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**ON MOTIVATION AND ENTERPRISE EDUCATION –  
ENSURING MANAGEABLE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

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**“The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary” –  
Vidal Sassoon**

**INTRODUCTION**

No discussion of entrepreneurship education can be said to be complete without the concept of motivation being addressed. Motivation is central to the drive and success of any entrepreneur or business start-up; sans a suitable motivational environment the potential for success of student enterprises become questionable at best and total failure at worst. Further poorly designed and delivered entrepreneurial education structures can act as future inhibitors to entrepreneurial drive and engagement. Poorly executed enterprise education could also result in disincentives for embracing entrepreneurial careers and causing students to see formal employment as their only route to success and economic opportunity. In times of low labour market absorption the implication of ineffective student enterprise activities has the potential to act as a social “bad” in terms of the waste of public and/or private finance and impact negatively on student aspirations. Consequently, when planning enterprise education, student business start-up and other entrepreneurial support activities, those who are entrusted with the responsibility must recognise their importance to the individual student and their life chances and the wider social context of these activities. These factors point solidly to the need to address motivation from both sides of the student enterprise and entrepreneurial education coin viz. the student motivational mosaic and the institutional strategic imperatives.

## MOTIVATION AND ENTERPRISE EDUCATION

The enterprise education challenges facing contemporary higher education institutions and the education system are myriad, one of the most telling is the need to create a more fecund environment for nurturing and develop of lifelong learning capabilities of students with is a significant skill for addressing and traversing rapidly changing global contexts and environments. The inherent entrepreneurial motivation is where “the intention of an individual to behave entrepreneurially arises because the entrepreneur perceives self employment... to be utility maximizing, and thus forms the motivation to behave entrepreneurially” [Fitzsimmons and Douglas 2005: 2]. However, in a student enterprise context the critical issue is associated with the initiators for engagement in entrepreneurial pursuits, and to recognition of such activities as a viable career choice; consequently success as an entrepreneur is first and foremost dependent “on people’s willingness to become entrepreneurs” [Shane et al. 2003: 257]. Effectively, as the authors have observed, it is all contingent on the individual’s willingness to “play the game” [Shane et al. 2003: 258]. Getting students to “play the game” is the key requirement for all institutional stakeholders entrusted with nurturing and developing students’ enterprise and entrepreneurial activities.

In a study conducted by one of the authors [Mostert and Shaikh 2013]<sup>1</sup>, a multi-national cross-section investigation of students at different higher education institutions, 46% indicated that they wished to start and manage their own business. Interestingly the study showed that only 32% of the respondents felt that a lack of support was an obstacle to starting their own business. Further, the majority of the respondents indicated that they could rely on family support for starting a business (57%) while 59% felt that that they would see starting a business as an alternative to formal employment if they encountered problems with securing such employment. However, the study also indicated that 85% had never considered entrepreneurial pursuits as a career option. This research exercise indicated that the students in higher education have a high propensity for engagement in enterprise education activity as a default; however, experience has indicated that this innate potential proves very challenging to convert into entrepreneurial action in the majority of cases. This outcome is likely due to the fact that while students would like to run and manage their own business, the concept of entrepreneurial activities as a career needs to be a focus area for those engaged in enterprise education.

Aldrich and Zimmer recognise that entrepreneurial activity “can be conceptualized as a function of opportunity structures and motivated entrepreneurs with access to resources” [Aldrich and Zimmer 1986: 3]. The challenge for the entrepreneurial educator is creating an environment to encourage playing the game with suitable opportunities and access to resources. Shane et al offers a comprehensive conceptualisation paradigm for assessing the issue at hand namely that “all human action is the result of both motivational and cognitive factors, the latter including ability, intelligence, and skills” [Shane et al. 2003: 258]. These, motivation and cognition, have been highly instrumental in the resulting bias within education, more especially higher education.

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<sup>1</sup> Sample size 1079 from 6 countries (Australia, China, United Kingdom, Pakistan, South Africa, Togo), although responses from Australia (11) and Togo (2) were insignificant.

This bias has evolved in no small part due to the fact that students are expected to bring motivation to the teaching and learning environment, with the educators delivering the content and applying formative and summative assessments against formal curriculum outcomes. The pedagogic environment calls for an integrated relationship between content, cognition, motivation and success, which is considerably more complex than other demands on educational delivery. Utility maximisation and teaching and learning delivery do not sit comfortably together due to the complex nature of returns to educational investment, an issue which is beyond the scope of this paper, however, the dynamic associated with enterprise education makes the need to explore this relationship more coherently.

The challenge associated with student enterprise development, can be effectively located within the issue of utility maximization behaviour, in that students gain extensive social utility from being students, and their utility horizons tend to be limited<sup>2</sup>. This presents one of the key challenges for effective enterprise education, generating utility for students from the process of participating in the business start-up activities that are extra-curricular. Consequently, the enterprise educator needs to ensure that the process of engagement in entrepreneurial activities generates utility in and of itself; this recognises the fact that “the pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunity is an evolutionary process in which people select out at many steps along the way, decisions made after the discovery of opportunities – to positively evaluate opportunities, to pursue resources, and to design the mechanisms of exploitation” [Shane et al. 2003: 257–258]. This evolutionary process is inherently beneficial to any economically active citizens and not least students who are planning to enter a complex and competitive workforce.

The goal of this paper is not to engage in a detailed analysis of the relationship between utility and motivation but rather to explore how motivation must be addressed when designing teaching and learning for entrepreneurial education. Thus entrepreneurial education needs to mobilise the structural advantages that formal assessment present and offer as basic motivators<sup>3</sup> for on-going student engagement. However, it is important to recognise that this is a necessary but insufficient aspect of effective entrepreneurial education. The key challenge is not so much in getting students to complete the relevant formal outcomes but to maintain the motivation to continue when the structural requirements and demands are removed as the formal assessment phase is completed<sup>4</sup>. Consequently, the challenge is bridging motivation from the classroom (formal) to on-going intrinsically based motivation, in effect how do enterprise educators kick start intrinsic motivational factors and ensure that students realise the potential of their ideas and embrace opportunities? In the ideal world the financial reward lag will be shortened, the world of start-ups

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<sup>2</sup> There continues to be a considerable overhang from the lifetimes earning impact of higher education argument, which holds that those with degrees earn more over their working lifetimes. The growing impact of graduate unemployment is likely to have significant impact on this “fact”.

<sup>3</sup> This assumes that the student has recognised the role of successfully completing their courses to continue to enjoy the student life style and the concomitant utility associated with being a student.

<sup>4</sup> Both authors have witnessed many students with excellent business ideas and motivation during a programme/course/module makes a submission and receive their mark and instantly lose interest. The intrinsic motivation is driven by the formal curriculum requirements.

is awash with stories of perseverance, failed crowdfunding, Dragon's Den rejections, etc., which later turn into big success stories.

Motivation, extrinsic and intrinsic, is key when developing and designing pedagogic structures to nurture and promote entrepreneurship, Pink [2009] offers a suitable framing paradigm with his analysis of anachronistic nature of Motivation 2.0 that is so prevalent in contemporary economies. Pink's analysis presents a call for a new discourse in terms of motivation, and he quotes Harry Harlow on the topic of motivation, Harlow "urged scientists to »close down large sections of our theoretical junkyard«" [Pink 2009: 4]. Harlow's thinking was ahead of its time and his research took another route. Pink traces the evolution of this initial thinking through other researchers and arrives at the telling observation, "our current operating system has become far less compatible with, and at times downright antagonistic to: how we organize what we do; how we think about what we do; and how we do what we do" [Pink 2009: 21]. A detailed analysis of Pink's thesis is beyond the scope of this paper, however, the potential that contemporary thinking on motivation is flawed needs to be brought into the debate for design and development of entrepreneurial training and development. This need for a rethinking goes to the core issue at hand, which is, if the contemporary motivation paradigms are erroneous the risk of designing faulty enterprise education curriculums may contribute to ineffective investment of resources.

Pink's analysis offers a suitable starting point in terms of mobilising a new focus for designing curricula that will deliver the desired outputs. Central to Pink's analysis is the distinction between "algorithmic" versus "heuristic" tasks, the former being linear in nature with the latter the polar opposite.

"A heuristic task is the opposite [...] precisely because no algorithm exists [...] you have to experiment with possibilities and devise a novel solution" [Pink 2009: 29]. This bears a telling resemblance to the role of the entrepreneurs. The entrepreneur "introduces a new good or a new method of production, opens new markets or discovers a new source of supply, or carries out a new organization of an industry [...] upsets the conventional way of doing things" [Braguinsky et al. 2009: 1]. Braguinsky et al continue and highlight those factors that have been identified as playing a role in entrepreneurship: "the role of risk taking [Kihlstrom and Laffont 1979], managerial ability [Lucas 1978], wealth [Evans and Jovanovic 1989], and preferences for the control, flexibility and other job attributes that come with being one's own boss [Kihlstrom and Laffont 1979] as the primary motivations for entrepreneurship" [Braguinsky et al. 2009: 1]. The Schumpeterian concept of the entrepreneur is firmly predicated on their being "an agent of change that is the source of his famous creative destruction" [Braguinsky et al 2009: 1].

The authors mobilise the Schumpeterian paradigm as methodological framework, and manipulate the utility maximisation concept as a backdrop to inform the discussion. Using each of the factors, as identified by Braguinsky et al., a link to utility maximisation behaviour can be constructed (Table 1), in this case utility maximisation postulates "that individuals will select the course of action which promises, in prospect, the greatest psychic satisfaction or maximal utility" [Douglas and Shepherd 2002: 84].

Table 1 could be accused of being artificial; however, it offers the initial framing structure for thinking more effectively about the factors that will inform the underlying design of enterprise educational structures for promotion of student motivation. Redeveloping Table 1 for students could generate the following Table 2.

TABLE 1. Utility maximisation behaviour – entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurial factor	What	Utility maximisation behaviour (entrepreneurs)
Risk taking	Willingness to engage in risk activities	The expected utility gain outweighs the disutility associated with the process (the risks of playing the game)
Managerial ability	Ability to manage resources and activities for identifiable outcomes	Utility received from the process of managing in and of itself
Wealth	Accumulation of financial and experiential wealth	Expected financial and experiential returns outweighs disutility
Preference for control	Ability to control all factors associated with professional activities	Utility generated from maintaining the locus of control outweighs the underlying risks associated with all aspects of responsibility
Flexibility	Linked to control and managerial ability, having flexibility to engage in selected activities	As above

Source: the authors.

TABLE 2. Student motivators

Entrepreneurial factor	Student motivator
Risk taking	Maximise the return to effort from academic and wider outcomes
Managerial ability	The ability to manage their own learning environments and the entrepreneurial process while developing their skill base
Wealth	Enhanced opportunities to generate financial return in both short and long run
Preference for control	Having the ability to control the overall process
Flexibility	Engage in a dynamic system

Source: the authors.

From a pedagogic perspective the considerations can be further simplified as follows (Table 3).

TABLE 3. Student motivator from a pedagogic perspective

Entrepreneurial factor	Student motivator
Risk taking and wealth	Maximise the return to effort from academic and wider outcomes while generating income streams and economic opportunities
Managerial ability	The ability to manage their own learning environments and the entrepreneurial process while developing their skill base
Preference for control and Flexibility	Having the ability to control the overall process and engage in a dynamic system

Source: the authors based on Braguinsky et al. [2009].

Implicit in this delineation is the concept of work effort; work effort in a student context presents a number of pedagogic philosophical conundrums, firstly, rewards in a classroom and the wider world of work often enjoy few synonyms<sup>5</sup> and this interface needs to be addressed as a matter of some urgency for all levels of education, but most especially within higher education. Secondly, for many students the demands associated with classroom effort also bears little resemblance to the work of work<sup>6</sup>. Thirdly, changing fee structures and costs associated with higher education is resulting in students acting more like consumers and expecting a service that delivers “results for my money”. This list is by no means exhaustive but highlights the challenge associated with work effort, student input and motivation. These aspects are not discrete and present the kernel of the demands associated with effective enterprise education activities.

The relationship between work effort and student work effort is very complex and offers extensive scope for discussion and further research due to the respective returns to any effort expended. “Tolerance for work effort refers to the degree of aversion to work effort – work effort refers simply to the expenditure of physical and mental effort in the workplace, and can be measured as the product of working hours and working intensity” [Douglas and Shepherd 2002: 86]. For the entrepreneur and the professional measurement of returns to effort are more easily quantified. However, for the student the conventional metrics are less discrete, except in terms of the formal credit system. It is this complexity that needs to be effectively addressed to bridge the student as learner and potential entrepreneur and a nascent career as an entrepreneur.

Success in entrepreneurial pursuits requires a number of individual/intrinsic motivating factors [The Entrepreneurialist]:

- financial independence;
- success of family business;
- challenge of starting a new business;
- market opportunity;
- realisation of a dream;
- implementing a business idea.

If none of these are present at the outset of a student’s engagement with an entrepreneurial educational process, the key aspect that needs to be nurtured and developed is creativity, and on the back of this development of motivators that will ensure that students follow through and develop ideas to logical and potentially viable outcomes.

This then begs the key question for those aiming to develop entrepreneurs, how to nurture creativity and motivate action? This requires a coherent understanding of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, “Intrinsic motivation is conducive to creativity; controlling and inflexible extrinsic motivation is detrimental to creativity” [Amabile 1996: 119].

Factors which are central to creativity, according to Barron [1988: 78] are:

- recognising patterns;

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<sup>5</sup> In fact many educators and educational institutions continually attempt to recreate world of work type contexts in their methodologies in order to prepare the students for the demands of professional activities. This interface is key to effectively preparing graduates for the world of work and employability and highlights the innate potential of entrepreneurial activities for preparing graduates ready to undertake any challenges that their professional development will require.

<sup>6</sup> Short sharp bursts of effort can delivery higher returns in terms of grades and assessments.

- making connections;
- taking risks;
- challenging assumptions;
- taking advantage of chance;
- seeing things in new ways.

If students bring any of the intrinsic motivators to the classroom or learning environment the necessary conditions are in place, however, these may not be sufficient and it is incumbent on the educator to develop fertile enterprising outputs. For students without intrinsic motivators any engagement, at least initially, will be driven by formal credit structures which are tantamount to “controlling extrinsic motivators” and thus potentially asymptomatic to promoting creativity in the classroom, with its impact on generating entrepreneurial activities. Nurturing creativity in classroom environments is an essential requirement for ensuring students engages coherently with any entrepreneurial activities and processes.

Linking the need to encourage, develop and nurture creativity is the need to mobilise work effort, which is essential to the translation of ideas into reality. Central to the changing perspectives on motivation is the view on the concept of work and work effort. Pink observes that much of the research on this area “suggests that work [...] always considered a »disutility« [...] is becoming a »utility«” [Pink 2009: 31]. Key to this changing characteristic is work which “is often creative, interesting, and self directed rather than unrelentingly routine, boring, and other-directed” [Pink 2009: 32]. The scope for developing opportunities that offer these characteristics to people is essential. “People use rewards expecting to gain benefit of increasing another person’s motivation and behaviour but in so doing, they often incur the unintentional and hidden cost of undermining that person’s intrinsic motivation toward the activity” [Reeve 2005: 143].

The scope for using entrepreneurial education and development for promoting opportunities that deliver self-directed employment cannot be overstated, however, to realise this potential the delivery, design and execution needs to be carefully consider within the relevant institutional parameters and staff capabilities. It is essential to recognise that motivation and drive are intrinsically linked to any methodological design and curriculum development processes that aim to promote enterprise development and entrepreneurship.

Pink in his analysis offers a coherent summary of the kernel of his thesis against which to build further discourse. “What is true is that mixing rewards with inherently interesting, creative or noble tasks – deploying them without understanding the peculiar science of motivation – is a very dangerous game” [Pink 2009: 49]. None more dangerous it can be argued than in the context of developing innate entrepreneurial skills and ventures. Making the incorrect assumptions regarding motivation and drive within environments that have as their key objective the identification, nurturing and development of entrepreneurial skills can led to a inefficient allocation of scarce education and training resources. “By neglecting the ingredients of genuine motivation – autonomy, mastery, and purpose – they limit what each of us can achieve” [Pink 2009: 49]; it is the creation of an environment that allows for the development of autonomy, mastery and purpose for all budding entrepreneurs which is the goal of any programme.



Another potentially toxic outcome associated with Motivation 2.0 is the role of goals and goal setting. Ordóñez et al. argue that “goals may cause systematic problems for organization due to narrow focus, unethical behaviour, increased risk taking, decreased cooperation, and decreased intrinsic motivation. Use with care when applying goals in your organisation” [Ordóñez et al. 2009: 17]. This perspective on goal setting can, *prima facie*, be a very relevant to the budding entrepreneur and for the entrepreneurial educator. While King and his colleagues take the idea a step further and state “the optimally striving individual ought to endeavor to achieve and approach goals that only slightly implicate the self; that are only moderately important, fairly easy, and moderately abstract; that do not conflict with each other, and that concern the accomplishment of something other than financial gain” [King et al. 2003: 189].

A word of caution at this point for the enterprise educator, these perspectives should be seen as offering a framework for assessing how motivation, goals setting and other outcomes are applied to the nurture and promotion of enterprise development. Student motivational frameworks will by definition be diverse, and this diversity can often result in a very mixed entrepreneurial educational context. The temptation to work to the lowest common denominator and create a numbers exercise can often seem most logical and the only viable option. This is a rational response to limited resource contexts that many institutions face, both in terms of physical and human resources, not to mention personnel with entrepreneurial experience<sup>7</sup>.

Against this analysis there is clearly scope for applied motivational thinking to entrepreneurial education curriculum design which could generate a suitable cost-benefit analysis framework. In order to develop such a framework, the authors use enterprise education outcomes or EEOs, and graduate these as:

- EEO1. Students completing a formal course for credit only;
- EEO2: Students continuing with their business ideas beyond assessment;
- EEO3. Students launching their business;
- EEO4. Students growing businesses and creating employment.

This offers a potential structure for design and delivery of a programme, the EEO1, EEO2, etc. acts as a streaming metric and allows students to self select initially. This has the potential to establish a system that recognizes the status of the student’s intrinsic motivation at the outset of their enterprise programme<sup>8</sup>. With this system in place students can receive different support from all stakeholders who have an interest in the outputs of an enterprise education exercise. Using these delineators the following possible structures and curriculum delivery activities could enhance the overall offering of an enterprise education system (Table 4).

Table 4 is not exhaustive but allows for a more structured approach to the pedagogic environment and allows students to self select, *a priori*, students will tend to the higher

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<sup>7</sup> Often the closest students come to people with entrepreneurial experience are guest speakers, networking functions, etc.

<sup>8</sup> *Prima facie*, the authors experience, is that many will elect to aim for EEO4 initially, but the framework allows for a suitable meta-cognitive paradigm for students to assess their own intrinsic motivations.



TABLE 4. Enterprise Education Outcomes

Enterprise Education Outcomes (EEO)	Teaching and Learning Structures/Support*
EEO1. Students completing a formal course for credit	Standard formal programme – lectures, workshops, seminars, speakers, tutorials, etc.
EEO2. Students continuing with their business ideas beyond assessment	As above plus post assessment planning and industry based networking activities
EEO3. Students launching their business	As above plus engagement with event planning networks and funding submissions
EEO4. Students growing businesses and creating employment	As above plus training in employment practices and all aspects of staff management

\*Each level requires students to commit to more formal engagement activities.

Source: the authors.

initial motivation categories but are likely to find the different demands of each to act as a limiting factor. For example, each level will have a concomitant step change in terms of initial commitments to formal activities. Students would be permitted to move between groups in response to the inevitable changes in motivation as the programme unfolds.

By streaming students at the outset the enterprise educator is able to ensure that the students receive the correct support and thus create an environment which effectively nurtures that diverse entrepreneurial potential and skills with any student cohort. Diversity in delivery is essential to the effective entrepreneurial education classroom, the need to create a fecund teaching and learning environment requires recognition of the different innate motivational factors which students bring to the classroom and process. This motivational diversity is a further complication for the range of skills and abilities that is characteristic of the contemporary classrooms.

## CONCLUSION

Developing coherent curricula for enterprise education with associated delivery structures will ensure that any innate entrepreneurial abilities will be nurtured and students will have the opportunity to create a solid foundation for further professional development. Creating a motivationally based pedagogic paradigm will deliver a more effective teaching and learning environment and ensure that entrepreneurial education moves closer to the individualized learning experiences for students. Further, it will allow students to gravitate towards each other in terms of shared vision and ambition. These commonly shared ambitions will ensure that groups are formed which are better able to understand the demands of their selected task and result in better outcomes from the teaching and learning environment, with the result of more viable and potentially successful ventures and enterprises. The enterprise educator is more than a facilitator of teaching and learning but is also a motivational speaker who must continually address the issues of motivation and work effort.

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**Summary.** There is growing recognition that the standard approach to motivation, referred to as Motivation 2.0 is not necessary adequate for assessing the contemporary drivers for students and budding entrepreneurs. Some have argued that the concept of goal setting may act as much as an inhibitor as a motivator. This perspective on goal setting can, prima facie,

be very relevant to the entrepreneurial educator. In this research exercise the contemporary thinking on motivation and motivational approached will be explored and applied to the development of entrepreneurial education curriculum development and pedagogic structures. Those entrusted with the nurturing and development of any innate entrepreneurial potential must ensure that the teaching and learning environment is dynamic and as individualized as possible. Key to any individualized delivery mechanism is a coherent understanding of motivational factors and activities. Effective curriculum development for entrepreneurial training demands an integrated understanding of motivators which must be driven extra-curricular, while enterprise education continues to become embedded in educational delivery structures. This paper addresses these demands and acts as a primer for how this could be achieved.

**Key words:** motivation, entrepreneurial, student enterprise, enterprise education, curriculum development, utility maximization, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, risk taking, managerial ability, business ideas, enterprise education outcomes

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