The case study may be like 12 to 25 pages. They are asked to analyze the main question and to link it with theory as well. Then again like 20 minutes with questions and answers again after that. I think they really enjoyed that part.

Can you tell more about assignments?

Dissertation portfolio consists of 3 parts. First of all sections should be linked together.

Students came to this course probably with some kind of specific business idea of a business in which they would like to go into, in the future. So they are pretty entrepreneurial individuals with their aims and ambitious. So they can spend basically all year researching and producing this business plan. The literature review is gone to be theory around one specific aspect of their business plan, idea. And in product development they have been asked to analyze competitors within this field or if there are no direct competitors, then to analyze companies with similar offerings, similar goals and situations. They have been chosen between one and three companies

and the goal is to look how these companies have developed on each stage of product development process, where did they get idea, etc. So it's like from idea generation through to commercialization.

It means students must go to company and make analyzes there.

Yes. They are doing primary or basic research. If it is bigger or more international company they are able to use kind of articles or other types of secondary research to construct this part. So basically what they are doing is just analyzing every stage why the company has or has not been successful in their business idea and what they would recommend (from their knowledge acquired through this course) that this business could operate in more successful way.

Are these companies always open to students?

That's kind of difficulty. There are some companies, organizations, educational organizations where students go... private business schools, private language schools... In some of these companies are very difficult to keen on information. Some of students have chosen more easily than other.

Your course is more about how to start up a business or how to be entrepreneurial?

In course general... It gives them knowledge and base to be able to start up their own business. Because as I said the majority coming in are with very specific business ideas that they had cope, execute in completion of course. So I think in the course are different aspects like law, accountancy, so they are able to use these different knowledge in order to succeed in their own businesses. It is been successful, I see them in progress.

Another thing is that we invite guest speakers during the *Product development*. These are people who have their own businesses or who have started their business. Again just to bring them practical element because I think it is very stimulating. You always need these practical examples not only abstract theory. These can be case studies or guest speakers. They can ask questions, there is interaction in the class. I think it gives them kind of hope for their own businesses because... you know, **if this guy, standing in front of me, has done this and has done it in success then I can do this thing as well.**

What kind of skills students improve during your course?

I think majority of students didn't come from business backgrounds but they were coming from different areas. So firstly the knowledge they acquire, the theoretical knowledge is the gravel thing for the course. Secondly, skills... presentation skills. All these practical aspects, real world aspects gives them knowledge and experience as well.

Can you select from this list 5 skills that you find most important for an entrepreneur? And can you explain why these skills are important?

1. Recognizing and seizing opportunities
2. Managing
3. Market orientation
4. Communication
5. Vision

Ok, first is *recognizing and seizing opportunities*. Having this original idea, you have to have vision (vision I have chosen as number 5 which is very much linked to that). Having this idea you really believe to it and having a wish to bring it to the market.

Number 2 I have chosen *managing*. Again... this is practical aspect. You have the idea but you need business orientation to bring it to, to develop your idea. I think it is also linked with number three – to *market orientation*. It means managing the market orientation, having the practical experience, practical skills to be sure it's gone be success. To manage the product itself, to manage the business, to manage the people are working for you, to manage suppliers, to manage your network, to develop your network which is number four – *communication*. You have to be able to communicate your idea to your public and to your employees and to be able to have these communication skills is just ability to operate your idea.

And number five – *vision*. It's again about innovation, originality, the unique idea that nobody else has. Something unique that only you are able to bring to the market.

Can students improve these skills during your subject and in which way?

Recognizing and seizing opportunities, certainly. Communication, certainly. Ambition, certainly. I think maybe students acquire some kind of confidence of their own ideas. From meetings with guest speakers **they can start to believe to their selves that their ideas can succeed as well.** Market orientation and managing gives ability to critic yourself in terms of theoretical knowledge. **It's not kind of little bubble that they have this idea which definitely will succeed, we give them understandings why not, why this idea not gone succeed.**

Are there any skills which you would like to add to this list (which are necessary for entrepreneurs)?

Probably creativity, innovation and expertises, just to be very specific.

Have you received feedback from students? Are they satisfied with your course or not?

They enjoyed the guest speakers very much. There was a guy who had 2 failed companies behind him and one successful who was currently operating. And students said that guest speakers gave them hope for their own business and **if your first business fails, you always are able to come back and be successful in the future.**

In class is very good atmosphere, students feel comfortable presenting their business ideas to each other.

Have you noticed how students have been changed during this course?

At the beginning they were very maze but then they just become very comfortable with each other. They became more confident of knowledge. More confident to communicate with each other and present their ideas.

What are the strong and weak points of this course?

Strong point is that students come from diverse backgrounds and they are able to share skills, to learn of each other.

They got lot from their study trip, they have contacts in Prague. They have made visits to companies, the have seen real life situations. So... they are having all best practises. From theoretical part from lectures, reading... I think it is good mixture and has done very successfully. They learn criticism as well.

What should be improved in this course?

Probably this structure of dissertation and marking - 50% goes to exam situations and then to dissertation.

What makes this course unique comparing with similar courses in other universities?

Firstly, the course is very intense. There are a lot of assignments through the year not only at the end of semester. Secondly, there is broad base of subjects. So if they didn't have any experience



of any of these areas, they can get it. They have to study various different components that can be useful. I think it is quite unique for this course.

Maybe there is something you would like to add about this course?

Entrepreneurship is always gone be a kind of interest. And there always will be good examples of successful and failed entrepreneurs as well.