

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TEACHER EDUCATION: ISSUES, TRENDS AND PROSPECTS



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Abstract

This paper asserted that teachers are expected to produce not just job seekers but job creators, and in order to meet this challenge, an increasing number of countries, including Nigeria, are introducing entrepreneurship education. This therefore, calls for entrepreneurship education for teacher preparation in Nigeria. The paper critically examines teacher education for entrepreneurship education and charts out the paths for entrepreneurship education in school curricular and related pedagogy. The paper concluded that for teachers to engage in entrepreneurship education as regards both content and teaching and learning methods, a complex combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes are required. All the prospects for entrepreneurship education for teachers need to be synchronized around the goals of creating the right conditions for the development of entrepreneurial teachers. Action is required not only within teacher education systems but more broadly within education systems as a whole to ensure that what teachers learn within their initial education is translated into a new role in day-to-day practice in schools.

Key words: Entrepreneurship, Teacher Education, Pedagogy, entrepreneurial education

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, is naturally endowed with millions of acres of arable land, 38.5 billion barrels of stated oil reserves, vast gas reserves, a variety of unexploited minerals, and a wealth of human capital by virtue of its estimated population of 150 million (Arunma, 2009). Nigeria is also one of the top three countries in the world that have the largest population of poor people. Equally,

Nigeria remains off track on achieving the Millennium Development Goals. (MDGs), The economic reforms have not been sufficient to reverse years of economic decline, deteriorating capacity, weakened institutions and inadequate infrastructure investment while the recent dramatic stock market decline and banking crisis, and the global economic crisis have accentuated the situation.

The economy of most African countries is weak. Millions of young school leavers on the continent fail to find formal employment where jobs are scarce. For many of them, post primary education for various reasons is not an option. Their only alternative is to make a living in the informal sector. Without relevant qualifications for self-employment, the outcome is generally meager. In this difficult situation, there is a growing awareness that a traditional academic education is inadequate to equip young people with the knowledge and skills they will need to improve their chances of a decent life.

In order to meet this challenge, an increasing number of countries are introducing Entrepreneurship Education (EE). Previous research has shown the essential role that education plays in the development of such mindsets, and in particular the central role that teachers play in this process requires nothing less than a sea change in the approach to education, emphasising active learning and the provision of new experiences for students outside of the classroom. For many education systems this represents a fundamental shift away from traditional approaches.

Teachers are in the middle of these changes. They need to be equipped with the right skills, knowledge and attitudes to be able to provide their students with the new curricula, pedagogies and learning environments that they will need if they are to acquire entrepreneurial experience. Teachers need to be trained for the task. That is entrepreneurship needs to be learnt and not just learning but by actually being involved in business.

Teachers have a central role, as they have a strong impact on the attainment of learners. Reflective teachers keep their practice under constant review and adjust it in the light of desired learning outcomes and of the individual needs of students. As a key competence, entrepreneurship does not necessarily involve a specific school subject. Rather, it requires a way of teaching in which experiential learning and project work have a main role. Teachers do not provide students with the answers, but help them to research and identify right questions and find the best answers. To inspire their pupils and students, and to help them develop an enterprising attitude, teachers need a wide range of competences related to creativity and entrepreneurship; they require a school environment where creativity and risk-taking are encouraged, and mistakes are valued as a learning opportunity. Developing the competences of school leaders and teaching staff including aspiring new teachers and those who have been in the profession for a long time- should be absolutely priority for the Nigerian government.

Having understood the critical stage Nigeria is in presently, this study intends to shine its beam on what an entrepreneur truly is, entrepreneurship education, implication for

new role of teacher to participate in the entrepreneurial education, what shape should an entrepreneur school take, what we should expect from a child that has attended the entrepreneur school, how it should be taught, and the prospect for entrepreneurial Education for teachers.

The Concept and Nature of Entrepreneurship Education

Shane (2003) described entrepreneurship as the act of being an entrepreneur. According to Shane, the word 'entrepreneur' can be taken to mean an individual who undertakes innovations, finance and have a business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic goods. The result of an effort in entrepreneurship may be the creation of a new organization or revitalizing an existing one in response to a perceived opportunity. Thus, acts of entrepreneurship create specific environment which innovations build on themselves, leading to continually increasing productivity (Holcombe, 1998).

Entrepreneurship education deals with those attitudes and skills that are necessary for the individual to respond to its environment in the process of conserving, starting and managing a business enterprise Emeraton (2008). It is made of all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds. It is about increasing student's ability to participate and respond to societal changes.

Entrepreneurship education is the type of education designed to change the orientation and attitude of the recipients and the process will equip them with the skills and knowledge to enable them start and manage a business. It aims at developing the requisite entrepreneurial skills, attitudes, competencies, and disposition that will predispose the individual to be a driving force in managing a business (Agu, 2006). (On the other hand, entrepreneurship education can be said to focus on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attitudes in widely different contexts).

Aig-Imoukhuede (1988) identified ten of the attitudes and skills that would-be entrepreneurs have to develop, as well as the corresponding objective of entrepreneurship education. These skills and attitudes include:

- ✓ Positive attitudes, high aptitude for rational critical thinking and timely decision making.
- ✓ Clear vision, generation of progressive ideals, drive and passion for success.
- ✓ Ability to convert vision in concrete reality.
- ✓ Creativity, innovativeness, courageousness and self-confidence.
- ✓ Ability to assume reasonable risk.
- ✓ Mercurial ingenuity, resourcefulness, patience and/or opportunities insight.
- ✓ Confidence and good judgement, which involves taking decisions and making choices.

- ✓ Prudence, which means due care in the management of resources especially financial.
- ✓ Willingness to learn and develop a disposition to pick-up, store knowledge and use it.
- ✓ Hard work, an indispensable ingredient of success in business and other sectors.

Implications ... A New Role for Teachers to Participate in Entrepreneurship Education

What do such developments imply for the practices of teaching and learning and hence for teachers? The development of the entrepreneurship key competence is not simply a question of knowledge acquisition. Since entrepreneurship education is about developing the ability to act in an entrepreneurial manner, attitude and behaviours are perhaps more important than knowledge about how to run a business. In short, entrepreneurship education means developing a culture which is through, for and about entrepreneurship. Such competencies are best acquired through people-led enquiry and discovery that enable students to turn ideas into action. They are difficult to teach through traditional teaching and learning practices in which the learner tends to be a more or less passive recipient. They require active, learner-centred pedagogies and learning activities that use practical learning opportunities from the real world. Furthermore, since entrepreneurship education is a transversal competence, it should be available to all students and be taught as a theme rather than as a separate subject at all stages and levels of education. Clearly, the implication of these changes for teachers is substantial. They mean nothing less than a new role for every teacher: that of 'learning facilitator.

A Global Perspective of Teachers as Entrepreneurs: New Mandate and Trends

The communiqué of the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) re-emphasizes the serious gaps in teacher supply or availability and its implications for fulfilling the mandate of higher education to drive qualitative and inclusive reform and sustainable development at all levels.

Higher education, especially teacher education and training, has been a focal point of development within the national, regional and global Plans of Action since the World Conference on Higher Education in 1998 and subsequent ones, including the 2009 edition. The implications are clear for the welfare of nations in the face of global challenges and competition.

Furthermore, the emphasis, especially for Africa, is not only one of access, but of social responsibility of higher education to discharge its renewed mandate as the driver of qualitative reform through a comprehensive transformation of its traditional structure, organizational profile and core mission of teaching, learning, research and development, and service.

The issue of teachers as entrepreneurs first needs some clarification; a teacher imparting knowledge and skills as a course component within a programme may not necessarily be a practicing or successful entrepreneur in his order or own right. The State of Maryland (USA) Policy Report (2009) presents interesting perspectives on the entrepreneurial teacher: What would he or she look like? Who, generally, is considered to be an education entrepreneur? The Maryland Policy Institute states that: 'Education entrepreneurs are individuals who develop new approaches to tackle society's greatest challenges in radically new ways. They are driving the most compelling improvements in educational outcomes for chronically underserved students'. More importantly, it affirms that education entrepreneurs have indeed created successful ventures such as: Teach for America, Challenge Summit, New Leaders for New Schools, The New Teacher Project and the Knowledge is Power Programme (KIPP), and that, 'the leaders of these organizations have transformed education for thousands of children and have changed our very ideas about what is possible in public schools... All of these initiatives have looked outside the traditional public schools for sources of new ideas, talent and school management' (Maryland Policy Institute 2009).

Furthermore, the profile of teacher entrepreneurship in the Maryland school system revolves around whatever rights teachers could claim, negotiate, enforce or outsource. Several factors, such as unionism, specialization, class size, merit pay, differentiated pay, retirement plans and political activity are steps that could be taken to 'provide teachers with the freedom to be entrepreneurs' (Maryland Policy Institute 2009:5).

However, for the purpose of this discussion and against the backdrop of the trend in developing countries, what is emphasized here is the social entrepreneurship perspective rather than the business entrepreneurship dimension. The teacher as social entrepreneur 'recognizes a social problem and uses entrepreneurial principles to organize, create and manage a venture to make social change (rather than to make a fortune or money). The main aim of social entrepreneurship as well as a social enterprise is to further social and environmental goals for a good cause (often based on a progressive business model). Whereas a business entrepreneur typically measures performance in profit and return, a social entrepreneur assesses success in terms of the impact he/she has on society as well as in profit and return' (Wikipedia).

A third dimension is the potential scenarios of teacher entrepreneurship based on the economics of school systems that may well represent untapped opportunities that professional teachers could explore and become part-time entrepreneurs. Hurley (2010) draws the attention of conservative, hardworking and effective teachers to the need to explore their environment and put themselves first for a change, because they deserve to maximize their output by leveraging their social entrepreneurial potential:

Entrepreneurship in the teaching and learning environment in developing countries presents another interesting perspective, and the question that needs

considering is: What type of entrepreneurship education should initial teacher education curriculum contain – the social entrepreneurship or the business entrepreneurial education? What would be the end purpose of teaching the course? To encourage would-be-teachers to avoid the constant stress and sacrifice of the classroom for which they are being prepared? What are the attendant risks in terms of brain drain and potential turnover among qualified teachers who practice in difficult economic and professional environments, especially in developing countries? What are the contents of entrepreneurial education and how does entrepreneurship show itself in paradigms of education? (Remes 2000). The answers to the first three questions seem fairly obvious, against the backdrop of low status, poor motivation, poor remuneration, increasing personal and family commitments and responsibilities and cost of living. Most teachers' would naturally choose the business entrepreneurial option to survive.

Perhaps of more practical relevance are the contents of entrepreneurship education curriculum through which the teacher entrepreneur is made. In the European, American and Nigerian education systems, entrepreneurship is a core subject at different levels. In the United States, elements of entrepreneurship education are strongly entrenched in the syllabi of secondary education and the majority of higher schools offer compulsory or optimal courses in entrepreneurship (Wach 2010).

It is, therefore, assumed that greater understanding and effectiveness of teachers would be more likely achieved if the same teachers had been exposed to entrepreneurship education much earlier, e.g. during their primary and secondary school education, as is the case in Poland. A typical entrepreneurship education syllabus which is compulsory in schools in Poland provides the first building blocks that class teachers and students who take teacher education options later on should find a useful preparation (Wach 2010).

Also, the Nigeria government has demonstrated the political will by introducing the compulsory course on entrepreneurship education in secondary schools and in Nigerian universities. It is designed to inculcate in every student the values and skills that make for a balanced would-be and future entrepreneur. Therefore, education systems will continually be the focal point for training teachers to teach entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial skills and for preparing learners to make a difference in this regard.

What Shape Should an Entrepreneurial School Take

An entrepreneurial school would have a number of characteristics. Some of these might be developed early on in a school's 'journey' to becoming entrepreneurial; others would take more time. Their exact form would depend on policy and practice of the wider education system, so here we summarize the more generic aspects.

First, an entrepreneurial school would possess a clear vision and policy for entrepreneurship education which expresses it as an entitlement for all pupils. To achieve this, school leadership teams would consult all staff, clearly identifying and

agreeing their own understanding and definition of entrepreneurship education, appropriate for the institution. Communication, debate and dialogue with staff are important in developing a shared understanding of what entrepreneurship education means for the school.

In order to develop its approach to entrepreneurship education, the school would undertake an audit of existing activity: schools are typically already carrying out a range of activities which are characteristic of entrepreneurship education and identifying these helps build understanding and overcome teacher concerns by demonstrating that much of what they already teach and the way in which they teach it has a good fit with the entrepreneurial approach.

To establish entrepreneurship education as a clear and defined entitlement for all pupils, a range of strategies and procedures can be used, e.g. an agreed list of annual activities, specific timetabling, use of a pupil diary, a school schedule, etc. Reference to entrepreneurship education should appear through explicit references in a number of curriculum policies.

The entrepreneurial school would also be clear as to how entrepreneurship should be introduced to pupils, discussing it with them well before activities take place. It is part of the ethos of entrepreneurship education that pupils are made aware of why they are involved in entrepreneurship activities, and of the intended learning outcomes and longer term benefits of developing entrepreneurship capabilities. All entrepreneurship education activities should be preceded by a structured briefing in which the purposes of the activity are explained and the intended learning outcomes are defined, emphasizing the applicability of entrepreneurial skills throughout life, not just at work, and also the ethical aspects.

The entrepreneurial school would explicitly identify time for entrepreneurship education in the school timetable. This would include time identified within the 'normal' curriculum across a broad range of subject areas, and also opportunities created through collapsing the timetable, operating 'themed' sessions and, in addition, extra-curricular activities.

Teachers as Facilitators of Learning

Entrepreneurship education requires the use of active learning methods that place the learner at the centre of the educational process and enable them to take responsibility for their own learning to experiment and learn about themselves. Such methods have been shown to make learning experiences richer and to have positive benefits for students in terms of improving their motivation with positive effects from their engagement with learning and long-term attainment. Thus teachers need the professional competencies to be able to guide students through the learning process rather than, as in traditional methods, communicating knowledge and information mainly through 'chalk and talk'. They need the skills to be able to ensure the relevance of education to students' learning needs and backgrounds and be able to support

students in planning activity. The teacher's role is especially important in the latter stage of activity-based learning, i.e. in the reflection and generalization stages. Without the right support, students may not be able to draw lessons from their experiences. In this setting, there is a fine balance to be found between too distant interventions that leave learners under-equipped to make the most of the experience and too much supervision which does not leave space for students to develop their independence.

This is not to say that it is only teachers who need to change. Students need authentic, practical experiences and realistic learning environments as essential parts of active learning. Teachers need to have access to a varied new range of resources in order to build activities for students that are as true to life as possible, bringing the outside world into the school. This includes, for example, the resources to set up and manage a businesslike project, to organize study visits to companies or charities, or visits to schools by entrepreneurs. This challenges both schools to become more open to their local communities and, in equal measure, businesses and the wider community in general to be willing to play an active and committed role in supporting teachers and schools in their endeavours. Changes to teacher education take place in four key areas

- ❖ The initial education of teachers;
- ❖ At national (or regional) level, the development of the requisite vision and supporting frameworks across education systems as a whole
- ❖ Teachers' continuing professional development;
- ❖ At local school level, the development of appropriate support structures and activities.

Initial teacher education is principally a question of formal education and national/regional level action, as teachers undergo their education in dedicated establishments and universities – though, of course, they also do placements in schools. He will follow it with a description of the support measures needed at national level. Continuing professional development, in contrast, consists of a mixture of formal, non-formal and informal learning where local interventions are as important as national ones. Alongside the formal element – taking place as part of national/regional programmes – is learning through day-to-day professional practice in local school contexts. The latter is particularly important for teachers to acquire entrepreneurial skills and attitudes. For entrepreneurship education to be embedded we need to develop entrepreneurial schools. Hence the wider context of local, school level support is central to teachers' Continuing professional development. At this level, national/regional policy and practice remain important, of course, since entrepreneurship education and in-service training are highly dependent in many countries on national/regional programmes and other external agencies (business organizations, NGOs etc). National policy and practice provides the overall framework as well. But local support measures are the essential corollary of continuing professional development.

The Entrepreneurial Teacher

Entrepreneurial teachers have a passion for teaching. They are inspirational, open-minded and confident, flexible and responsible — but also, from time to time, rule-breakers. They listen well, can harness and sell ideas and can work with student- and action-oriented. They are team players and have a good network.

They seek to close the gap between education and economy and include external experts in their teaching; focusing on real-life experiences. They always refer to the economic aspect of a topic; and business-related subjects play an important role in their classes — across the disciplines.

They follow a flexible and adaptable study plan and prefer interdisciplinary, project-based learning; using training material rather than textbooks. They put emphasis on group processes and interactions; and understand the class room sometimes as a ‘clash room’, giving room for diversity — a diversity of opinions, answers and solutions and the reflection about the learning process.

An entrepreneurial teacher is more of a coach than someone who lectures. They support the individual learning processes of students and the development of personal competences.

Entrepreneurial teaching is based on a number of recurring themes. These include:

- Entrepreneurship education is more than preparation on how to run a business. It is about how to develop the entrepreneurial attitudes, skills and knowledge which, in short, should enable a student to ‘turn ideas into action’.
- Teachers cannot teach how to be entrepreneurial without themselves being entrepreneurial.
- Entrepreneurial competences require active methods of engaging students to release their creativity and innovation.
- Entrepreneurial competency and skills can be acquired or built only through hands-on, real life learning experiences.
- Entrepreneurial skills can be taught across all subjects as well as a separate subject.
- Entrepreneurship education should focus on ‘intrapreneurs’ as well as entrepreneurs, in light of the fact that most students will use entrepreneurial skills within companies or public institutions.
- To give entrepreneurship education real traction, there is a need to develop learning outcomes related to entrepreneurship, and related assessment methods and quality assurance procedures for all levels of education. These should be designed to help teachers progress in the acquisition of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- The entrepreneurship education agenda should be promoted beyond teacher education institutions to businesses and the wider community.
- Teachers and schools will not be able to realize their ambitions without cooperation and partnerships with colleagues, businesses and other stakeholders.

Prospects for Entrepreneurial Education for Teachers

To realize actual entrepreneurial education for teachers, certain necessary conditions need to be in place.

a. Good initial teacher education: Student teachers should get the chance to experience entrepreneurial learning in their initial training. By studying in an institution that enforces entrepreneurship education in a broad sense, student teachers develop a range of skills and methods that enables them to be innovative and entrepreneurial themselves. Teachers entering their profession with an awareness of entrepreneurial principles are able to ignite the ‘entrepreneurial spark’ and inspire their student’s right from the beginning of their professional career.

b. Teacher education institutions with an entrepreneurial strategy and a vision: Teacher education institutions benefit from a mission and a clear vision on how entrepreneurial strategies can serve their institutional goals. Entrepreneurship education can be embedded as a horizontal approach throughout the whole study programme, by viewing it as a key competence important to any teachers’ qualifications rather than as an isolated subject.

c. Entrepreneurial teacher education programmes built around new pedagogies: To act entrepreneurially, active learning is necessary. Contemporary pedagogies (e.g. project-based, active learning or independent learning) should be applied. These can be piloted in specific programmes; emerging good practices should be shared amongst teacher educators to eventually become embedded in day-to-day pedagogy. Non-traditional learning environments (real-life situations, out of classroom) should be available for all students.

d. Quality continuing professional development: High quality programmes for the continuing professional development of existing teachers are needed to support entrepreneurial teachers, and to make sure that those who did not have the chance to experience entrepreneurship education during their initial training can catch up with the latest developments.

e. Entrepreneurial spirit and good support from effective leaders: An entrepreneurial school has a vision for its future needs and a clear view of how entrepreneurship education fits into the broader curriculum and development plan. Developing entrepreneurship in initial teacher education (ITE) will struggle to have significant impact if teachers subsequently progress into schools which are not embracing the concept of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurial teachers benefit from good support from effective school leaders.

f. Entrepreneurial teaching networks: To assure continuous quality, teachers engaged in entrepreneurial teaching and learning should develop a network, meeting regularly and exchanging experiences, know-how and material.

g. Partners in the community: Support systems have a vital role to play in making progress. Schools and teacher education institutions should establish links and

cooperation structures with businesses and community organisations to support their entrepreneurship curriculum.

Conclusion

For teachers to engage in entrepreneurship education as regards both content and teaching and learning methods, a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes are required. Governments, institutions, schools and stakeholders in Nigeria are in different stages of development regarding the implementation of entrepreneurial teaching and learning. This requires action both within and outside the school. Within the school, a supportive environment needs to be created which will enable teachers to put into practice their entrepreneurial education. Outside the school, mechanisms need to be put in place to facilitate the structured involvement of the entire community-businesses, social enterprises, parents e.t.c.

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