

Proposal for a practical session in a university subject to develop the transversal competence of "Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship"

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Abstract

In a dynamic and globalized business world such as the current one in which our professional and personal life is developed, it is crucial to focus on the development of the cross-cutting competence "Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship" of future professionals, already from their formative stage in University.

Taking advantage of the intrinsic creativity of the early age of students with concerns about entrepreneurship, we consider it appropriate to help develop and enhance this competence in the first university course of the Degree in Business Administration and Management, specifically in the subject of Introduction to the Business Management. We think it is the best way to motivate students in their training as future entrepreneurs.

We propose to do a practical session in which a recognized professional in the field of commercial management, representing business lines of leading brands in their sector (home fashion), conduct a practical workshop in which students are placed in situation of knowing how to face a new business model to diversify and expand its distribution field. The object of study and work would be limited in this case to the creation of an own line of articles, complementary to the lines of which the professional is a representative, and to arrange with the online sales logistics platform the sale and distribution of the new product line.

With this we hope that the students can, in an active way, experiment and develop their innovative and entrepreneurial capacity, using and reinforcing their creativity.

Keywords: *Innovation; Creativity; Entrepreneurship; Active Learning; Problem-based learning (PBL); Student outcomes; Business Administration; Management; Transversal competence.*

1. Introduction

In the current, dynamic and changing, demanding and complex economic environment, innovation is one of the areas of development that can most enhance the competitive advantage of companies and thus their benefits (Fidel et al., 2018). Good customer knowledge management, as well as a generous investment in innovation capacity, can and should lead to customer loyalty, and thus to the establishment of a long-term partnership with customers and suppliers that, in an environment of trust, reinforce the productive and commercial capacity of the company (Guerola-Navarro et al., 2019). Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship are three key concepts in the success of companies that want to compete in today's modern and dynamic market, reaching and enhancing their competitive advantage and seeking to adapt their value chain to the needs, requirements, and demands of clients (Santesmases, 1999).

Bueno Campos (2007) defines the structure, processes and business models that the company faces today, being increasingly changing and complex, despite the tendency of the previous decades to simplify the structures, and fruit of the need to adapt to the changing reality of the market. De Castro et al. (1996) some decades ago, he defined the basic concepts of business economics as adaptive variables to the economic and social reality of the moment. In an industrialized economy, where the secondary and tertiary sectors dominate the productive sphere, and therefore are determining factors in the development of the different business models and their logistic and service derivatives, Durbán et al. (2010) insists on the need to intensively apply innovation and entrepreneurship to achieve business success.

Robbins and Mary (2005) establishes the parameters that a company's administration must have to face the competitive challenges of the modern market, which is why it is considered that the study of Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship should be a focal point in any training activity specialized in **Business Administration and Management**.

Introduction to Business Administration is one of the core subjects of the first Academic Course in the Degree in Business Administration and Management. This subject is focused in the study of the relationship between the Company and its economic environment through the two functional areas: Production and Marketing (De Castro et al., 1996). The final objective of this subject is to introduce the student to the basic concepts of Business Administration and Management, so that the student can finish the course knowing the playing field in which the economic life of the companies is developed and knowing how to value the impact that any decision that affects the company's Value Added Chain may have on a company and its environment (Ochoa Laburu, 1996).

In addition to the expected outcomes related to the Company and its Administration and Management, this subject has additional outcomes called "transversal", meaning that during the acquisition of fundamental concepts by the student, the student must also acquire certain competencies not directly related to Economics, Marketing and Finance, but with the student's own development as a person and professional, and also their transversal competences (Menguzzato and Renau, 2007). To master these competencies, it is necessary to carry out training activities. These actions should be based on active methods of learning skills and student participation methods that generate a deeper, meaningful and sustainable learning (March, 2006).

That said, we believe that the development of the **transversal competence "Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship"** should be included in the teaching program of the subject Introduction to Business Administration, so that students develop their personal ability to face the changing challenges of an economic model in which Innovation, Creativity, and entrepreneurship will be key in their success as professionals.

1.1.- The Subject "Introduction to Business Administration" and its competencies.

The Subject "Introduction to Business Administration", is a core subject of the Degree in Business Administration and Management in the Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV). The objective of this subject is to situate the company in its environment from a systemic approach, serving as an introduction to three large business subsystems: management and control, commercial and operations. It should be noted the introductory nature of the subject that seeks to give a global vision that serve the student as a basis for further study in other subjects of the curriculum.

The content is structured in these basic topics:

1. Introduction and general concepts on Management. Introduction to the Production and Marketing Subsystem
2. The functions of Forecasting and Planning
3. The Organization functions
4. The Address functions
5. The Control functions

In this subject the following competences are worked on, empowering their development through Active Learning during the development of the theoretical and practical sessions:

- Ability to develop, analyze and interpret the processes of organization and management in the company.
- Ethical commitment at work

- Learn autonomously
- Work in diverse environments
- Work in multidisciplinary teams
- Communicate orally and in writing in their native language.
- Synthesize critically information from different sources.

Together with the core competencies, the student must learn to develop a series of transversal competencies (UPV, 2012) that will lead the student to exploit in a more effective way the basic competences (ICE, 2015), and that will not only be critical for this subject but for all his / her personal and professional development:

- Understanding and integration
- Teamwork and leadership
- Planning and time management

As can be seen, the **transversal competence "Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship"** is currently not included among the competences developed and evaluated in the subject. For what has been said in the introduction of this paper, **our proposal** is to include this transversal competence and develop it through Active Learning methodologies. Innovate is the key tool to respond satisfactorily and in an original way to personal, organizational and social needs and demands with an entrepreneurial attitude. Innovation is understood as the ability to respond satisfactorily to personal, organizational and social needs, modifying processes and / or results to generate new value. In turn, the development of this competence requires, both to think in a different way to provide different perspectives (creativity), and to commit certain resources on their own initiative, in order to explore an opportunity, assuming the risk that this entails (entrepreneurship).

2. Methodology

Having stated our intention to propose a training activity model to include the development of Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship within the academic-formative scope of the Introduction to Business Administration course, we focus next on the format that said model should have.

First of all, we think that, following the basic guidelines of Active Learning (Araújo et al., 2014), to involve and motivate students, it is essential to break their learning routine, which we propose is done through the participation of a speaker external that breaks the schemes and expectations of the students.

Second, we believe that learning and competence development can be achieved more effectively through the use of Problem-based learning (PBL) as one of the most effective methodology of Active Learning.

2.1.- The leading speaker professional profile.

Along the same lines of other proposals of training activities of these authors, it is considered appropriate to propose that an external speaker attend the training session, with minimal academic knowledge to face debates with students of this subject, and at the same time with sufficient experience in the area of work as to provide students with an eminently practical and different point of view from the one they are used to in the usual classes at the university.

On this occasion, in addition, the rapporteur is considered as mandatory to have an entrepreneurial attitude demonstrable by his professional experience, and also by his speech and by his dialectic, since we consider it basic that this professional captivates, motivates, and starts all students present in the classroom to face group dynamics in which Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship are intensively present.

2.2.- The Active Learning methodology and Problem-based learning (PBL) methodologies

As already mentioned in the Introduction, the use of **Active Learning methodologies** for the implementation of this teaching activity proposal is proposed, based on the benefits that recent literature attributes to these methodologies, at all educational levels and in special at Higher School (Araújo et al., 2014). The foundation of this methodology is its ability to motivate students and to get actively involved in their own learning, which makes it much more effective (Konopka et al., 2015). This type of learning also guarantees that the concepts, experiences, and skills developed will last over time once the student finishes his academic stage and later when he is integrated into the labor market. Specifically, Konopka et al. (2015) defines Active Learning as “the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values and attitudes by any educational strategy that involves or engages students in the process by leading them to activities and debates, instead of just putting them in the position of passively listen to the information given by the teacher”.

Boud and Feletti (2013) defines **Problem-based learning (PBL)** as “a way of constructing and teaching courses using problems as the stimulus and focus for student activity”. PBL is based in the principle that the best way to learn is when the students are able to participate and to do things while they think about what they are doing, and this is the way they learn and acquire active competences for continuous and future learning (Gudwin, 2015). It is

therefore confirmed that PBL is one of the Active Learning implementation models, perhaps the most effective, for which the teacher or speaker must be the main motivator of the students so that they participate actively in activities that lead them to an effect and experiential learning.

That said, **our proposal is the use of PBL as an exponent of Active Learning methodologies**, to establish a teaching framework in which a series of practical classroom sessions help students to live a series of real-life situations and with This will develop their own abilities to manage their reactions to them.

2.3.- Description of the practical session.

Speaking of Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship, a multitude of psychological, mercantilist and social theories establish different parameters based on which the human being makes his decisions and bets on solutions to the challenges that are presented to him. Our proposal is far from enumerating these theories, but it focuses on finding an experienced professional with demonstrated skills in a productive sector, and that said professional acts as an external speaker to establish a Work Project composed of a series of group dynamics.

In the first instance, and as an example to launch the activity proposal, a recognized professional in the field of commercial management, representing business lines of leading brands in their sector (home fashion), conduct a practical workshop in which students are placed in situation of knowing how to face a new business model to diversify and expand its distribution field. The object of study and work would be limited in this case to the creation of an own line of articles, complementary to the lines of which the professional is a representative, and to arrange with the online sales logistics platform the sale and distribution of the new product line.

All work sessions are intended to be:

- **Participatory:** the students must be the protagonists, the teacher must be the facilitator and moderator, and the external speaker must be the reference as an experienced person who introduces the group dynamics and puts the conditions around it
- **Related to the subject:** all the situations that are proposed must be coordinated between speaker and teacher, so that they faithfully reflect aspects related to the objective and thematic of the subject, so that the training activity is consistent
- **Within a global plan,** in the scope of what PBL means, with an approach, a development, an objective, and scales of measurement of results

- Totally aligned with the “**Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship**” transversal competence.

The initial approach, agreed with a professional previously arranged and willing to launch this training activity, would be to perform these group dynamics, in this below pre-established order, and adjusting the duration of them based on the interest and response of the students. The three activities are totally aligned with the “**Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship**” transversal competence:

1. **Initial approach:** the speaker explains what his current business is as a representative of different home textile lines and brands, giving a clear and concise image about what his responsibilities are to his represented, and what are his strengths and weaknesses. The group dynamic will consist of students presenting their views and discussing the benefits and risks of this type of business in the current market, so that the final result of the discussion is a map of "pros and cons" for a person who doubts whether to undertake this type of business or not
2. **Maturity of the professional stage:** The speaker explains what his day to day is, both in programming of commercial actions, as in obligations and responsibilities for the management of his business, placing special emphasis on the competitive situation of the sector and his commercial experience and trade. Students are then urged to discuss what their desires and fears would be when assessing how far to continue with the current business approach, and at what time or circumstances they would consider making the decision to follow, abandon, or diversify business. The teacher acts as a stimulator of the debate, and the speaker as an enrichment with details of valuable content about the environment and the real commercial world that students are still far from knowing for their lack of work experience.
3. **Decision on diversification and new business lines.** The speaker puts students in the trance of knowing what are the expectations of the future of the sector, what are their personal expectations, and what is the current situation of the competition, and thus urges them to actively discuss what their decision to
Looking ahead to two challenges:
 - a. **diversify product lines:** create your own brand, based on existing but inactive production of any of your represented, discarding competition between them; a kind of white label that allows the representative to play with a new product line that he enjoys total control in all phases of his production-distribution chain. This would broaden the business horizon of the business professional, but also increase their risks. Students should expose their fears and expectations to this situation.

- b. **establish a new modality of sale-distribution:** the speaker exposes a possible business proposal, with the new white label, establish a distribution agreement through an Internet sales platform (in this case Amazon) and distribution of your product through a global agreement with a transport-parcel agency. Again, and after presenting the speaker the details of the option negotiated with the sales platform and with the distribution agency, the students must present and discuss their points of view.

All these sessions of presentation-debate between speaker, teacher and students, make sense within the applicability of PBL methodology and the principles of Active Learning, which as stated above imply that the speaker and teacher must establish the necessary framework and rules so that students are motivated to participate actively, and thereby ensure that group concepts and reflections last over time as effective learning.

3. Results

The results of this training and teaching activity proposal are the establishment of a global and stratified plan of activities and objectives for real learning about the criteria that are taken into account in real professional life in the face of challenges on Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship.

The three scheduled sessions deal with these three components of this transversal competence "Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship", which is estimated to cover three of the biggest challenges of a dynamic, modern and changing market like the current one, which guarantees the adequacy from the planning of activities to the achievement of the competence studied in this paper.

On the other hand, the work sessions have been raised in line with the Active Learning and PBL methodologies, always based on the students getting involved in their own learning and being protagonists of it, for which the group dynamics and public debates They are powerful tools.

The selection of the speaker is also a key to success, not only because of his qualification and experience, but also because of the need for a motivating spirit.

Finally, the establishment of objectives in each activity guarantees that each one of them makes sense and does not become an empty and meaningless debate.

4. Conclusions

The study of this proposal for active training has shown, after reviewing the literature, what is the expected impact of the use of PBL and Active Learning methodologies. There is the conclusion that the expectations of the motivation and active involvement of the students in their own learning are confirmed, being protagonists in their training, and making the results better and more lasting over time.

Another conclusion obtained is the importance of the three concepts of transversal competence under study: Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship. During the investigation, and in contact with qualified professionals to carry out the activity, the relevance of these three pillars of business success in the current market have been widely verified and confirmed.

The general conclusion is that, this training activity, in the format of participatory Active Learning, and in the context proposed, is ideal for developing the transversal competence "Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship", key to the development of personal and professional skills of the students of the Introduction to Business Administration subject.

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