

A Tale of Two Cities: A Retrospective Comparison of Business Programs in Cape Town and Santa Barbara

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ABSTRACT

We looked at two business programs in South Africa and the United States which used the Entrepreneurial Attitude Orientation instrument to measure the students' entrepreneurial attitude changes after completing entrepreneurship courses. The data indicated that education indeed caused changes in entrepreneurial attitude. The divergence of student outcome with the contrasting teaching styles employed by the two business programs supported Gibb's notion that instructional approach affects student outcome. This assessment makes explicit a tacit knowledge that pedagogy matters and it highlights the effect on the students' entrepreneurial attitude.

INTRODUCTION

THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEUR AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

The Small Business Association (2006) reported that of the nearly 26 million firms in the United States, 97.5 percent of them have fewer than twenty employees. During the 2004-2005 period, 671,800 firm births were offset by 544,880 firm deaths; a net gain of 126,920 firms. On the other hand, during the recessionary 2001-2002 period, there were 569,750 firm births but 586,890 firm deaths; a net loss of 17,140 firms. These numbers portray a dynamic U.S. economy characterized by constant attrition and new enterprise formation. It is the new firms founded by entrepreneurs that take up the slack and contribute to the sustenance of our economic viability. Small businesses and entrepreneurs are essential to the vitality of our economy.

The first entrepreneurship course was introduced in the United States on February 1947 at the Harvard Business School (Katz, 1993). One hundred and eighty-eight of the six hundred second-year MBA students attended. Entrepreneurship education has since grown to reach more than 12,000 students with 2,200 courses in entrepreneurship or small business courses offered at over 1,600 schools in the United States. The supporting infrastructure includes 44 English-language refereed academic journals (Katz, 1994) and endowed chairs in entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, educators have voiced different opinions on what should be taught in entrepreneurship programs (Erkkila, 2000; Rabbior, 1990). The course objectives and modality of delivery are areas of interest for many educators (Gartner and Vesper, 1994; Gibb, 1993; Hynes, 1996; Klatt, 1988; Myrah and Currie, 2006; Solomon and Fernald, 1991). Despite the prolific published work, we have yet to see convergence in the modality of instruction among different institutions. This paper contrasts two business programs to illustrate how modality of instruction affects student outcome.

BUSINESS EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) is a leading research and teaching institution in South Africa. Following the end of apartheid, President Nelson Mandela appointed many prominent faculty and alumni of UWC to his cabinet. Today, Archbishop Desmond Tutu serves as Chancellor of UWC. The university enrolls approximately 14,000 students, of which 300 are foreign students. The student body of UWC mirrors the population of South Africa in the Western Cape. The university now ranks among the country's top five universities in research output in the social sciences, which includes the field of management. Both undergraduate and graduate degrees in management are conferred at UWC, including a specialization in enterprise management.

BUSINESS EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTA BARBARA

University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) enrolls approximately 20,000 students. U.S. News & World Report ranks the university as the 44th best national university in the United States. UCSB is a member of the 62 research-oriented institutions in the Association of American Universities. Among the innovations UCSB pioneered was the internet. UCSB, together with UCLA and Stanford, formed the initial internet connections that revolutionized information technology.

UCSB does not have a business school or a formal business program. Under the department of economics, courses in finance and accounting are offered. For other business related subjects, students turn to the Technology Management Program (TMP), which is housed within the College of Engineering.

The Technology Management Program is a product developed to satisfy a market need. During the dot-com era of the late 1990s, some engineering students approached the dean of engineering and voiced their desire for some organized ways to learn about commercializing technology. A few faculty members came together and started a lecture series with local entrepreneurs as guest speakers. The program has since grown to offer both an undergraduate and a graduate certificate program in technology management. All courses are structured with readings, assignments, classroom interactions and the use of real-world information. Extra-curricula activities such as business mentorship, business plan competition, and public symposiums are interwoven into the curriculum. During the 2007-2008 academic year, 430 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in these courses. The classes are open to any interested UCSB students at senior level or above. While the Technology Management Program operates under the College of Engineering, only 26% of the students major in engineering. The remaining students major in Business Economics (approximately 30%) and other fields.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Both of these business programs aim to make students think and act entrepreneurial. Aside from skills and knowledge, an important attribute for this discipline is entrepreneurial attitude (De Faoite et al, 2003; Garavan & O'Kinneide, 1994; Hytti & Kuopusjarvi, 2004). Can students be made more entrepreneurial through education? These two institutions use very different

approaches to teaching and learning. Is there a discernable difference in the development of entrepreneurial attitude as a result? We feel these are important questions to explore.

THEORETICAL PRINCIPLE

GIBB'S MODEL

Gibb (1993) contends that teaching methods should not just transfer knowledge, but develop the building-up of skills and attitude in favor of entrepreneurship. Gibb described two different styles of teaching and learning, the didactic approach and an enterprising style. The didactic approach emphasizes lecturing and examination whereas the enterprising approach emphasizes constructivist learning. Gibb's model may be summarized in Exhibit 1 (Gibb, 1993, p.24).

Exhibit 1: Gibb's model

DIDACTIC AND ENTERPRISING LEARNING MODES

Learning from teacher alone	Learning from each other
Passive role as listener	Learning by doing
Learning from written texts	Learning from personal exchange and debate
Learning from 'expert' frameworks of teacher	Learning by discovering (under guidance)
Learning from feedback from one key person (the teacher)	Learning from reactions of many people
Learning in well organised, timetabled environment	Learning in flexible, informal environment
Learning without pressure of immediate goals	Learning under pressure to achieve goals
Copying from others discouraged	Learning by borrowing from others
Mistakes feared	Mistakes learned from
Learning by notes	Learning by problem solving

Mentoor and Friedrich (2007, p. 227) described an entrepreneurship course offered as 'Introduction to Business' at the University of the Western Cape. It was taken by most freshmen in the Economic and Management Sciences program:

The target outcomes of the module are that the students should be able to evaluate what makes an entrepreneur and to analyze the South African business environment ...

The primary method of instruction for the course is teaching to class sizes varying between 180 and 300 students, supported by large group discussions on assignments. For logistical reasons, use cannot be made of guest speakers, study visits or other creative teaching methods. The methods of assessment are tests, examinations, assignments and the business plan.

This description aptly places the pedagogy used in this University of Western Cape course on the didactic side of the Gibb model.

The TMP at the University of California, Santa Barbara employs an opposite approach. Most courses are taught by adjunct faculty who are highly successful entrepreneurs. Many of them are in investment banking or are partners of venture funds. Most courses also involve guest speakers who are business founders or experts in the field to address specific business topics in a real world context. Most classes have team projects on relevant topics in business creation. In one class, students are required to submit a business idea every week to practice opportunity recognition. In another class, students deliver their team projects in business attire using professional presentation materials, complete with real-world market data, prototypes and props to bring realism to their projects. The program utilizes a highly practice-oriented method. It fits with the enterprising modality of the Gibb model.

ENTREPRENEURIAL CHARACTERISTICS

There are a number of characteristics that differentiate entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs. This body of research mainly comes from psychology and business. Need for achievement (Komives, 1972; McClelland, 1965; McClelland and Winter, 1969), locus of control (Brockhaus, 1980; Brockhaus and Nord, 1979; Hull, Bosley and Udell, 1982; Liles, 1974), risk taking (Brockhaus, 1980; Hull, Bosley and Udell, 1982; Liles, 1974; Palmer, 1971), values (DeCarlo and Lyons, 1979; Hornaday and Aboud, 1972; Hull, Bosley, and Udell, 1980; Komives, 1972) and sacrifice (Roberts, 1998) are some of the most cited entrepreneurial characteristics.

ENTREPRENEURIAL ATTITUDE ORIENTATION INSTRUMENT

Peter Robinson's dissertation (1987) outlined the development of a quantitative instrument called the Entrepreneurial Attitude Orientation (EAO). It was designed to predict entrepreneurship in students. The four subscales used in the Robinson EAO instrument were achievement in business, innovation in business, perceived personal control, and perceived self-esteem. In each subscale, the questions were constructed from three psychological perspectives of affect (i.e. the "I feel" questions), cognition (i.e. the "I think" questions) and behavior (i.e. the "I act" questions). After going through a sequence of item creation, reliability testing and factor analysis, the instrument was validated with two sets of subjects. In one set, both the control and experimental group were students (students in school versus recent graduates who have founded businesses) while the other set was made up of business people (white-collar employees versus established entrepreneurs). Robinson (1991) later reduced the EAO from its original 91 items to a 75-item questionnaire.

The EAO has been used in a number of doctoral dissertations (Askim, 1999; Christensen, 1995; Roberts, 1998) and research articles (Hoge, 1995; Huefner, Hunt & Robinson, 1996; Kassiech et al, 1996; Shaver et al, 1996; Mccline et al; 2000; Mento and Friedrich, 2007). The limitation of the EAO is that it does not include risk perception and opportunity recognition, two other well recognized characteristics of entrepreneurs. The advantage is that it is a validated instrument with sound theoretical underpinnings.

Robinson's EAO instrument is the common platform to compare the two business programs. The data from the University of the Western Cape was collected at the beginning of the first semester

of 2004 as reported by Mentoer and Friedrich (2007). The empirical data from the University of California was collected by the author during the spring 2007 quarter.

METHOD

Mentoer and Friedrich's data was based on 463 students who declared specializations in General Business Commerce (n=277), Business Administration (n=52) or Accounting Business Commerce (n=89), together with a control group of non-program participants (n=45). Data from the same student were collected in a pre-test, post-test repeated measure design. They utilized an abbreviated 53-item version of the EAO instrument which still included all four subscales of achievement, innovation, personal control and self-esteem. Students rated their responses to each question on a 10-point Likert-type scale. The mean, standard-deviation and t-test were presented to compare the subscale score changes between t1 (pre-test) and t2 (post-test).

Our data from UCSB was based on 75 students (n=75) who completed both the pre-test and post-test questionnaires out of 197 who responded at the beginning of the spring 2008 quarter (t1). This sample represents about 18% of the 430 program participants. No non-participant control group was used since the main interest was how program participants' entrepreneurial attitude change as a result of taking classes during that academic quarter. The students' pre-test results are their own reference points. The original Robinson 75-item instrument was used for data collection. To improve the reliability, the responses were measured on 69-items which yielded stronger Cronbach alpha values. The scoring was modified from Robinson's 10-point Likert-style scale to a 7-point scale. The changes between t1 and t2 in the four attitudinal subscales were calculated as an omnibus 2x4 MANOVA. For comparison with the Mentoer and Friedrich results, t-tests were also performed.

The null hypothesis is that there is no change in entrepreneurial attitude before and after the school term. The alternate hypothesis is that there is a significant change.

RESULTS

Our data on the UCSB results were checked for reliability by calculating the Cronbach alphas for each of the four attitudinal subscales using SPSS 15.0 (Table 1). The weakest items were removed, resulting in a 69-item construct with generally acceptable alphas (i.e. above 0.7).

Table 1: Cronback Alphas of the EAO instrument at t1 and t2

Subscales	items	Cronbach alphas at t1	items	Cronbach alphas at t1	Improve by removing
achievement	23	0.714	22	0.725	question 57
innovation	26	0.751	24	0.794	questions 41, 66
personal control	12	0.600	11	0.664	question 36
self-esteem	14	0.653	12	0.750	questions 53, 25
Total questions	75		69		

Subscales	items	Cronbach alphas at t2	items	Cronbach alphas at t2	improve by removing
achievement	23	0.792	22	0.819	question 57
innovation	26	0.718	24	0.745	questions 41, 66
personal control	12	0.674	11	0.717	question 36
Self-esteem	14	0.579	12	0.712	questions 53, 25
Total questions	75		69		

Factor analysis was not performed since our sample size (n=76) was insufficient for analyzing a 69-item instrument. Since the instrument was well grounded in entrepreneurial characteristics and that it has been used in many publications, we found no reasons to question the internal validity of the instrument.

To check for treatment effect, the pre-test and post-test subscale data were analyzed using repeated-measure MANOVA. A significant main effect was observed between the pre-test and post-test ($p=0.044$) after making the Bonferroni adjustment. The Power was 0.701 and partial eta square was 0.127. The observed power of 0.701 indicated that the instrument was sufficiently sensitive in detecting the changes. 12.7% of the variance was explained by these four subscales. The repeated-measure MANOVA results led us to reject the null hypothesis that there was no change in the entrepreneurial attitude of the UCSB TMP students. Our results supported the alternate hypothesis that a statistical significant change in entrepreneurial attitude had occurred.

Mentoor and Friedrich presented the UWC results as comparisons of the mean values for each subscale between t1 and t2 in repeated measure 2-tailed t-tests. In order to contrast the two business programs, we performed similar calculations with the UCSB data; although statistically using t-tests for multiple related subscales tend to increase type-I errors (Colman & Pulford, 2006; Shavelson, 1996). Due to space limitation of this article, the standard deviations are not shown since the mean scores and the t-test results are the most informative data in this analysis.

For the achievement subscale, the mean scores of the South African UWC students came down at a significant level for the general business commerce and the business administrative majors (Table 2). The general business accounting students as well as the UCSB students showed increases in their mean scores, although the changes are not statistically significant.

Table 2: Mean score differences in achievement subscale between t1 and t2

Variable	Group		t1	t2	t	df	sig (2-tailed)
Achievement	UWC Gen B Comm	Mean	8.22	7.95	1.550	34	0.013*
		n	35	35			
	UWC B Admin	Mean	8.03	7.82	4.441	231	0.000**
		n	232	232			
	UWC Gen B Acct	Mean	8.09	8.16	-0.339	42	0.507
		n	43	43			
	UCSB TMP	Mean	5.69	5.76	-1.351	74	0.181
		n	75	75			

As for innovation, statistically significant changes were seen in the UWC general business accounting students and the UCSB students (Table 3). The change in mean scores of the South African students was negative whereas the change of that for the UCSB students was positive.

Table 3: Mean score differences in innovation subscale between t1 and t2

Variable	Group		t1	t2	t	df	sig (2-tailed)
Innovation	UWC Gen B Comm	Mean	6.98	7.04	-0.979	245	0.329
		n	246	246			
	UWC B Admin	Mean	7.25	7.37	-0.801	44	0.427
		n	45	45			
	UWC Gen B Acct	Mean	7.07	6.78	-0.801	8	0.010**
		n	81	81			
	UCSB TMP	Mean	5.18	5.31	-2.477	74	0.016*
		n	75	75			

For the personal control subscale, the UWC general business commerce students and the general business accounting students showed significant negative changes whereas the UCSB students showed significant positive change (Table 4).

Table 4: Mean score differences in personal control subscale between t1 and t2

Variable	Group		t1	t2	t	df	sig (2-tailed)
Personal Control	UWC Gen B Comm	Mean	7.04	6.74	4.159	256	0.000**
		n	257	257			
	UWC B Admin	Mean	7.27	7.06	1.233	48	0.223
		n	49	49			
	UWC Gen B Acct	Mean	7.18	6.77	3.333	87	0.001**
		n	88	88			
	UCSB TMP	Mean	5.06	5.21	-2.67	74	0.009**
		n	74	74			

Lastly, for self-esteem all three groups of UWC students showed statically significant negative changes (Table 5). The UCSB students continued to show gains, although the change is not significant.

Table 5: Mean score differences in self-esteem subscale between t1 and t2

Variable	Group		t1	t2	t	df	sig (2-tailed)
Self-esteem	UWC Gen B Comm	Mean	7.92	7.54	6.427	267	0.000**
		n	268	268			
	UWC B Admin	Mean	7.87	7.46	2.678	49	0.010**
		n	50	50			
	UWC Gen B Acct	Mean	8.06	7.66	3.457	86	0.001**
		n	87	87			
	UCSB TMP	Mean	5.16	5.21	-0.808	74	0.422
		n	74	74			

Overall, UWC students who were taught with a didactic teaching style as defined by Gibbs generally resulted in lower entrepreneurial attitude scores at the end of the term. The drops are particularly significant ($p < .01$) in the personal control and self-esteem subscales. Conversely, the UCSB students showed gains in all four subscales of entrepreneurial attitude. The gains are significant in innovation ($p < .05$) and very significant ($p < .01$) in personal control. These findings provide empirical evidence to support Gibb's notion of effective instruction.

DUSCUSSION

Caution has to be taken when one looks at these results. While they serve to highlight the effect of curriculum and pedagogy on students, it is not a controlled comparative study of the two programs. Both instruments originated from Robinson's work but an abbreviated 53-item version was used in the South African study. Mentoer and Friedrich did not report the Cronbach alphas of their instrument. They did not perform a repeated-measure MANOVA which is more appropriate when comparing multiple parameters. Another difference is that the UCSB data was drawn from students in all nine TMP courses offered during the quarter and the students are upperclassmen, whereas the UWC data was collected from a first class in their program, presumably from lowerclassmen. Mentoer and Friedrich's UWC study used a 10-point scale while the UCSB data was collected on a 7-point scale; although statistical significance was determined with t-statistics. Due to these methodological differences, we should not view the results as a comparative study but rather a retrospective comparison using data collected under similar research frames. The reason that we can still make inferences from these two studies is that by using repeated-measure statistics in a pre-test, post-test design, each student serves as their own control, thus yielding an accurate picture of the respective treatment effects.

Interestingly, the fact that the two programs fall under different sides of the Gibb model and that a similar measurement instrument was used, we have an unusual opportunity to contrast the two business programs. The results seem to indicate higher outcome in entrepreneurial attitude using an enterprising pedagogy as compared to a didactic pedagogy. These two studies provide empirical evidence that education can modify the students' entrepreneurial attitudes. The results also suggest that the EAO may be useful as a diagnostic tool to assess program effectiveness.

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