

What makes an entrepreneurial teacher for sustainability and well-being?*

Entrepreneurial teachers have a passion for teaching and learning. They are inspirational, open-minded, confident, flexible, compassionate, and responsible - but also, from time to time, rule-breakers. Educators who are fostering sustainability and well-being bring their passion and entrepreneurial mindset into collaborative learning ventures with students, colleagues, and the wider community.

They see a role for education to contribute to sustainable societies. They explicitly draw connections to how topics relate to diverse aspects of sustainability (economic, social, environmental) while encouraging critical reflection, discussion, and real-world applications.

They follow a flexible and adaptable student-centred study plan and prefer interdisciplinary, project-based learning. They put emphasis on group processes and interactions within a culture that respects a diversity of opinions, answers and solutions and reflection about the learning process.

An entrepreneurial teacher is more of a facilitator than someone who lectures. They support the individual learning processes of students and the development of personal competences and passions. They are also a visible learner.

An entrepreneurial educator is mindful and prepared to focus on the impact of the course or program model with respect to sustainable initiatives. Care is taken to make connections outside of the classroom with entities that have a consistent mandate for sustainable practice.

An entrepreneurial educator strives to be aware of both local and global initiatives, prepared to remain current and to be willing to tackle social issues and initiatives that may exist outside the commonly accepted systems of education.

Entrepreneurial teachers have strong team working skills and know their personal strengths and values. Personally and professionally they reflect attributes such as passion, humility, integrity, courage, focus, justice, and a growth mindset. They are networkers, actively exchanging with their peers.

Learning Outside of the Scheduled Course Time

The entrepreneurial teacher will often work outside the allocated course time frame. Student learning will occur in several constructed and spontaneous environments that model real-life scenarios and systems of business, as well as outdoor learning spaces.

Managing Risk, Failure, and Change

Entrepreneurial teachers have learned how to manage risks and overcoming barriers. They reward individual and group initiatives, responsibility taking and risk taking. They are ready to accept failure as an integral part of a learning process but also recognize that setbacks can be a costly waste of time, skill and commitment. Entrepreneurial teachers know how to mitigate risk.

Operating within an entrepreneurial system of education often requires the need to operate outside the norm. Course structure, outcomes, environment, and areas of assessment will not always fall within the traditional paradigm of course or program design. This will sometimes make people nervous, both the educator teaching within the program and colleagues alike. A solid plan that is malleable and capable of shifting with the systems of education and the business environment is essential for success.

Culture and Ownership

An entrepreneurial teacher will focus on the concept of culture. He or she will build a culture within the course or program that will allow the students to take ownership of their contributions. The culture and ownership are built around a team or group of individuals that work towards a common goal for learning and success. The entrepreneurial teacher is always striving to be open to other ways of knowing.

Sustainable Model of Business

Entrepreneurial educators will need to put focus on the concept of program sustainability as well as sustainability principles. Budgetary, technological, and social dependencies will shift over time. It is important to maintain several contingency plans in order to promote and ensure program success. Questions need to be asked such as: can the program remain relevant and effective over time with reductions or the elimination of the core systems of support?

Mentors (Both inside and outside school)

Entrepreneurial teachers use technology and social media in the classroom to support learning. They explore new solutions, production techniques and computing tools that support the learning process. They allow their students to find new tools and become the mentors to the teacher and fellow students in the use of these tools.

They also use social media for their own peer learning and exchange of information. And are aware of the power of this technology and their responsibility for its use.

They reach out to colleagues who have been down similar roads to assist with navigating through non-traditional patterns of design and development.

The current thinking on entrepreneurial teaching is based on a number of recurring themes:

Sustainable entrepreneurship education is more than preparation on how to run a business. It is about how to develop the entrepreneurial mindset, attitudes, skills and knowledge that, in short, should enable a student to ‘turn ideas into action’. Thus, if that action should lead to a business venture it is less likely to be one that perpetuates unsustainable practices.

Teachers cannot teach how to be entrepreneurial without themselves being entrepreneurial, creative and innovative. Entrepreneurial teachers use a variety of creative methods as innovative pedagogical tools. They are not afraid to say “I don’t know, but I will find an answer to that.”

Entrepreneurial competences require active methods of engaging students to release their creativity and innovation.

Entrepreneurial mindsets, competency, and skills can be acquired or built only through hands-on, real life learning experiences.

Entrepreneurial skills can be taught across all subjects as well as a separate subject.

Entrepreneurship education should focus on ‘intrepreneurs’ as well as entrepreneurs, in light of the fact that most students will use entrepreneurial skills and mindsets within companies or public institutions.

To give entrepreneurship education real traction, there is a need to develop learning outcomes related to entrepreneurship and related assessment methods and quality assurance procedures for all levels of education.

Teachers and schools will not be able to realize their ambitions without cooperation and partnerships with colleagues, communities, businesses and other stakeholders.

The sustainable entrepreneurship education agenda should be promoted beyond teacher education institutions to businesses and the wider community.

Schools for sustainability, well-being and entrepreneurship

An entrepreneurial school has a dedicated and committed school management which supports entrepreneurship and sustainability education for all students.

An entrepreneurial school has a vision for its future and a clear view of how to integrate sustainability with entrepreneurship education into the broader curriculum and development plans. The schools vision must be embraced by the larger jurisdiction and the governing body. This requires support for the work at the governmental area, and the jurisdictional area to embrace creativity and innovation. It also requires support of

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professional development opportunities for staff to develop the ability to visualize future opportunities for students.

The teaching staff and the general staff are willing to embrace change positively; and identify the need for change and the risk of stagnancy, and have a plan and the ability to move beyond routines.

An entrepreneurial school has a vision for its future needs and a clear view of how entrepreneurship education fits into the broader curriculum and development plan.

The school has a commitment to keeping the principles of sustainability, while nurturing the transversal, creative and entrepreneurial skills children and young people need to perform well not only in school, but also in wider society.

Concrete learning outcomes are defined and assessed. Assessment methods are consistent with the ethos of creativity, innovation, sustainability, passion-based learning, and pedagogies for real-world deep learning.

Student feedback is collected systematically – positive reactions of learners are an important driver for the implementation of entrepreneurial learning and speed up the acceptance of entrepreneurship education.

Regular evaluation of the activities are carried out – particularly the impact on global society and individual student capability development.

Training courses focus on practical approaches and include active, participatory methods which are suitable to create ownership.

Entrepreneurial schools and projects benefit from engaging external organizations and business partners.

Creative workers such as artists, designers, architects and scientists can help schools and teachers to unlock the creativity and raise the aspirations and achievements of children and young people.

Entrepreneurial institutions and educators take part in peer learning and exchange – on local, regional, national and international levels.

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