HOW TO EDUCATE “FOR” ENTREPRENEURSHIP? A TEACHING INNOVATION PROJECT ADDRESS TO FUTURE PSYCHOLOGISTS

Ángela Castrechini

Department of Social Psychology and Quantitative Psychology. University of Barcelona (SPAIN)

Abstract

This paper describes and presents the results of a teaching innovation project named "PSIcoEmprende" (Psycho-Entrepreneurship). The main objective of this initiative was to develop learning activities to raise awareness and empower last year psychology students to the competence of innovation and entrepreneurship, with the ultimate goal of contributing to entrepreneurship and self-employability. In this sense, the project included, on the one hand, the acquisition of a set of skills necessary to create an entrepreneurship project and its communication plan, and on the other hand, to promote attitudes and experiences on the students that enhance their autonomy, initiative and confidence in themselves.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, competencies, pedagogy, psychology students.

1 INTRODUCTION

There is an increasing attention in the role that entrepreneurship can play to reach economic and social development objectives. Consequently, entrepreneurship promotion has included efforts that aim to develop knowledge and skills, assuming that they can be learned (Valerio, Parton & Robb, 2014). In 2009, Education and Training 2020 Program, which main objective was to address challenges in education and training systems by 2020, set “Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training” as one of the four focal European Union objectives. From this framework, entrepreneurship has been identified as a competence that can increase innovation and promote creative learning environments” (European Commission, 2012).

Fostering entrepreneurship is a current challenge of the universities. In this sense, entrepreneurship education is one key to the promotion of entrepreneurial innovation behaviour. However, most authors agree that education does not encourage entrepreneurial attitudes and either develops or promotes business creativity skills, risk-taking, independence, etc. (Gorman, Hanlon & King, 1997). Some authors argue that it is necessary to provide specific learning experiences, based on an active participation in projects and offer content that led to the development of the idea of self-employment (Rasmussen & Sorheim, 2006).

Some reviews of entrepreneurship courses show that many of them are focus in educating “about” entrepreneurship and enterprise rather than educating “for” entrepreneurship (Kirby, 2004). Additionally, most of the courses are focused on contents and skills involved in developing the business plan, being generally taught in economics and business educational programs. However, communication, and in particular persuasion and influencing abilities is a sensitive task from the beginning of any entrepreneur project.

This paper presents a teaching innovation project named "PSIcoEmprende" (Psycho-Entrepreneurship) and its more relevant results. Its main objective was to develop learning activities to empower last year psychology students to the competence of entrepreneurship and promote a favourable attitude to self-employability.

1.1 Defining entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has traditionally been defined as the process of designing, launching and running a new business, which typically begins as a small business, such as a start-up company, offering a product, process or service for sale or hire. In the 2000s, the definition of "entrepreneurship" expanded to explain how and why some individuals (or teams) identify opportunities, evaluate them as viable, and then decide to exploit them, whereas others do not, and, in turn, how
entrepreneurs use these opportunities to develop new products or services, launch new firms or even new industries and create wealth (Wikipedia, 2017)

Entrepreneurs are those who detect an opportunity and carried out. Fundamentally, they are people of action. Although it is undeniable that certain features personal help to be an entrepreneur, it is also true that, like any process, be an entrepreneur can be learned: the accumulation their skills, knowledge and experience are contribute to a large extent.

As pointed out by Timmons (1989) “Entrepreneurship is the ability to create and set up something on the basis of basically anything is started, make, manage and build a company or organisation, rather than observe, analyse or describe. It is to grasp the opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction and confusion” (p. 1). In this definition, we see that the emphasis is placed on the entrepreneurial process than in psychosocial features of the people.

Entrepreneurship refers to an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and taking risks, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives (European Commission, 2006).

More recently, the term “entrepreneurship competence” have raised in the European context. Bacigalupo, Kampylis, Punie and Van den Brande (2016), in the document: EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework, define and describe entrepreneurship as a competence. They define three competence areas: ‘Ideas and opportunities’, ‘Resources’ and ‘Into action’, each of them contains 5 competences. Areas have been labelled to underline “entrepreneurship competence” as “the ability to transform ideas and opportunities into action by mobilising resources” (p. 10). Behind this conception, underline the idea that entrepreneurship is a skill that can be learnt.

1.2 Entrepreneurship education

The European Commission (2003) defines entrepreneurial education as those activities of “teaching and learning about entrepreneurship involve developing knowledge, skills, attitudes and personal qualities” (p. 15). In a recent document, the EC emphasise the idea that 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’ (see EC, 2013, p. 9).

Liñán (2004) propose a clear and comprehensive concept of entrepreneurship education as “the whole set of education and training activities -within the educational system or not- that try to develop in the participants the intention to perform entrepreneurial behaviours, or some of the elements that affect that intention, such as entrepreneurial knowledge, desirability of the entrepreneurial activity, or its feasibility” (p. 163).

Valerio, Parton and Robb (2014) proposed a conceptual framework which categorizes entrepreneurial and education training outcomes in a series of domains: entrepreneurial mindsets, capabilities, status and performance. First of these factors refers to the socio-emotional skills (associated with motivation and future success as an entrepreneur (e.g., self-confidence, leadership, creativity…) whereas the second refers to entrepreneurs’ competencies, knowledge and technical skills.

1.3 Focus of entrepreneurship courses

There is no doubt that today there is increasingly a greater number of entrepreneurship courses and programs in higher education centres than in the past. At the end of the nineties, Gorman, Hanlon and King (1997) did a ten-year literature review on entrepreneurship education and concluded that was the necessity to differentiate among entrepreneurship, enterprise and small business management education. In particularly, they stressed that is relevant to distinguish each of these from traditional approaches to management education. This situation has led to a growing area of research into those factors that affect and should be taken into consideration in entrepreneurship teaching and learning programs. Because it is a relatively new area, researchers are doing an effort in reviewing existent literature and proposing theoretical models with the final aim of offer clear guidelines for formative centres and teaching.

Three main questions have attracted attention: What kind of entrepreneurship courses exist? Which is the most appropriate methodology to teaching for entrepreneurship? And finally, what type of effect have these courses on the participants? Regarding the first question, Liñán (2004) differentiates four kind of entrepreneur courses based on the objectives they pursue: (i) entrepreneurial awareness
education; (ii) education for start-up; (iii) continuing education for existing entrepreneurs; and (iv) education for entrepreneurial dynamism. Table 1 show their main aims as well as the teaching issues involved. As it can be seen, they also correspond to different stages or levels of engagement on the entrepreneur’s goal. This author affirms that the two first kind of programmes are the most common variants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Teaching focus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial awareness education</td>
<td>To increase the number of people concerned about small businesses and entrepreneurship so that they may consider this alternative as a viable and rational option.</td>
<td>It focuses on different aspects of entrepreneurship such as abilities used by entrepreneurs; how to be developed; the problems usually faced, and making explicit the successive steps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education for star-up</td>
<td>To rise detailed knowledge about their closer environment (where the firm would operate) and what specific steps should be taken to start a firm.</td>
<td>It focuses on the practical aspects related with the creation of the firm: the business-plan elaboration, carrying out visits to entrepreneurs and support bodies, how to obtain financing; legal regulations; taxation; etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education for entrepreneurial dynamism</td>
<td>It objective would not only be to increase the intention of becoming an entrepreneur, but also the intention of developing dynamic behaviours when the enterprise is already in operation.</td>
<td>To increase the entrepreneurial behaviours quality after the business is already in operation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing education for existing entrepreneurs</td>
<td>It mains objective is to allow improvement of the existing entrepreneur’s abilities</td>
<td>To improve the entrepreneur’s existing abilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* ) Built table from Liñán, (2004, p. 10-12) and Liñán, Moriano and Zarnowska (2008, p. 49)

With regard to which is the methodology most appropriate to teaching “for” entrepreneurship, according to European Commission guidelines, a future entrepreneur learns through practical-learning methodologies, real-life experiences and project work (EC, 2017). Furthermore, entrepreneurship education programs which are defined as good practice include collaborative learning, experience-based learning, role models and community and business connections. Therefore, it consists of active pedagogical methodology with applied practice-oriented. Theories of social learning and self-efficacy can explain the use of this kind of methodology and its possible influence participants (Peterman and Kennedy, 2003).

Regarding the third question, the influence of entrepreneurial education programmes on participants, there is evidence that many entrepreneurship programs and courses are able to build awareness of entrepreneurship as a career option and to encourage favourable attitudes toward entrepreneurship (Gorman, Hanlon and King, 1997). Some studies show that substantial changes in their perceptions towards starting a business after participating in the program (Peterman and Kennedy, 2003; Soutaris, Zerbinati and Al-Laham, 2007).

Fayolle (2003) emphasise that instructors in education entrepreneurship should concentrate their task on generating and strengthening entrepreneurial intention of participants. According to Liñán (2004) whether this intention turns into action or not rest on very diverse aspects (environment, opportunity, resources, etc.) which lie outside the scope of educators.

2 METHODOLOGY

The teaching innovation project consisted in the realization of a set of activities within an optional course of the degree in psychology (Social Psychology of Communication). Teaching methodological included activities such as: brainstorm of ideas about what means to be an entrepreneur, business ideas, talks with young entrepreneur psychologists, evaluation of the entrepreneurial attitude among of others. The main evaluative assignment consisted of doing an exercise of developing an entrepreneurship idea and its communication plan. It should be done in teams and make a final presentation.
At the beginning of the course the aim of the PSIcoEmprende project was explained to the students. The basic concepts of entrepreneurship were progressively introduced and work in a practical way during the classes. There were two initial activities which allowed the delimitation of projects. The first activity consisted of a brainstorming of words to the question “What is to be an entrepreneur?” Thus, each student individually wrote on post-it's the words and after they shared them working in groups of 4-5 persons.

The second activity comprised writing three entrepreneurship ideas and then shared in groups. From this dynamic, the students chose an idea and began to develop it. After that, the parts of an entrepreneurship project, as well as, of the communication plan of the project were working during classes.

The third activity consisted of inviting young entrepreneur to explain their experiences to the students. The criteria followed for the selection were: coming from different areas of applied psychology, but with an innovator profile and it should be recent. This activity was highly valued by the students and make the sessions very dynamic and motivating.

3 RESULTS

A group of 33 students were enrolled in the course. Once started the course, 15 students followed continuous evaluation, thus they were implied in the innovation project. They formed groups ranging between 2 and 4 persons, presenting a total of 6 entrepreneurial projects (see Table 2).

Analysing the themes of submitted projects, two of them offer services for university students ("Horizontal Courses" and "Unigroup"). Other two were addressed to young people that visit Barcelona, for tourism or study reasons. Both proposals were prepared by international/exchange students. Thus, this student profile presents proposal placing themselves in their condition of visitors of the city.

Only two of the proposals were addressed to psychological assistance, although in an innovative format. "Psychobar.net" consist of a psycho-cultural association of psychologists. Apart of the bar, the place will have office space for doing psychotherapy of diverse approaches and techniques: psychoanalysis, art-therapy, bio-dance, etc. These spaces will be rent for hours or days in an accessible and flexible format. "Advisory of exchange students" consists of a psychological service address to international students with the aim of providing psychological advisor before, during and after the student exchange period. It considers to offer both: face-to-face and virtual assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing is Caring</td>
<td>It's a project of communication to raise awareness and diffuse to finance social projects. Many NGOs or companies that carry out social projects do not have the means or the time to carry out an effective dissemination, therefore, our organization is in charge of running this service for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal Courses</td>
<td>The aim of the project is that student could offer optative courses open to the all university community. It implies to break the barrier very common between teacher and student, suggesting that both the students act as teachers, taking an active role in experiences of co-construction of knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unigroup</td>
<td>The mission of Unigroup is to facilitate communication and interaction between students and/or users of the universities in order to form University working groups. It will do it through the design of an app.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychobar.net</td>
<td>It consists of a psycho-cultural association of psychologists and a virtual network. Apart of the bar, the place will have rooms for doing psychotherapy of diverse approaches and techniques. These spaces will be rent for hours or days in an accessible and flexible format.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory of exchange students</td>
<td>It consists of a psychological service address to international students with the aim of providing psychological advisor before, during and after the student exchange period. It considers to offer both: face-to-face and virtual assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopper Barcelona</td>
<td>Hopper BCN will add a new way of transportation in the city: the idea has the same structure as a taxi but instead of using cars as a way of transporting people, Hopper BCN makes use of scooters to bring people from one destination to another.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once completed the course, students were asked to answer a "Scale of Entrepreneurial Attitudes". The scale is a digital version of the developed by C. Krauss (20XX) in her doctoral thesis. The scale consists of 30 items and measures five dimensions: assumption of risk, need for achievement, self-esteem, perceived internal control and innovation. Sociodemographic information and questions about future entrepreneurial level were included. After the student answered it, the score in each category and the way of interpreting the qualification were sent by email.

The scale was answered by 8 students between 21 and 30 years old, with the same distribution by gender. They all began their study of psychology in 2012, with the exception of a student who began the year 2011. In general lines, students obtained an average score of 121 points. In the "Global Entrepreneurial Attitude" (see Table 3). In accordance with the parameters of interpretation established by the author of the scale, this value is indicative of a moderately favourable attitude.

### Table 3. Mean scores obtained in the scale: Global and dimensions scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>S1</th>
<th>S2</th>
<th>S3</th>
<th>S4</th>
<th>S5</th>
<th>S6</th>
<th>S7</th>
<th>S8</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Assumption of risk</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Need for achievement</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>4.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-esteem</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Internal locus control</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Innovation</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Entrepreneurial Attitude</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>121.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the level of evaluated dimensions, students tend to score higher in: Need for achievement (M = 4.88), Innovation (M = 4.68) and Internal locus control (M = 4.55). Whereas, they tend to score lower in Self-esteem (M = 3.60) and Assumption of risk (M = 3.11). In terms of future projection, the 75% of student see themselves developing a business idea in the medium or long term.

The students were very motivated and this fact made that the dynamics of the sessions were very committed and participatory. One of the group's opinion presented below shows that the innovation project was positive evaluated:

"The realization of this work has provided an opportunity to be able to delve into the psychology of social communication in two sense: on the one hand, picking up part of the developed concepts in the course and, on the other hand, in a practical and constructive manner. The exercise of construction has been rewarding because it has helped bring theory and tools to practical reality [...] The construction of the Social Communication Plan, reflects, to a large extent, many of the issues involved in the publication of a product: objectives, targets, channels, messages, etc. Also, as it happens in everyday reality, communication plan has been a reprocessing constant until its later form. [...] On the other hand, the first part of it - think of an idea / product - has allowed us to carry out dialogue, negotiation, interaction and, especially, processes of creativity. The time dedicated during classes to the innovation and entrepreneurship have facilitated the emergence of group synergies, providing a unique character class to allow students to go beyond academics, thus gaining a sense of empowerment and contributing to the personal development." (Unigroup, 2016; p. 13).

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

Most of the students show a positive assessment of the activity. Learning by doing implied greater student involvement during the course and a high motivation. Moreover, inviting young entrepreneurs contributed with relevance and up-to-date real-life experience, which is especially important in an action-oriented field like entrepreneurship. They constitute role-models and contributed significantly to move projects forward. Therefore, the main objective reached was that even those students who will not become entrepreneurs are more "entrepreneurial" and have a more favourable opinion towards the entrepreneurial activity.
About strategies and techniques for teaching entrepreneurship to future psychologists, we will indorse some recommendations. Firstly, entrepreneurial competence should be introduced in the classroom through varied practical methodological strategies. We cannot “teach” competencies but train them. Secondly, learning through projects offers a range of possibilities of creating better learning experiences. Passing through all the stages of a project, allow them to deepen in the proposed idea, become highly committed, and experiment and experience have reached the goal. Thirdly, students should choose those areas in which they want to do the entrepreneurship project. The entrepreneurship brings out the best of themselves when it is linked to their personal area of interest. Additionally, we recommend to work in teams. Entrepreneurial have a high component of risk assumption. Working in groups allow them move further with the tranquility of being accompanied. Finally, generate high expectations of learning in students allows them to learn without limits, taking the control of their learning process.

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