

Infusing Social Entrepreneurship into Teaching and Learning:

An Esoteric Discussion

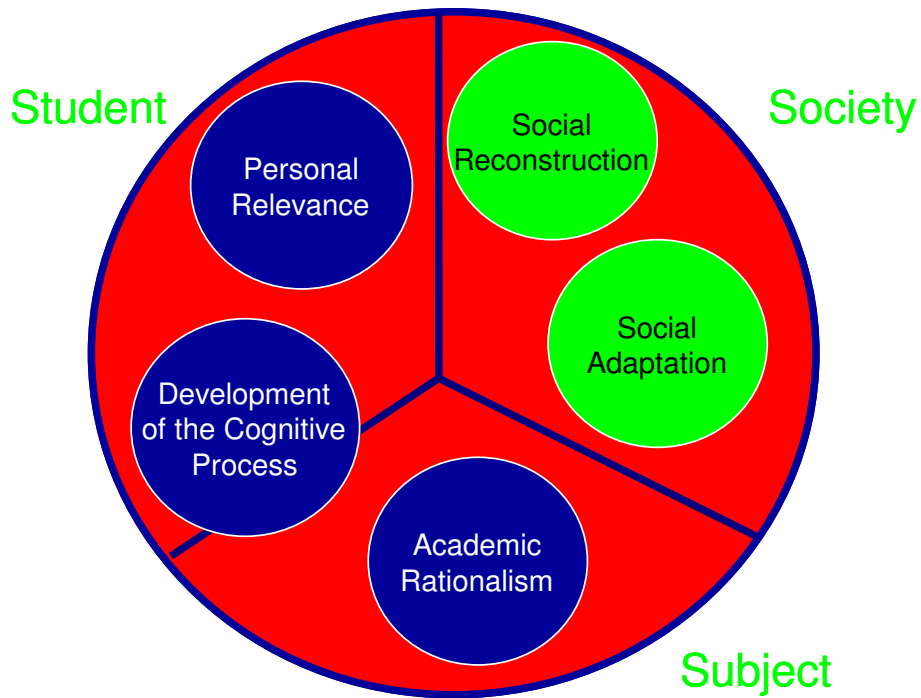
Suzanne L. Flannigan, PhD

It is always exciting when a community college educator has the opportunity to build a new program and to design curriculum that truly blends theory with practice. When entrepreneurship is introduced as one of the fundamental values of the curriculum design and subsequently appears in the approaches and outcomes inherent in the program's mission, the task is even more rewarding. As the Chair of the Sport Management Program at Camosun College's Centre for Sport and Exercise Education (CSEE), an innovative new Centre whose mission is to provide educational programs related to sport leadership, I have had such an opportunity. And, the fundamental challenge I faced was how to infuse entrepreneurship into the teaching and learning process.

How and why should we infuse entrepreneurialism into our teaching and learning? This article addresses both questions in the context of curriculum design for a new sport management program and concludes by affirming the importance of aligning the cultural values of the curriculum with those of the program (and, ideally, the institution). I present a new model that aligns the cultural values of the curriculum with those of the program while infusing an entrepreneurial shift from social adaptation to reconstruction. I believe this approach is effective because it allows us to connect students' personal development to social growth and development.

Jewett, et al (1985) suggests that in advance of any curriculum design process, the developers must consider the value orientation—the underlying social, student or subject perspective—from which they intend to build the curriculum. Jewett’s assumption is that the value orientation is the fundamental determinant of all that follows. While Jewett discusses five orientations—one related to subject mastery, two related to student self-actualization and cognitive growth, and two related to social change—the orientations most applicable and critical to our discussion of entrepreneurial curriculum development are social adaptation and social reconstruction.

Figure 1 – Jewett’s Five Value Orientations



Social adaptation—building curriculum that prepares students to enter existing societal systems with the intent to change society incrementally from within those systems—focuses on the more managerial entrepreneur. For example, we would apply this orientation by training students to go into existing sport organizations and facilities, to fall into step with the current management practices, and to seek and act on opportunities to affect change incrementally from within the established practices.

Social reconstruction—building curriculum that prepares students to enter existing systems with the intent to change society radically from the leading edge of those systems—focuses more on the opportunistic and often visionary entrepreneur. Here, we would train students to go into existing sport associations and facilities with the intent to change revolutionarily, over time, the existing systems.

Given that the basis of entrepreneurship is opportunity which leads to change and growth, it would seem that social reconstruction would be the predominant value orientation and that social adaptation might be more suited to a management curriculum. What is often overlooked in this initial assessment is that both orientations are critical to the continued evolution of society. Both provide substantive environments within which to create and manifest growth for the benefit of society as a whole.

So, what does this mean for our curriculum and our program? This means that we expand our teaching and learning objectives beyond subject mastery (i.e., thorough knowledge of the basics of accounting and financial management) and beyond a basic business-oriented understanding of traditional profit-driven ventures and their requisite social implications. We include and emphasize the students' learning within the context of the self-actualizing process which occurs when they recognize an opportunity—have a

vision—and develop the confidence to act and ultimately lead the operationalization of the vision to produce change.

While the starting point for a purely entrepreneurial business venture and an individual's self-actualizing experience may be similar, the process can be very different in its manifestation of change. The business venture drivers (i.e., fiscal viability, profit and shareholder satisfaction) may produce change in society in terms of the economic impact related particularly to that venture. The individual's self-actualizing experience has a much more lasting impact on society because it overlays any future endeavor, including business ventures.

In the self-actualizing context, students experience significant personal change through increased awareness of their individual and unique potential. Infusing the curriculum with opportunities for self-actualization not only supports students' subject mastery, but also assists in their individual development and their subsequent contribution to society. In the ongoing process of actualizing, they prepare to enter society as change agents—catalysts for change.

Explained another way, by the time the students complete the curriculum, they understand the subject matter through their own unique opportunity orientations. They understand their own motivations and have refined their own particular entrepreneurial tendencies. Their enhanced and individualized self-awareness contributes to their expanded sense of self worth within society. Therefore, they have a much better sense of what they can offer to the future. They have greater confidence in their ability to impact social change and growth.

Making entrepreneurialism a core value in the program helps us to align the curriculum orientation with the fundamentals of entrepreneurial thinking. In short, overlaying subject mastery, self-actualization and social evolution with entrepreneurialism integrates the individual's personal vision with a social vision. This provocative linkage contributes substantially to the growth of the individual and the operationalization of change in society.

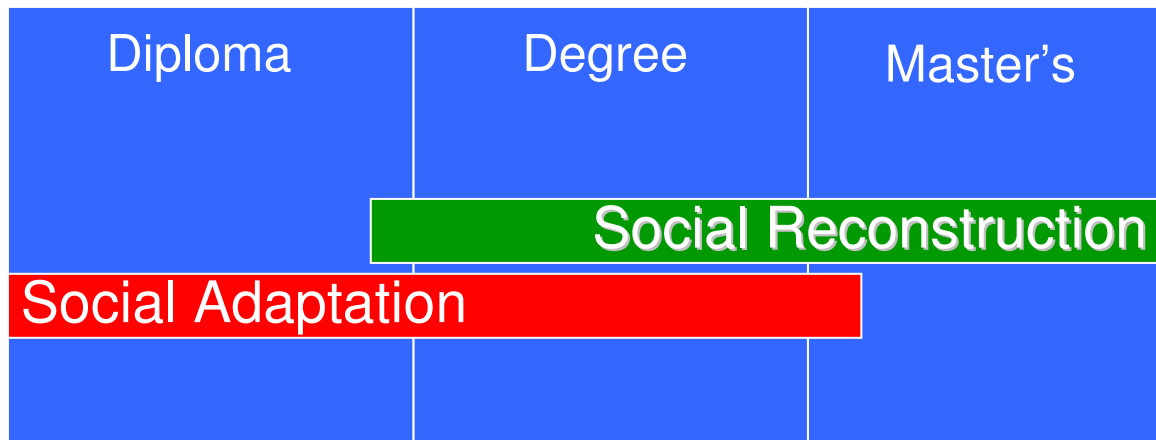
Added to this is the impact of cultural congruence (Flannigan, 2005)—the degree to which the cultural values of the program are congruent with the entrepreneurial curriculum and its core values. This is a key point for reflection. Because there is an evident difference between a managerial entrepreneur and a visionary entrepreneur in terms of the way each manifests change in society, it is critical that the curriculum designers and the program administrators understand these differences and align their values. A program which fosters values of leading edge innovation and change agency will provide a much more supportive environment for social reconstruction than will an institution whose values are stability and status quo. A program which promotes values of fiscal conservatism and risk aversion would more naturally fit with a social adaptation focus because of the need to understand the existing social systems and environmental factors in order to affect incremental change.

The obvious question, then, is how we design a curriculum infused with entrepreneurial thinking using these two value orientations? Using our previous example of a new sport management program which progresses from diploma to master's, we see in Figure 2 how the value orientations manifest over a continuum.

In the two year diploma, social adaptation is the primary focus because our intent is not to produce managers at this level, but to produce individuals who coordinate sport programs, are involved in sport leagues, associations, and events, and the operations of facilities. At this level, students learn about existing systems and ways to interact effectively in order to affect change internally and slowly through adaptation. Students begin to recognize opportunities and find ways to develop those visions within existing systems.

As the students move into the degree program and we begin to produce managers, we see a gradual shift from social adaptation toward social reconstruction. Social reconstruction relates to the creation and implementation of whole scale change in systems and behavior. So, at this level, while social reconstruction co-exists, there remains a strong emphasis on adaptation because these individuals manage in sport more than create the future vision for sport. These managers are near the ‘front lines’ finding opportunities to change and tweak systems and behaviors in order to manage them more effectively. Concurrently they begin to locate opportunities to create new systems and behaviors that transcend existing ones and serve as catalysts to propel society forward.

Figure 2 – Social Adaptation/Reconstruction Continuum



It is not until we reach the Master's level that our focus shifts significantly toward social reconstruction—the creation of leaders who envision a new future and act in ways that inspire change on a societal level. True visionaries in the making, these highly effective individuals are well versed in existing social systems and behaviors, trained to explore new avenues through which to sustain and expand society's growth and evolution. These individuals have learned about what society is and they have developed a sense of what society can be. These are the individuals who will move society from the real to the ideal in this century.

The final point is that in order to infuse entrepreneurialism into our teaching and learning, we need to focus on both social adaptation and reconstruction. Our curriculum design must be grounded in our society's potential evolution. Our content must be rich with opportunities for students to flex their entrepreneurial muscles. It must be intentional and reflective in ways which engender our students' self-actualization. And, our content must be congruent with the culture of our program, constantly reaffirming our core values. In this way, curriculum design becomes a substantive and powerful way to infuse entrepreneurialism into our teaching and learning.

Bibliography

Flannigan, S. L. (2005) *Cultural Congruence and Students' Sense of Connectedness: A Case Study*. Dissertation, June 2005.

Jewett, A.E., Bain, L.L., and Ennis, C.D. (1985). *The Curriculum Process in Physical Education* (First Edition). Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers.