Business lecturers' perceptions of the nature of entrepreneurship

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Abstract

Purpose – To investigate possible connections between the ways in which university lecturers define the term "entrepreneurship" and the pedagogical methods they apply when teaching the subject.

Design/methodology/approach – In total, 141 lecturers on entrepreneurship courses completed a questionnaire concerning meaning of the term "entrepreneurship"; the pedagogical techniques they employed when delivering entrepreneurship units; and their commitment to entrepreneurship as an academic discipline. The sample was analysed with respect to the respondents' subject areas (marketing, organisational behaviour, economics, etc.), amounts of business experience, types of employing institution, and socio-demographic characteristics. An emerging model was tested using the technique of partial least squares.

Findings – Lecturers' definitions of entrepreneurship were indeed influenced by their backgrounds and by the number of years they had worked in businesses. Few of the sample had ever owned an enterprise and, in general, respondents' operational management experience was limited. There was no consensus as to how the word entrepreneurship should be interpreted or how the subject should be taught.

Research limitations/implications – Only a minority of the sampling frame (29 per cent) returned the questionnaire. The model that was tested had to be constructed *ab initio* due to the paucity of prior research in the field. Hence the study was wholly exploratory and could not test hypotheses explicitly derived from pre-existing literature.

Practical implications – A consistent theory of entrepreneurship needs to be developed, to be disseminated among and accepted by lecturers who actually teach the subject, and then be incorporated into the curricula and syllabuses of entrepreneurship courses.

Originality/value – This research is the first to examine the perceptions of the nature of entrepreneurship held by lecturers on entrepreneurship programmes and to relate these perceptions to their antecedents and pedagogical consequences.

Keywords Academic staff, Business studies, Individual perception, Entrepreneurialism

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) throughout Britain and North America increasingly offer courses in entrepreneurship as part of their mainstream undergraduate and postgraduate provision (see Jack and Anderson, 1999; Watkins and Stone, 1999; Finkle and Deeds, 2001; Morris *et al.*, 2001; Ibrahim and Soufani, 2002; Adcroft *et al.* 2004; Klappa, 2004). Entrepreneurship "majors" have been available in US universities since the early 1980s (Hills, 1988). In Britain, Watkins and Stone (1999) reported that by 1997 at least 45 per cent of all UK HEIs were offering a full undergraduate unit dealing with business start-up issues. A survey of the student recruitment web sites of 121 British university-level institutions completed by the present author in Summer 2004 found that 82 (68 per cent) advertised a unit that included the word "entrepreneurship" or a similar term. Morris *et al.* (2001) observed

that the number of US business schools providing an entrepreneurship or new-venture course had expanded from about 25 in 1980 to well over 700 by the start of the current millennium. The growth in Master's level provision of entrepreneurship programmes has been especially pronounced (Watkins and Stone, 1999; Davies *et al.*, 2002; Brush *et al.*, 2003) and many universities now offer entire undergraduate degrees under the title of "entrepreneurship" or "business enterprise" (Kolvereid and Moen, 1997; Adcroft *et al.*, 2004).

A plethora of factors has been suggested to explain the proliferation of entrepreneurship programmes across British and American HE (and indeed HE in certain other countries – see Carayannis *et al.*, 2003; Ladzani and van Vuuren, 2002). From the early 1980s onwards governments on both sides of the Atlantic have sought to nurture "enterprise culture", and have openly espoused the proposition that entrepreneurial qualities can be developed through the education system (Gibb, 1987; Klappa, 2004). Specific reasons for national governments wishing to promote entrepreneurship education include the crucial role that small businesses play in a country's economic growth (and hence the need to minimise the failure rate of new start ups) (Garavan and O'Cinneide, 1994; Ibrahim and Soufani, 2002; Taylor and Plummer, 2003), and the strong connections known to exist between entrepreneurship and first, the diffusion of new technologies (Jack and Anderson, 1999; Ladzani and van Vuuren, 2002; Grebel *et al.*, 2003), and second, a country's international competitiveness (Audretsch *et al.*, 2002). Critical considerations related to governmental interest in the stimulation of entrepreneurship are the fact that small firms are "net creators of jobs" whereas large companies are "net shedders of jobs" (Hynes, 1996 p. 10) and that small enterprises exert a hugely disproportionate positive effect on increases in total national employment (Gibb, 1987; Morris *et al.*, 2001; Formica, 2002; Colette *et al.*, 2004).

On the demand side, greater flexibility in the labour market (with consequent job changes and regular periods of unemployment for many workers) has induced growing numbers of people to aspire to self-employment (Garavan and O'Cinneide, 1994; Hynes, 1996). In particular, females and ethnic minority individuals who otherwise might face discrimination in the labour market can succeed as owner-managers of small businesses (Shim and Eastlick, 1998; Basu, 2004). It is relevant to note moreover that intrapreneurship (i.e. the application of entrepreneurial approaches to the management of large organisations) is increasingly viewed as a desirable attribute among company executives (see Boyett, 1996; Morris *et al.*, 2001), thus raising the overall demand for entrepreneurship education.

Despite the proliferation of entrepreneurship degrees and units that has occurred over the last quarter century, little is known about the perceptions of the nature of entrepreneurship held by the academic staff who actually teach the subject. Lecturers' interpretations of "what entrepreneurship is" are important nonetheless because they have the potential to affect the ways in which entrepreneurship is taught to students. Do people who lecture on entrepreneurship degrees have the same perspective on "what entrepreneurship is?" If not, how do differences of opinion influence the pedagogical techniques that faculty members select when working on entrepreneurship courses? More fundamentally, is there a consensus among the staff who service entrepreneurship units as to whether "entrepreneurial" attributes can even be taught in the first instance? This paper presents the results of an empirical study of the views on these matters of a sample of 141 lecturers employed on entrepreneurship

units in HEIs throughout the UK. It explored how the people in the sample taught entrepreneurship; and whether their backgrounds and characteristics (subject specialisation, extent and type of business experience, level of highest educational qualification, length of service, etc.) significantly affected their opinions and behaviour. Arguably it is more important to explore connections between the backgrounds of entrepreneurship teachers and how they teach the subject than to examine similar links for lecturers in other areas (accountancy or organisational behaviour for example) for a number of reasons. Teachers of units in, say, accountancy or marketing are (normally) expected to have specific subject-related qualifications and experience in the relevant field, and it is known that academic disciplines of this nature can be learnt via well-established and validated pedagogic methods. The teaching of entrepreneurship, in contrast, is multifaceted and necessarily involves the provision of instruction across a wide range of topics. Entrepreneurship relates to the running of an entire business and (allegedly) concerns acumen, the possession of certain attitudes, and personal resourcefulness as well as (for example) particular financial, organisational design or marketing skills. An extant body of knowledge exists in relation to disciplines such as organisational behaviour and accountancy; with accepted definitions, benchmarks and professional norms. This is not the case with entrepreneurship however, where numerous options arise *vis-à-vis* the way the subject is taught and where there are multiple opportunities for teaching methods to be influenced by an individual's background.

Contrasting perceptions of the meaning of entrepreneurship
The word "entrepreneurship" means disparate things to different people (see Sexton and Bowman, 1984; Hills, 1988; McMullan and Long, 1983; Rauch and Frese, 2000; Grebel *et al.*, 2003; Deamer and Earle, 2004). One general approach to the definition of "entrepreneurship" follows Schumpeter's (1942) dictum that entrepreneurship involves the bringing together of all the factors of production (Pittaway, 2005); in essence entrepreneurship means owning and running a business (Bannock, 1981). Thus, according to this view, anyone who initiates and manages a new venture is, *ipso facto*, an entrepreneur (see Sexton and Bowman, 1984; Watkins and Stone, 1999; Llewellyn and Wilson, 2003 for details of the literature supporting this position). The alternative view is that an "entrepreneur" is really quite distinct from a typical owner-manager although, according to Sexton and Bowman (1984), Morris *et al.* (2001), Grebel *et al.* (2003), and others (see Pittaway, 2005), there is no consensus regarding what the distinctions actually involve.

Possible attributes of entrepreneurs
Gibb (1987 and 2002) differentiated between entrepreneurship and owning and managing a small business on the grounds that the former involved the application of a certain set of personal attributes, whereas the latter was concerned simply with the performance of specific tasks (see also Colette *et al.*, 2004). The first cluster of attributes allegedly associated with true entrepreneurship focuses on innovation (see Sexton and Bowman, 1984; Gibb, 1987; Boyett, 1996; Harris *et al.*, 2000; Engelen, 2002; Llewellyn and Wilson, 2003), opportunism and creativity (see Gibb, 1993; Henderson and Robertson, 1999; Formica, 2002; Shook *et al.*, 2003; Walton, 2003; Schwartz *et al.*, 2005), in the sense of attempting things not previously undertaken or in ways not hitherto

explored (Hoselitz, 1951). Entrepreneurship, according to Morris *et al.* (2001, p. 41) is "opportunity-driven business behaviour". Hence, Morris *et al.* (2001, p. 41) continued, effective entrepreneurs "are those who are adept at recognising patterns or forces that combine to form opportunities".

Some writers go considerably further in their assertions that entrepreneurs are identifiably different to the rest of the population (Gibb, 2002; Llewellyn and Wilson, 2003; Shook *et al.*, 2003; Deamer and Earle, 2004). Leavitt (1989, p. 598), for instance, described the entrepreneur as (in addition to being an innovator and creator) a "visionary, a dreamer and a charismatic leader". Basu (2004) suggested that entrepreneurs often had aspirations different to those of other people. Other personal characteristics that supposedly differentiate entrepreneurship from owner-managership include initiative, a willingness to take risks, self-confidence, perseverance, resourcefulness, independence, persuasiveness, tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity (i.e. seeing ambiguous situations as challenges rather than as problems), imagination, high need for achievement, and a strong belief in being in control of one's own destiny (see Stewart and Roth, 2001; Gibb, 2002; Ibrahim and Soufani, 2002; Llewellyn and Wilson, 2003; Louw *et al.*, 2003; Deamer and Earle, 2004 for details of relevant literature). It is important to recognise however that, in the words of Sexton and Bowman (1984, p. 20), there is "no consensus about what entrepreneurship is, what an entrepreneur does and what an entrepreneur is like, and hence about what should be taught on entrepreneurship courses". Distinctions between "entrepreneurship" and small business management are often ill-defined (Gibb, 1987; Colette *et al.*, 2004, Pittaway, 2005) and the concept of entrepreneurship (allegedly) is not grounded in a consistent body of theory (Fiet, 2001; Grebel *et al.*, 2003; Adcroft *et al.*, 2004). Morris *et al.* (2001, p. 36) in particular cited a large volume of literature that continued to note "a lack of theory development, limited development of useful theoretical frameworks, an absence of rigour in much of the available research, and an inability to draw generalisations from the empirical work that has been conducted so far". The situation is further confused by the association of the word entrepreneur with the word "enterprise", which is often used to denote an entire business organisation (Gibb, 1993). Likewise, the word "enterprising" is commonly employed as an alternative to words such as pioneering, progressive, ambitious, daring, etc. (Klappa, 2004). Gibb (1987) commented that lack of clarity regarding the entrepreneurship concept had damaging consequences for the teaching of entrepreneurship in HE institutions, and that it was hardly surprising that the contents of entrepreneurship syllabuses varied so widely when there were so many potential interpretations of the meaning of the term. This matter is addressed in more detail in the next section.

Entrepreneurship education

In 1984, Sexton and Bowman complained that "the content of a typical entrepreneurship course varies according to the teacher's personal preferences as to definition and scope" (Sexton and Bowman, 1984, p. 21). This was attributable, Sexton and Bowman (1984, p. 18) continued, to the absence of agreement about "what entrepreneurship is or how it fits in with wider academic programmes". More recently, Gorman and Hanlon's (1997) ten-year literature review of entrepreneurship education found very little uniformity among the programmes offered. Disturbingly moreover

Gorman and Hanlon's (1997) review suggested that there were hardly any attempts by institutions to match faculty members' perceptions of the notion of entrepreneurship with practical measures for enhancing course participants' capabilities in relation to these perceptions. Garavan and O'Cinneide (1994) and Shane and Venkataraman (2000) similarly noted wide variations in course content, due in large part to the absence of a clear consensus on the definition of entrepreneurship and the lack of generally accepted paradigms or cohesive theoretical frameworks in the entrepreneurship education area (see also Colette *et al.*, 2004).

The fundamental distinction in entrepreneurial education programmes is between on the one hand those that stress practical small business management skills, and on the other those which emphasise the development of certain attributes within the participant (Gibb, 1987; Curran and Stanworth, 1989; Garavan and O'Cinneide, 1994; Ladzani and van Vuuren, 2002; Peterman and Kennedy, 2003; Walton, 2003).

Skills-training approach
Skills-based programmes seek to teach people the mechanics of running their own businesses. They tend to be "highly structured, consensus-orientated and unstressful" (Sexton and Bowman, 1984, p. 21) and usually involve instruction on such matters as how to raise finance, the selection of premises, taxation, employment and other legal regulations, elementary book-keeping, marketing problems, and so on. Teaching methods usually include case studies, lectures, and assigned readings intended to develop the student's critical judgement and capacity to digest, understand and analyse information (Collinson and Quinn, 2002; Davies *et al.*, 2002; Ladzani and van Vuuren, 2002). Assessment and coursework typically comprises written reports and the development of a business plan (Hills, 1988). Courses of this nature are said to be popular because enrolees frequently desire practical, highly specific and "hands-on" information about small business management issues (Collinson and Quinn, 2002; Ladzani and van Vuuren, 2002). Often, moreover, tutors regard their proper role as that of transmitting this type of knowledge (Curran and Stanworth, 1989; Peterman and Kennedy, 2003). Hills' (1988) survey of entrepreneurship education programmes in US universities found that instruction in small business management processes was the primary activity of most courses. Other common elements were helping the student understand functional business interrelationships, building student self-confidence, and developing analytical skills. An important justification for a university deciding to run this kind of programme is the substantial body of evidence that exists to suggest that new businesses rarely fail because their owners lack innovation, self-confidence, imagination, etc.; but mainly in consequence of their owners' ignorance of management, marketing, finance, budgetary control, employee recruitment and other aspects of personnel administration (Hambrick and D'Aveni, 1988; Jansen and van Wees, 1994; Davies *et al.*, 2002; Ibrahim and Soufani, 2002; Peterman and Kennedy, 2003; Keogh and Galloway, 2004).

Attribute development approach
The skills training approach to entrepreneurship education has been criticised on the grounds that it is "passive", "mechanistic", and contrasts "with the reality of the entrepreneur operating with intuition and limited information under acute time pressure" (Henderson and Robertson, 1999, p. 238). Rather than focusing on systems

and techniques, critics suggest, entrepreneurial education should try to "inculcate the necessary attitudes, values and psychological sets" of the successful entrepreneur (Curran and Stanworth, 1989, p. 13), and develop appropriate personal attributes such as innovativeness; the willingness to take risks, to fail and start afresh; creativity; determination and self-direction (Garavan and O'Cinneide, 1994; Jansen and van Wees, 1994; Hynes, 1996; Engelen, 2002; Gibb, 2002; Deamer and Earle, 2004). Jack and Anderson (1999, p. 114) justified this position on the grounds that because first, the qualities of successful entrepreneurship are "intangible, holistic and enigmatic" and second, each entrepreneurial act is unique and usually the result of complex interactions, then entrepreneurship education should aim to nurture "higher level" thinking and reflection. Graduates of entrepreneurship programmes, Jack and Anderson (1999) continued, should possess a rich understanding of the entrepreneurial process and be ready to react to circumstances not yet known or entirely unpredictable.

Justification for the attribute development approach

Advocates of the attribute development approach to entrepreneurship education (see, for example Fiet, 2001; Gibb, 2002; Carayannis *et al.*, 2003) maintain that entrepreneurship is a "learned competency" rather than an inherited predisposition or cultural trait (Etzkowitz, 2003, p. 326; see also Rae, 2000). This contrasts with the view that entrepreneurs are "born not made", i.e. that successful entrepreneurs deviate from "normal" small business owner-managers in terms of their having been born with exceptional personalities that impel them towards innovative and highly creative commercial behaviour (see Sexton and Bowman, 1984; Chell *et al.*, 1991; Jennings *et al.*, 1994; Gibb, 2002; Llewellyn and Wilson, 2003; Deamer and Earle, 2004 for details of the historical literature concerning this proposition). The counter-argument to the "born not made" hypothesis is that many entrepreneurial aptitudes and attributes are in fact acquired experientially (Haynes, 2003). Hence, because education is part of a person's life experience it follows that entrepreneurship education can enhance an individual's capacities for innovative behaviour, creativity, flexibility, self-direction and the ability to respond to widely different situations (Bannock, 1981; Garavan and O'Cinneide, 1994; Rauch and Frese, 2000; Collinson and Quinn, 2002; Shook *et al.*, 2003; Llewellyn and Wilson, 2003; Walton, 2003). In other words, life experience (including relevant educational experience) can itself engender and encourage innovativeness, self-determination, imaginative problem solving, and so on (Haynes, 2003). Arguably, adopting specific roles and responsibilities and acquiring certain life experiences (e.g. owning and running a business) can change an individual's personality characteristics and influence his or her attitudes and values (Littunen, 2000; Shook *et al.*, 2003). Thus, according to this line of thought, entrepreneurship education should be designed and implemented in ways that nurture and reward innovation, creativity, flexibility, autonomy, self-direction, and the capacity to respond to widely differing situations (Raven, 1983; Hynes, 1996; Fiet, 2001; Carayannis *et al.*, 2003).

Pedagogical methods for attribute development

Garavan and O'Cinneide (1994) cited an extensive literature suggesting that "active" rather than "passive" pedagogical methods were more appropriate for nurturing entrepreneurial attributes. Reflective teaching techniques such as lectures, handouts, required readings, programmed instruction and content-oriented examinations help

participants to acquire knowledge about the mechanics of running a business but, Garavan and O'Cinneide (1994) argued, they ignore the complexities of the environments in which entrepreneurs actually operate. Active pedagogy, conversely, requires the instructor to facilitate, not control, the learning process via the employment of learning exercises such as role plays, management simulations, brainstorming, team projects, and participative discussion sessions that do not involve the student simply listening and taking notes (Rae, 2000; Fiet, 2001; Carayannis *et al.*, 2003). In a similar vein, Gibb (1993, p. 21) advocated classroom entrepreneurship teaching methods based on "self-discovery"; task completion and decision making under uncertainty; informality, freedom to think and to make mistakes; student "ownership and control" of the learning process, and holistic problem solving. These sentiments are echoed by the comments of Sexton and Bowman (1984, p. 25), who argued that entrepreneurship teaching "should be relatively unstructured and pose problems which require novel solutions under conditions of ambiguity and risk"; and by Jack and Anderson (1999, p. 119) who posited that entrepreneurship education had an artistic dimension that was inductive, subjective, and which involved "perceptual leaps which may transcend a conventional economic rationality". The objective, Jack and Anderson (1999) continued, was to inculcate in course participants a particular mentality; not transmit a cookbook of mundane management techniques (see also Garavan and O'Cinneide, 1994; Carayannis *et al.*, 2003; Louw *et al.*, 2003; Shook *et al.*, 2003). In practical terms the differences in the teaching styles that the above mentioned (and other) writers have deemed appropriate for entrepreneurial attribute development, as opposed to management skills development, can be quite stark. For instance, conventional education abhors and penalises (often severely) students who copy from others. Gibb (1993, p. 24) argued however that so far as entrepreneurship education was concerned, "learning by borrowing from others" should be actively encouraged. Table I integrates and summarises some previous syntheses of the teaching and learning methods that academics in the field have recommended for entrepreneurial attribute development.

The problems involved
Underlying the approaches to entrepreneurship teaching and learning listed in Table I is the presumption that institutions actually know which entrepreneurial attributes they need to cultivate. In reality, however, personal values such as creativity, independence, the desire to achieve, and so on, are surrounded by ambiguity (Curran and Stanworth, 1989; Rauch and Frese, 2000; Llewellyn and Wilson, 2003; Deamer and Earle, 2004) and it is not always clear as to which emotional responses, intuitions and "deeper aspects of self" should be nurtured (see Adcroft *et al.*, 2004). Entrepreneurship theory, according to Morris *et al.* (2001, p. 37) is more a "loose collection of ideas than a coherent structure with a shared intellectual paradigm". Hence, Morris *et al.* (2001) continued, there were few principles or generalisations upon which entrepreneurship teaching syllabuses could be based. Sexton and Bowman (1984), Curran and Stanworth (1989), Garavan and O'Cinneide (1994), Llewellyn and Wilson (2003) and Deamer and Earle (2004) have similarly complained that the supposed entrepreneurial characteristics of perseverance, innovativeness, self-direction, etc., have often been derived from the informal observation of successful practicing entrepreneurs and not from psychological research. Curran and Stanworth (1989, p. 12) in particular noted

Skills training approach	Attribute development approach
Students learn by reading and listening to a teacher	Students learn by doing things for themselves through conversations with other course participants
Students are taught to solve problems using information, objective analysis and rational processes	Students are encouraged to solve problems quickly using imagination, "gut feeling", and personal values
Students are taught how to analyse systematically a firm's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats	Students learn how to explore wider environmental cultures and contexts and recognise the existence of hidden agendas
Students are taught to resolve conflicts methodically using set rules and procedures	Students are encouraged to use emotional responses to deal with conflict
Case studies are employed to develop critical analysis and to learn lessons from past situations	Case studies are employed to stimulate the students' imagination and speculate about the future
The aim is to transmit knowledge	The aim is to develop insight
Students are taught how to understand and rigorously analyse concepts	Students are taught how to search for opportunities
Objectivity and academic detachment are encouraged	Emotional involvement with issues is encouraged
Learning occurs within an organised, timetabled environment	Learning occurs within an informal, unstructured environment
Copying from others is penalised	Borrowing from others is actively encouraged
Mistakes are penalised	Mistakes are used as a vehicle for learning
Students examine various business functions	Students examine the deeper aspects of self, emotions and values

Table I.
Possible approaches to teaching and learning

Sources: Gibb (1993); Garavan and O'Cinneide (1994); Ibrahim and Soufani (2002); Carayannis *et al.* (2003)

that, despite empirical studies having been completed in several different countries, the literature on the psychological characteristics of entrepreneurs remains inconclusive. Critically, the alleged link between creativity and successful entrepreneurship "has never been demonstrated in rigorous and unambiguous terms". How then could educational programmes be developed to encourage individuals to adopt entrepreneurial approaches when so little was really known about the unique characteristics of successful entrepreneurship in the first instance?

A more practical barrier to the effective implementation of attribute development approaches to entrepreneurship education is the possibility that courses may be taught by faculty members who have not themselves been trained in the subject (Sexton and Bowman, 1984). Instructors will probably possess backgrounds in such fields as marketing, organisational behaviour, personnel management, logistics, social psychology or accounting and finance. Thus they are likely to draw and build upon concepts and pedagogical methods pertaining to the teaching of these specific subjects. Staff might have been "volunteered" to service entrepreneurship units against their will, and some may be antagonistic towards the very concept of holistic entrepreneurial education. Hills (1988) noted how business schools were often prepared to support research only within single disciplinary areas (at the expense of inter-functional entrepreneurship research), and that lecturers' rewards might be linked solely to

proven expertise in a particular subject (evidenced perhaps by research publications). Institutions could create further difficulties for entrepreneurship programmes by failing to provide the resources necessary for small class sizes, for the rooms and equipment needed for interactive small-group teaching in simulated new venture environments (Fiet, 2001), and for the training of instructors. Attribute development programmes might be good for instilling in participants an appropriate set of values and attitudes (Gibb, 2002; Carayannis *et al.*, 2003; Shook *et al.*, 2003), but the pedagogic methods involved might be extremely expensive for institutions.

The investigation
The present study sought answers to the following five questions:

(1) How do the faculty members who actually deliver entrepreneurship units define the term "entrepreneurship", i.e. as simply owning and managing a business or as the application of special personal qualities and attributes such as creativity, innovativeness and imagination?

(2) Are lecturers' interpretations of "what entrepreneurship is" affected by their backgrounds and characteristics?

(3) To what degrees are the faculty members who teach entrepreneurship genuinely committed to the subject? Are high levels of commitment associated with particular definitional and/or pedagogical approaches to entrepreneurship? Do teachers on entrepreneurship units feel they are constrained to deliver courses in certain ways?

(4) Do lecturers' perceptions of the nature of entrepreneurship influence how they teach (or would like to teach) the subject?

(5) Do lecturers' backgrounds and personal characteristics affect their approaches to the teaching of entrepreneurship?

To investigate these matters a questionnaire was developed and mailed to a sampling frame of 392 module leaders of entrepreneurship related units (see below) in 82 HEIs across the UK. A first draft of the questionnaire was produced consequent to a review of relevant literature followed by discussions with: the programme leader of an undergraduate degree in "Business Enterprise" and three lecturers teaching on that degree at the author's home university; and two unit leaders of undergraduate entrepreneurship degrees at two other universities. This draft was pre-tested on nine teachers contributing to entrepreneurship units at the author's university and five such lecturers at another UK university. In the former venue the items were delivered through face-to-face interviews so that the respondents' reactions to each question could be observed in person. The aim here was to identify any sources of uneasiness, confusion or resistance when answering the queries. This was followed by a mailing to 50 entrepreneurship unit leaders selected at random from the sampling frame used for the main investigation. Consequent to a follow-up this latter distribution generated 13 replies. Examination of the 27 pre-test responses facilitated the rewording of certain items to improve their clarity, although the changes were of a minor nature, so that all 27 pre-test questionnaires could be incorporated into the main sample (exclusion of these 27 cases did not alter the pattern of the results).

Section one of the questionnaire concerned the respondent's personal profile, including the extent and nature of his or her business experience. This was followed by a section that explored (five-point scales) the lecturer's view of "what entrepreneurship is". Thus, three items (see Table II (a) to (c)) referred to the notion that entrepreneurship is basically about business ownership and control (the wordings of these questions were informed by the articles of Sexton and Bowman (1984), and Curran and Stanworth (1989)); while others examined the proposition that "entrepreneurship" needs to be defined with reference to personal attributes such as creativity and innovativeness (Table II (d)); vision and charisma (Table II (g)); perseverance and

		Percentages				
		5	4	3	2	1
(a)	Entrepreneurship means owning and managing a business	20	25	25	19	11
(b)	Anyone who starts a new business venture is an "entrepreneur"	19	31	16	25	9
(c)	At the end of the day, entrepreneurship is basically about the practical aspects of running one's own small business	22	26	19	23	10
(d)	The term "entrepreneurship" should be restricted to people who differ from the rest of the population in that they possess special characteristics such as creativity, innovativeness and imagination	9	19	28	24	20
(e)	Entrepreneurship is fundamentally about the application of personal qualities such as creativity, innovativeness and imagination	11	25	20	25	19
(f)	Entrepreneurs are people who have special qualities of perseverance, resourcefulness and persuasiveness that set them apart from the rest of the population	10	24	30	20	16
(g)	Being a successful entrepreneur has more to do with being a visionary, a dreamer and a charismatic leader than with being good at managing specific business functions (marketing, financial control, etc.)	9	16	24	31	20
(h)	Entrepreneurs are different from other people in that they have different attitudes towards taking risks	21	31	20	18	10
(i)	Entrepreneurs are different from other people in that they feel much stronger desires to achieve and succeed	19	26	27	17	11
(j)	The term "entrepreneur" should be restricted to people who create new ventures that supply completely novel products or services, or products or services that are very different from those currently available	6	12	17	34	31
(k)	New ventures fail mainly because their owners lack basic knowledge of business functions (marketing, financial control, etc.), not because their owners lack creativity, innovativeness or imagination	19	32	21	19	9

Table II.
Interpretations of "entrepreneurship"

Note: respondents were asked to express the strength of their agreement/disagreement on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 represented strong agreement and 1 represented strong disagreement

persuasiveness (Table II (f)); and risk tolerance and need for achievement (Table II (h) and (i)) (see also Sexton and Bowman, 1984; Littunen, 2000; Llewellyn and Wilson, 2003). This section also queried whether the respondent agreed that the term "entrepreneurship" applied only to the supply of novel products (Table II (j)) (*cf.* Hoselitz, 1951; Shook *et al.*, 2003); that entrepreneurship could be taught (see Table III (a)(b) and (c)) (see also Randolph and Posner, 1979; Gibb, 1993; Hynes, 1996); and that lack of basic business knowledge was a more important cause of failure than the absence of entrepreneurial attributes (see Table II item (k)) (*cf.* Garavan and O'Cinneide, 1994).

The third section involved lecturers' opinions *vis-à-vis* what should be taught on entrepreneurship courses (see Table III (f) to (h)) and the person's approach to entrepreneurship teaching (Table IV (a) to (c)) (c*f.* Garavan and O'Cinneide, 1994; Ibrahim and Soufani, 2002), students' expectations, (as discussed later in the text) (see also Gibb, 2002), and whether the individual felt committed to teaching entrepreneurship (Table V (a) to (d)). (These last four items concerning personal commitment were adapted from the inventory developed by Mowday *et al.* (1979)). Section three concluded with items to do with institutional support and resources (Table V (f) to (h)). The fourth and final section asked respondents to indicate the specific techniques they employed when teaching entrepreneurship (as discussed later in the text) (see also Gibb, 1993; Garavan and O'Cinneide, 1994).

		Percentages				
		5	4	3	2	1
(a)	Entrepreneurship is a learned competency rather than an innate predisposition or cultural trait	22	31	22	17	8
(b)	Personal qualities such as creativity and innovativeness can be greatly improved through an individual completing an educational course	24	36	16	16	8
(c)	Teaching people to be entrepreneurs is highly problematic because only a small percentage of the population possesses the innate entrepreneurial characteristics that are necessary for this role	11	19	23	27	20
(d)	A flair for taking risks is more important for successful entrepreneurship than formal business training	13	20	20	23	14
(e)	Entrepreneurship is an academically rigorous subject	8	20	32	22	18
(f)	It is more important for entrepreneurship courses to give students a firm grounding in business functions (raising finance, marketing, budgetary control, etc.) than to encourage students to be creative, imaginative and innovative	16	35	21	19	9
(g)	The purpose of entrepreneurship courses is to nurture higher level thinking and reflection, rather than teaching practical business skills	11	11	19	41	18
(h)	It is more important to get a student to examine the deeper aspects of self, emotions and values than to learn about specific business functions	8	10	24	39	19

Table III.
Can entrepreneurship be taught?

		Percentages				
		5	4	3	2	1
(a)	When teaching entrepreneurship I emphasise practical skills concerning raising finance, marketing, selecting premises, etc., rather than the development of personal qualities such as innovativeness, creativity, self-confidence, etc.	13	41	19	20	7
(b)	The methods and techniques I use when teaching entrepreneurship are fundamentally the same as the methods and techniques I use when teaching other subjects	19	44	23	9	5
(c)	When teaching entrepreneurship I try to get my students					
	(i) to tackle problems in a detached and objective manner rather than encouraging them to become emotionally involved with the problem or issue itself;	28	45	15	7	5
	(ii) to borrow ideas from one another and exchange information and data when completing individual assignments rather than working independently and alone;	4	12	21	37	26
	(iii) to adopt a particular mentality rather than be concerned about specific management techniques;	11	22	39	18	10
	(iv) to solve problems by following methodical and rational procedures rather than through the student using his or her insights and personal intuition	21	40	24	9	6

Table IV.
Approaches to teaching
entrepreneurship

		Percentages				
		5	4	3	2	1
(a)	I feel fully committed to my work as a teacher of entrepreneurship	13	20	39	18	9
(b)	I would be unwilling to exchange my current entrepreneurship teaching for teaching in other subjects	16	28	33	15	8
(c)	I am willing to put in a great deal of extra effort over and above that normally expected in order to ensure that this organisation's entrepreneurship courses are successful	15	22	22	26	15
(d)	Teaching entrepreneurship really inspires me to give of my very best in the way of job performance	17	25	22	18	18
(e)	I was "volunteered" to teach entrepreneurship courses rather than my choosing to teach this subject	10	10	35	32	13
(f)	My institution is keen to develop entrepreneurship education	17	40	32	6	5
(g)	My institution has provided me with substantial amounts of training and staff development in relation to my entrepreneurship teaching duties	8	8	14	42	28
(h)	I would like to focus my entrepreneurship teaching on developing students' attributes of creativity, innovativeness, etc., but institutional resource constraints prevent me from doing this	5	8	30	38	19

Table V.
Commitment and
institutional support

The sampling frame
The sampling frame for the investigation comprised lecturers teaching on entrepreneurship units at the 82 HE institutions identified by the author as offering undergraduate or postgraduate entrepreneurship units in the course of their examination of the student recruitment web sites of UK university and HE colleges. However the survey only covered undergraduate and postgraduate (certificate, diploma and Masters' level) entrepreneurship units at higher education institutions. Short courses, Department of Trade and Industry training days, local Chamber of Commerce new venture start-up events, etc., were not considered. The sampling frame was spread relatively evenly across England (77 per cent of the institutions), with fewer addresses in Scotland (11 per cent), Wales (7 per cent) and Northern Ireland (5 per cent). A questionnaire accompanied by a covering letter that explained the general nature of the research was addressed to "The Unit Leader" followed by the unit name and degree programme mentioned in the relevant web site. Typical examples were "Unit Leader: Contemporary Issues in Entrepreneurship Module", BA (Hons) Entrepreneurship, University of Wolverhampton; "Unit Leader; Managing Entrepreneurship and Innovation Module (Bus 1052)", University of Greenwich; and "Unit Leader: New Ventures Module", BA (Hons) Business Entrepreneurship, University College Northampton. It was necessary to address the letters to "Unit Leaders" as the university web sites rarely gave the names of specific individuals to whom the questionnaires could be sent. Also there are no professional bodies of entrepreneurship teachers with substantial membership lists. It proved impossible to obtain the names and precise locations of the people lecturing on these units by telephoning university switchboards, as the receptionists taking the calls usually did not have the relevant information to hand. In total, 392 individual units listed in the web sites of the 82 institutions contained the word entrepreneurship or enterprise, or related unambiguously to an entrepreneurial theme. After a follow-up, 114 usable replies were received (29 per cent), representing a reasonable rate of response to unsolicited correspondence mailed to unnamed recipients. The mean values of the replies to all the questionnaire items for the earliest 40 and latest 40 responses were compared, no meaningfully significant differences ($p < 0.05$) emerging. The 27 pre-test questionnaires (see above) were added to the 114 replies to the mail out to give a 141-strong total sample.

Descriptive results
(1) Lecturers in entrepreneurship
The respondents in the sample had an average age of 42 years (compared to the national average (NA) of 44 years for business and social studies lecturers), and on the average possessed 14 years of teaching experience (NA = 16 years). (Figures for national averages for business and social studies faculty were obtained from HESA (2004)). Of the sample, 82 per cent were male (NA = 74 per cent) and 78 per cent taught on a full-time basis (NA = 86 per cent). A total of 40 per cent worked in post-1992 universities (NA = 28 per cent), 40 per cent in "old" universities (NA = 58 per cent) and the remaining 20 per cent in other forms of higher education institution. Half had completed a formal teacher training programme (NA = 57 per cent). The highest level of qualification of two thirds of the lecturers was a Master's degree; 19 per cent had a PhD. (Although detailed information on the qualifications of UK lecturers with respect

to academic discipline is not available from official sources it seems reasonable to predict that the proportion of the sample possessing a PhD was perhaps less than half of the national average.) A total of 20 per cent of the sample specified economics as their main subject area; 18 per cent gave accounting or finance as their major field; 15 per cent marketing, and 24 per cent other business subjects (management, organisational behaviour, etc.). A further 16 per cent listed non-business subjects such as politics or "area studies", while seven per cent mentioned engineering, computing or information technology. All 141 lecturers claimed they had worked for commercial businesses at some time or other, but for 40 per cent of the sample the duration of their business experience was just one or two years. Another 39 per cent had three to five years' experience; 18 per cent six to eight years; and just 6 per cent had worked for businesses for more than eight years. Interestingly, this pattern applied almost identically to the 31 part-time as to the 110 full-time lecturers in the sample. The part-timers seemingly occupied their time by teaching for a number of different institutions, as opposed to combining part-time lecturing with working for commercial enterprises or running their own firms. Only 14 of the 141 respondents had ever owned or part-owned a business. A third of the respondents reported that they had completed a specialist function (e.g. accountancy or marketing) when working with businesses rather than occupying general managerial or administrative posts. The majority (59 per cent) had worked mainly for enterprises with more than 50 employees.

Most of the respondents (52 per cent) stated that they taught units that included entrepreneurship components, rather than units that were entirely devoted to entrepreneurship (20 per cent of the sample). The remaining 28 per cent taught both types of unit. On average the lecturers spent between 20 per cent and 40 per cent of their teaching time on entrepreneurship courses. Forty per cent of the sample claimed that their primary academic orientation was towards research, 60 per cent towards teaching.

(2) How lecturers who teach on entrepreneurship courses define entrepreneurship
Table II items (a) to (j) lists the percentages of the sample agreeing or disagreeing with various statements concerning the meaning of the word "entrepreneurship". It can be seen from Table II that there was no consensus as to whether entrepreneurship simply meant owning and managing a business (items (a) to (c)), or the possession and exercise of exceptional personal qualities such as creativity, innovativeness, charisma, etc. (items (d) to (g)). Overall however the respondents leaned towards the view that entrepreneurship was basically defined in terms of ownership and control rather than the application of creative and innovative attributes. About one-third of the sample seemed to subscribe to the latter view (in the sense that their responses fell within the two most extreme categories for the relevant item). Only 28 per cent of the sample replied in the bottom two divisions for the proposition that entrepreneurs had different attitudes towards risk than the population at large (item (h)), and exactly the same percentage replied in the bottom two categories regarding the notion that entrepreneurs' desires to achieve and succeed were greater than for most other people (item (i)). There was very little support for the view (see also Hoselitz, 1951; Sexton and Bowman, 1984; Morris *et al.*, 2001) that the name "entrepreneur" be restricted to individuals who supply completely novel products or services (item (j)). A majority (51 per cent) of the respondents were of the opinion that lack of functional

knowledge was the main cause of business failure (see item (k)), not a lack of creativity, innovativeness or imagination. This implies a firm belief in the need to improve students' abilities *vis-à-vis* financial control, marketing, personnel management, etc.

The Table II "management-based" definitions (items (a) to (c)) correlated positively and substantially ($R > 0.7$, $p < 0.000$ in all cases) with each other, and negatively and significantly ($R < -0.72$, $p < 0.000$ in all cases) with the four (highly intercorrelated, $R > 0.8$, $p < 0.000$) "attribute based" definitions (items (d) to (g)). A principal components factor analysis of Table II items (a) to (f) generated three eigenvalues greater than unity, corresponding (as might be expected) to: items (a) to (c); items (d) and (e); and item (f). The first component explained 35 per cent of total variation in the data ($\lambda = 2.1$), and the three items with significant loadings (i.e. those exceeding 0.5) had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 (indicating that they reliably measured the same construct). Factor two explained 31 per cent of variation ($\lambda = 1.85$) and factor three 23 per cent ($\lambda = 1.4$). Hence, for the purposes of subsequent analysis the three management-based items were averaged to form a continuous composite scale reflecting the degree of a person's belief in the management based definition. As this composite correlated negatively and substantially ($R < -0.75$) with the attribute definition items it proxied (in reverse) the items involving agreement with the attribute definition approach. (Most of the respondents agreed that entrepreneurs had different attitudes to risk and were more achievement oriented than other people, so these items were not considered to "belong" to either the management or the attribute approach.)

(3) Lecturers' approaches to teaching entrepreneurship
The lecturers in the sample generally agreed with the idea that entrepreneurship (however defined) can be taught, as is evidenced by Table III items (a) to (d). (A factor analysis of these items generated a unidimensional solution ($\lambda = 3.09$) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87, indicating sound internal reliability of the questions.) However, a significant minority of the respondents (40 per cent) did not believe that entrepreneurship was an "academically rigorous" subject (item (e)). Majorities of the lecturers clearly agreed that entrepreneurship was more a learned competency than an innate trait, and that a person's creativity and innovativeness could be substantially improved through attending an educational programme. The responses of less than a third of the lecturers fell in the top two categories relating to the belief that the absence of "innate entrepreneurial characteristics" caused major difficulties for teaching the subject (item (c)).

As regards the respondents' opinions concerning what should be taught on an entrepreneurship programme, items (f) to (h) of Table III reveal a widespread feeling that entrepreneurship courses should teach practical business skills rather than nurturing participants' personal qualities of creativity, reflection, innovativeness, etc. These findings do not mean that the majority of the respondents regarded such attributes as unimportant, only that they felt that the development of management competencies should be given priority. As the three items ((f) to (h)) loaded on the same factor in a principal components analysis ($\lambda = 2.31$) they were combined to form a single composite scale (items (g) and (h) were reverse scored).

Table IV summarises the responses from the remaining items of the section of the questionnaire that dealt with lecturers' approaches to the teaching of entrepreneurship. The sample members were much more likely to concentrate on practical skills rather

than attribute development (item (a)). This outcome might be explained in part by the lecturers' responses to an *ad hoc* item worded "In my experience, students on entrepreneurship courses desire specific, hands-on information about business functions and practical management skills rather than courses that seek to develop personal creativity, imagination, innovativeness, intuition, etc." A total of 67 per cent of the sample responded in the top two categories relating to this statement; just 14 per cent in the bottom two divisions. Only 14 per cent of the sample replied in categories four and five of Table IV item (b) concerning the employment of different methods and techniques when teaching entrepreneurship than when teaching other subjects. Overwhelmingly the members of the sample encouraged academic objectivity and detachment in their students (item (c(i) and (iv))), and disliked the idea of students "borrowing" ideas from each other and exchanging information and data when completing individual assignments (item c(ii)) (see also Gibb, 1993). However the respondents were more equally divided *vis-à-vis* whether they tried to instil in students a particular mentality (4c(iii)), as opposed to focusing on specific management methods (see also Jack and Anderson, 1999).

The questionnaire asked the respondents to specify the pedagogical techniques they used when teaching entrepreneurship by ticking items from a list based on Garavan and O'Cinneide's (1994) suggestions (themselves adapted from Randolph and Posner (1979)) concerning the methods that are best suited for entrepreneurship education (see Garavan and O'Cinneide, 1994, Table II, p. 10). All 141 lecturers in the sample stated that they employed case studies, independent projects, assigned readings, team exercises and seminars or tutorials; and all but seven reported that they gave formal lectures. A total of 80 per cent of the sample stated that students on their entrepreneurship units sat content-based examinations; 12 per cent of the lecturers gave their students self-discovery exercises (e.g. personality self-assessment inventories); the same percentage as used role plays; 15 per cent offered one-to-one counselling, and a further 15 per cent reported that they set up artificial simulations of businesses within a classroom. However, only 8 per cent gave their students "field projects" in actual local businesses. Just three of the 141 respondents operated brainstorming sessions.

Lecturers in the sample varied substantially in their levels of commitment to their roles as teachers of entrepreneurship, as shown in Table V items (a) to (d). Between 33 and 44 per cent responded in the top two categories for these items; with roughly comparable responses at the bottom end of the spectrum. A factor analysis of the four items generated a unidimensional solution ($\lambda = 3.23$, Cronbach's alpha = 0.92). For the purpose of subsequent analysis therefore the four items were combined into a single scale reflecting the commitment construct. One in five of the lecturers responded in the top two categories of item (e) concerning their agreement that they had been "volunteered" to teach on entrepreneurship, consequent perhaps to their institutions wanting to expand the provision of entrepreneurship education (item (f)). Staff training and development in entrepreneurship teaching appeared to have been uncommon (item (g)). There was little evidence to suggest that resource constraints had interfered with lecturers' desires to devote more attention to developing students' personal attributes (item (h)).

Analysis
In order to examine possible connections between, on the one hand, lecturers' backgrounds and characteristics, and on the other their interpretations of the meaning

of entrepreneurship and how they taught the subject, the sample was divided according to: the respondents' discipline areas (economics, marketing, accounting, etc.); whether they defined entrepreneurship in "management" or "attribute" terms (as previously described); and whether they adopted management skills development or attribute development approaches to entrepreneurship teaching. Correlations among the responses within and between the various categories were then examined. It emerged that the response patterns of lecturers with backgrounds and qualifications in business and management subjects (primarily marketing, accounting, organisational behaviour and general management) were essentially similar; but differed significantly to those of economists, political scientists, engineers, historians and others with non-business studies backgrounds. The non-business group appeared to adopt "attribute" approaches to the definition of entrepreneurship to a greater extent than the business subject lecturers. Accordingly the sample was split into two groups involving business subject and non-business subject lecturers ($n = 80$ and $n = 61$ respectively).

A distinction was now drawn between lecturers who preferred management skills development approaches to the teaching of entrepreneurship from those who believed it was more important to develop students' personal attributes. A total of 58 per cent of members' responses fell in the top half of the composite, which was highly correlated ($R = 0.82$) with Table IV item (a) measuring what lecturers actually did as opposed to what they believed. Correlation coefficients between this composite and the composites for: whether a respondent was attracted more to the owner-managership definition of "entrepreneurship"; and the extent of a lecturer's commitment to teaching entrepreneurship, were calculated with respect to all the remaining questionnaire items. It emerged that there were no significant correlations ($p < 0.1$) involving:

- age, gender, length of service, or whether a person was employed on a full-time or part-time contract;
- the type of institution at which the lecturer worked ("old" or "new" university or HE institute), or whether an individual was research orientated or teaching oriented;
- the person's highest level of educational qualification; and
- the lecturer's level of commitment to his or her work as a teacher of entrepreneurship. it appeared that people adopting either the skills development or the attribute development pedagogical approach displayed comparable levels of commitment to the subject – commitment levels did not covary significantly ($p < 0.1$) with any aspect of the sample members' personal characteristics.

In contrast, substantial connections were evident between a lecturer's subject area, whether he or she had received formal teacher training, the length of a person's business experience, and the respondent's interpretation of the nature of entrepreneurship and how best to teach the subject.

Consequent to this initial exploratory analysis, and the removal of variables that did not relate to any others included in the investigation, it was possible to test formally for significant connections between preferences for the "owner-manager" definition of the word "entrepreneur" and practicalities towards management skills approaches to entrepreneurship education. A structural equation modelling procedure was applied hypothesising that a lecturer's academic background influenced both of the

aforementioned variables, and that the possession of a teaching qualification affected (negatively) a person's predilection to emphasise management skills when teaching an entrepreneurship unit. The extent of an individual's practical business experience was posited to impact on how the person defined entrepreneurship. This relationship was assumed to be stronger if the lecturer had previously owned a business. Figure 1 shows the results, which were computed using the method of partial least squares. This method was chosen because it does not require variables to be normally distributed. (All the variables of Figure 1 were non-normal.) The estimates and t-values were derived via a bootstrapping procedure. A number of alternative configurations of the variables were estimated, but the model shown generated stronger and more significant pathways than any other (the criterion recommended by Chin (1998) for comparing models estimated using partial least squares procedures).

It can be seen from Figure 1 that people who defined entrepreneurship in terms of running a business (as opposed to the possession and application of special personal qualities such as creativity and innovativeness) were also likely to focus on practical management skills when teaching the subject. Lecturers in marketing, accounting and other business subject areas tended to prefer both the "owner-manager" definition and the management skills approach to the teaching of entrepreneurship. Irrespective of a person's subject area, the possession of a formal teacher training qualification increased significantly the probability that the lecturer would believe in the attribute development approach to entrepreneurship education. People with longer periods of practical business experience were more likely to subscribe to the owner-manager definition of "what entrepreneurship is" than were sample members with shorter periods of business experience. Although only 14 of the 141 lecturers had ever themselves owned or part-owned a business, the interaction effect of this with having
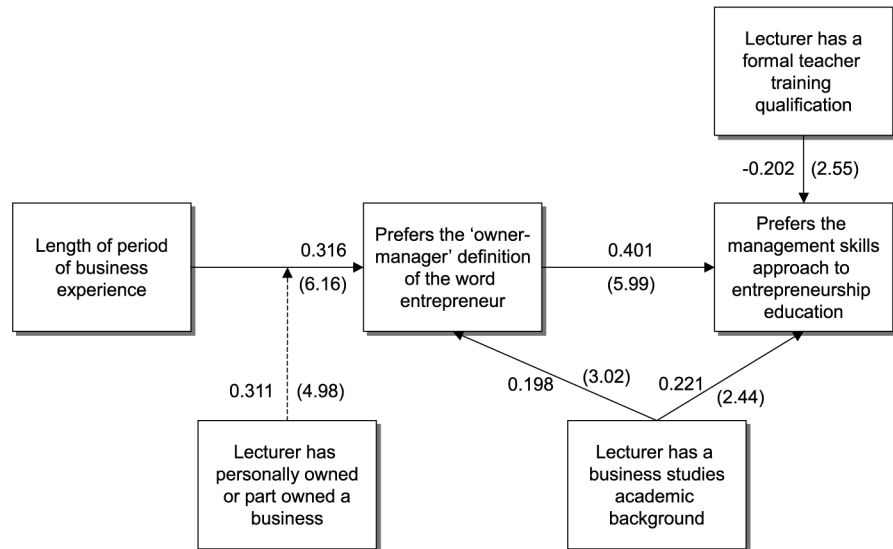

Figure 1.
An emerging model

Note: Standardised regression coefficients. T-values in parenthesis

spent a long time working in commercial enterprises had a highly significant
moderating impact on the strength of the association between business experience and
a preference for the owner-manager definition. In other words, a person with extensive
business experience in conjunction with that experience having involved
owner-managership was far more likely to incline towards the owner-manager
definition than other sample members who had only worked for businesses as hired
employees. The type of work a person had undertaken during the years he or she had
worked for businesses (discipline specific such as accounting or marketing, versus
general management or administration) did not exert a significant impact on any other
variable.

Conclusion
The picture that emerges of the typical British lecturer on entrepreneurship units is
that of someone in his or her early 40s, qualified to Master's degree level, and
possessing limited commercial experience (79 per cent of the sample had worked for
businesses for less than six years and only 8 per cent had actually owned and managed
their own firms). A majority (57 per cent) of the lecturers held business studies
qualification; otherwise the sample consisted in the main of economists and other social
scientists plus a small number of engineers. Sample members were more likely to be
teaching rather than research-oriented and spent around a third of their time on
entrepreneurship units. Most of the lecturers taught entrepreneurship in the same sorts
of ways as they taught other subjects, normally using "conventional" teaching
methods such as lectures, tutorials, assigned readings and content-based examinations
(see also Garavan and O'Cinneide, 1994). Faculty members encouraged academic
objectivity and detachment in their students, and discouraged "borrowing" (see also
Gibb, 1993). Few of the lecturers had received staff training and development in the
field of entrepreneurship education. One in five of the sample members reported having
been "volunteered" to teach entrepreneurship.

There was no general consensus either as to how the word "entrepreneurship"
should be defined (see also Gibb, 1987; Morris *et al.*, 2001; Grebel *et al.*, 2003; Colette
et al., 2004); or how the subject should be taught (see also Sexton and Bowman, 1984;
Garavan and O'Cinneide, 1994; Gorman and Hanlon, 1997; Shane and Venkataraman,
2000). However most of the respondents believed that entrepreneurs had different
attitudes towards risk than the rest of the population, and that entrepreneurs were
more success and achievement oriented. Irrespective of how entrepreneurship was
perceived, the majority of the lecturers thought that it was a learned competency.
Typically the teaching of management skills took priority within entrepreneurship
programmes over the development of personal attributes such as creativity and
innovativeness.

It was indeed the case that faculty members' definitions of "what entrepreneurship
is" were influenced by their background characteristics. People with relatively long
periods of business experience were significantly more inclined to see entrepreneurship
as owner-managership (rather than as the possession and application of personal
qualities not commonly found in the wider population) than were lecturers with little
commercial experience. Possibly, long-term "hands on" involvement with and
exposure to a variety of business environments causes individuals to adopt practical
and mundane perspectives on this issue. The people concerned will have witnessed the

operations of numerous types of firm (partnerships, companies, sole traderships, etc.) and hence may be more inclined to identify owner-managed enterprises as a distinct and relatively homogeneous division within the overall business community. Lecturers in business subjects such as accounting or marketing also tended to view "entrepreneurs" as owner-managers. Possibly, the prior education and training of subject specific business teachers has the effect of encouraging these individuals to think of entrepreneurs as owner-managers (rather than as individuals with rare and special personal qualities) to greater degrees than their economist and humanities colleagues who will have been schooled in different intellectual traditions.

Lecturers in business subjects were more likely to emphasise management skills in entrepreneurship programmes. It may be that people who have acquired knowledge of a particular business subject (accounting for instance) will thereafter value the subject highly and hence be anxious to teach it. Economists, sociologists, political scientists, etc., conversely might not possess detailed knowledge of functional management techniques and thus may prefer to teach entrepreneurship on a more general level. Regardless of subject discipline however lecturers who possessed a formal teacher training qualification were more inclined than others to want to develop students' personal attributes. Teacher training exposes the individual to a gamut of modern interactive teaching methods, possibly inducing a person to adopt broader approaches to the teaching of subjects such as entrepreneurship. Levels of commitment to the teaching of entrepreneurship were not significantly associated with having received teacher training or indeed with any other background characteristic.

All in all the results underscore the concerns expressed by numerous previous writers (see above) that there is no consensus among educators as to "what entrepreneurship is" or how it should be taught. There is clearly a lack of uniformity *vis-à-vis* general pedagogical approaches to the subject and the specific instructional methods employed. Arguably, this is attributable to the theoretical underdevelopment of entrepreneurship as an academic subject (see Sexton and Bowman, 1984; Gibb, 1987; Grebel *et al.*, 2003; Morris et al., 2001; Adcroft *et al.*, 2004). But even if the theory of entrepreneurship were to be substantially extended, the outcomes would still need to be disseminated to and accepted by the people who actually teach the subject. Matching theory development with the consolidation and standardisation of entrepreneurship educational programmes will be a major challenge for the growing number of HE institutions offering the subject in coming decades.

The results have further implications for higher education institutions. There was little agreement within the sample as to how entrepreneurship should be defined. Moreover the way in which a particular individual interpreted the meaning of entrepreneurship had significant consequences for the person's teaching approaches and methods. If an institution's entrepreneurship programmes are to be internally consistent then it may well be necessary for it to impose (consequent to internal discussion and debate) its own in-house statement of "what entrepreneurship is" in order to chart a path for the day-to-day teaching of the subject. More than a third of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were committed to their roles as teachers of entrepreneurship. This might be explained perhaps by the fact that most of the lecturers taught entrepreneurship only as a part of their overall timetable. Commitment to teaching the subject might improve, therefore, if individuals are given greater opportunity to specialise in the area and to spend the bulk of their time on

entrepreneurship. More in-house staff development in the field would also be useful for cultivating faculty members' commitment. There was a widespread belief within the sample that entrepreneurship courses should prioritise instruction in practical management skills. Whilst there is nothing wrong with this in itself, it is obviously necessary to ensure that broader issues (including attitudinal factors) are not ignored completely.

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