

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN TECHNICAL COLLEGES IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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Abstract

The focus of this paper was to examine the strategies for teaching and implementing entrepreneurship education in Akwa Ibom State Technical Colleges. To achieve the objectives of the study, the concept of entrepreneurship, the impact of entrepreneurial activity on economic development, key factors for success in starting small scale business were examined. Finally, appropriate strategies for teaching entrepreneurship education were highlighted.

Introduction

In today's world, an educational programme is relevant to the extent that it meets the needs and aspirations of the beneficiaries. This implies that emphasis in education has shifted from education for its sake to education for relevance. Given the obvious need to fight unemployment, alleviate poverty and promote economic growth, the Nigerian has embarked on reforms in various aspects of economy. As part of the on-going reforms, Singh (2007) Nwaokolo (2005) have argued for promotion of entrepreneurship education at the technical college so that graduates of the system can set up their own business, create employment and reduce poverty in the society.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

Afonja (1999) as quote in

Nwaokolo (2005) stated that entrepreneurship is a French word "which means literally to undertake" and in business terms means making a living by working for yourself. This implies that entrepreneurship connote the setting up of a business as an owner, manages and assumes the risk of a business or enterprise. Carter (1986) in Nwaokolo (2005) stated that entrepreneur is a 'promoter' who takes care of the business by being involved in the risk of procuring the raw materials, transporting them to the production centres, and collecting and selling the finished goods. An entrepreneur is significant because of his influence on the economy of the nation and his role in the development of the country as a whole. Ejikeme, Idris and Eke (2008), conceptualized the entrepreneur as one who perceives business opportunities and

takes advantages of the scarce resources to use them. According to Ejikeme et al, (2008) it is the entrepreneur alone who bears the non-insurable risk in his enterprises and it is he who directs the human and materials resources in his business. Thus, entrepreneurship is always associated with several activities concerned with the establishment and operating of enterprises. According to Olannye and Oyibi (2002), these includes identification of investment opportunities, decision making as to the opportunities to exploit, promote and establish the business enterprise, aggregation of the scarce resources required for production and distribution, risk bearing and establishment the business enterprise, aggregation of the scarce resources required for production and distribution, risk bearing and innovation. McConnell (1981) posited that the single function that constitutes entrepreneur is innovation. The entrepreneur should be prepared to risk his personal energy, time and financial resources to achieve unpredictable results.

Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, as analysed by scholars, despite the modest attempts made by the government in the establishment of Technical College is poor. One factor responsible for this is that teaching strategy is still basically theoretical (talk and chalk) and earnings of good grades is still paramount. Employers of labour in both public and private sectors still celebrate and attach high premium to paper qualifications and not on performance and knowledge of the job. Singh (2007), described entrepreneurial

education as learning directed towards developing in young people skills, competencies, understanding and attributes which equip them to be innovative, and to identify, create, initiate, and successfully manage personal, community and work opportunities. The thrust should be on small and medium scale enterprises and self-employment. This is not justified by the fact that from little mighty often grows but because small enterprises provide logical point for big business latter (Njoku, 2005).

Key Issues for Success in Starting Small Scale Businesses

Entrepreneurship education can be functional and seen as attaining its objectives under certain conditions. According to Oshagbemi (1983) in Ejikemes, Idris and Eke (2008), the entrepreneur must consider the following critical factors for success in starting small-scale businesses;

- Experience in the intended businesses.
- Viable ideas which can be translated into a product or service to meet customer's demand.
- Perception of probability to succeed in starting and sustaining the business when it is started.
- Availability of business opportunity in the society and the ability to identify it.
- Successful role model to emulate.
- Government support through supportive set of institutions.

- Information, i.e. possessing information about the business trends and source of fund.
- Ability to take risk coupled with a strong urge to succeed rather than avoiding failure.

Sourcing Fund for Small Business Enterprise (SMEs)

Money is important variable in the equation of any business. It present help to create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship to blossom. In recent times some source of funds are open for supporting SMEs under various micro-finance programmes of many establishments and organizations. However many potentials SME entrepreneurs do not know that these funds are available, neither do they know how to get about sourcing them. As a result, many of the funds are not accessed.

Owualah (1999), listed some major sources of finance available to a small business enterprise to include:

- **Banks** – There include Commercial Banks, Merchant Banks, The Nigerians Banks of Commerce and Industry (NBCI), Bank of Industry (BOI), The Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB) and the Nigerian Agricultural and Co-operative Bank (NACB).
- Specialized Funding Facilities such as National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND).

- Loan schemes from Federal and State Government.
- Equity funding e.g. SMEEIS and Second-tier Security Market (SSM)
- Co-operative Societies,
- Ventures capitals,
- Leasing.
- Friends, family members and thrift societies.

Roles of Stakeholders in Entrepreneurship Education

The following stakeholders, have vital contributions to make in order that entrepreneurship education will yield the needed results. The stakeholders are the supervisory agencies, the administrators, the teachers and the students. For the purpose of this write up, emphasis would be on the last two, that is the teachers and the students.

The Teachers: Staffing an educational institution adequately is not just a matter of having all the staff positions filled. The workers fill the various job demands that constantly change due to curricular improvements, research effort and the impact of information and communication technology. Since human resources are perishable, they have to be developed and utilized at the right time, not only to achieve the immediate needs of the education system, but also to help prepare other worker who will fill the positions in future (Aliu, 2001). This means that entrepreneurship education cannot be successful without quality teachers.

The Students: They are the ultimate beneficiaries. It is important that they know there is unemployment. Many of them however seem not to have the future in mind. A lot of them still believe that the white collar jobs are freely available (Ejikeme et al, 2008).

Strategies for Instruction

Teaching is an environmental arrangement which inevitably involves an organism mentally or physically in a set of organized activities, and facilitates those activities in consonance with its goal, its age (mental and/or chronological) and its capacity in an attempt to further its covert and overt behaviours (Onwuegbu, 2000). Teaching involves the impartation of knowledge on the learners by the teacher. The ability of the teacher to do so depends largely on the method he applies during teaching-learning process. The methods to be discussed here are not the only ones for teaching entrepreneurship, but it is difficult to exhaust all of them in just a paper like this.

Lecture Method

This method is seen as one that leads to an easy coverage of the school syllabus. In entrepreneurship education this method will be appropriate when:

- The subject matter dealt with is factual in nature and there is very little opportunity for differences of opinion or for problem-solving.
- Time is limited, for any reason at all.

- The straight lecture is to be later reinforced by other techniques.

As Umoren (2000) indicated in using this method, the teacher must use words and ideas which are familiar to the pupils. He has to deliver his lessons systematically, adopting a suitable order. Lecture method should not be used in isolation in any lesson. When used however, it should be supplemented with methods such as discussion and project. For instance, one can build up another lesson through demonstration, by directing the learner to inquire related facts to what has already been introduced to the learner by the teacher. The key points of the presentation should be summarized and the learners given an opportunity to reflect upon what they have learned.

Discussion Method

Discussion method is when two or more people interact verbally with each other. In teaching entrepreneurship, there are avenues for concrete learning using the discussion approach. This method could be considered as student-centered. It entails extensive student participation and creative thinking. If properly used, the method provides an excellent opportunity for the teacher to check on student understanding and attitude.

In teaching sources of funds for self-employment purposes or the problems associated with entrepreneurship financing for example, group discussion method along with others can be very rewarding. The advantage of this method here is that every member of the class is given the opportunity to think of the issue under

discussion, analyse it and proffer viable suggestions in the course of discussion. The method can also fail to achieve the desired impact if poorly applied. The lecturer will do well then to apply the following techniques (Umoren, 2000):

- Ask questions at the appropriate times, such as “could you give an example or illustration?”
- Keep the discussion on target with comments such as: “Let’s come back to the topic”, “That is a very different matter.”
- See that all points of view are considered by making comments such as: “We seem to have overlooked...”
- Guide the group to see more in the discussion than they would see individually with comments such as “There are at least three other points that might be made” etc.
- Summarize periodically to show the progress that has been made by saying “Let’s re-examine the ideas we have developed so far” or “where do we stand now on this matter.”
- Encourage all students to participate by asking non-contributing class members questions such as “Patrick, based on your experience, do you agree.”
- Interpret clearly with the group the individual’s contributions with comments such as “Let’s be sure we see what John means before we go on.”
- Record significant points as they are developed, using appropriate words to clearly express students ideas.

- Help the group summarize the discussion and draw meaningful conclusions.

Field Trips

For technical students in all entrepreneurship programme, field trips will greatly enhance the appreciation of the classroom work in relation to achieving the objective of self-employment on graduation. Educational tours of this nature will equip the students with insights into the manufacture and marketing of products of a technical nature as well as provide them with the various management and marketing techniques available for products that may want to venture into on graduation. Some exponents of field trip held that there must be a “solid” preparation for the trip and the things to be observed must be carefully described by the teacher in advance, (Nwaokolo, 2005).

In order to ensure that the class benefits maximally, careful consideration of certain guide points must be made. These points, in brief, must be a consideration of:

- The purpose of the trip
- Preparation for the trip
- Appraisal of the trip

Umoren (2000) developed a list that can serve well as a basis, for a summary check up device to ascertain the completeness of the trip planning:

- Will the planned field trip contribute to the students’ understanding and appreciation of the problems being studied?

- Is the planned field trip of sufficient value to warrant the expenditure of time and effort?
- Has the class assisted in the planning and arranging for the trip?
- Is the purpose of the trip clearly understood by the members of the class?
- Have the students been sufficiently prepared to take the trip?
- Have arrangements been made with the business for the trip at a specific time?
- Is the trip itinerary carefully planned and flexible?
- Has the trip study guide been prepared and used by the class in planning for the trip?
- Have plans been made for an evaluation of the trip?

Project Method

The project method is a form of individualized instruction whereby the learner performs a unit of activity in a natural manner and in a spirit of purpose to accomplish a definite goal. In essence, the project is a purposeful activity or a meaningful whole or unit of experience which proceeds in a social environment. Hence, it is another application of the unit idea. The project is a learning unit usually conducted by individual students under the guidance of the teacher. The project topics chosen based on the background experience of the student and the work to be completed is meant to be an original work of the student or students performing the task. The students are given a free hand

to look for problems which are of special interest to them. It allows the student more flexibility and autonomy in deciding his own method of solving the problem at hand. The student is expected to detail out of a business plan and enunciate how he intends to raise the necessary capital.

Conclusion

In today's world, rising youth unemployment need for poverty reduction, desire for economic prosperity, the need to encourage self-employment and job creation are the key factors that have given rise to the introduction of Entrepreneurship Development in our curriculum. This paper posits that graduates of the Technical Colleges, with entrepreneurial training can initiate self-employment and even create jobs for others. In this paper, the concept of entrepreneurship, key factors in starting small-scale business as well as major strategies for teaching entrepreneurship education were highlighted.

Recommendations

Arising from the conclusion thereof, it is hereby recommended that:

1. An awareness should be created for students of Technical Colleges that they are expected to be job creators for self-employment and employers of labour through utilizing the skills they acquire in the colleges.
2. Technical school teachers should be encourage to use information technology in teaching and learning has this is not only imperative for all nations but inevitable.

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