

# 8<sup>th</sup> International OFEL Conference



## Promoting entrepreneurial thinking and acting of students through competency-based learning

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# Research Frame

- **Research Question:**

*How can the entrepreneurial thinking and acting of university students be promoted through competency-based learning?*

- **Research Objectives:**

- 1) developing a flexible and modular entrepreneurship training plan for universities of applied sciences
- 2) literature review on entrepreneurship in higher education
- 3) analyzing the case of University of Applied Science HTW Berlin
- 4) giving some implications for the implementation of the concept into the students' curricula

# Theoretical Background

- in Germany, universities of applied sciences focus on practical relevance within all their activities and programmes
- therefore, usually there are closely linked to corporate world and entrepreneurship as well
- student engagement in the area of entrepreneurship often remains extracurricular, i.e. participating in workshops and training courses on financing a startup project, registering patents, taxing etc.
- as a logical consequence, the activities of the startup centers located at universities only reach students who are already planning to start their own business, or at least have already thought of this idea

# Theoretical Background

- in order to enhance entrepreneurial thinking and acting, an integration of entrepreneurship-related topics into curricula is needed
- thus, the learning environment must be designed differently and include, for example, inspiring personalities and projects that make the requirements of starting a business tangible
- this can be achieved through experiential learning, project based learning and action based learning (Blumenfeldt et al. 1991; Ebbers 2004; Lackeus and Williams Middleton 2018)
- to sum up, entrepreneurship education shouldn't be only about the subject itself, but should widen the view on methods and instruments used by successful entrepreneurs

# Case Study

## University of Applied Sciences HTW Berlin, Germany

- *Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin* has more than 14,000 students, about 300 professors, 800 lecturers and approx. 450 employees in administration
- HTW Berlin's Startup Service Center has already launched a large number of extracurricular courses, i.e. the weekly semester programme “Startup Tuesday” and provides individual advice
- HTW Berlin also offers around five interdisciplinary seminars on entrepreneurship in the elective area per semester
- an interest group for entrepreneurship was founded, but all in all entrepreneurship education is up to the teachers themselves

# Training-Programme for Entrepreneurship in Higher Education

- in order to foster students to think and act entrepreneurially, a set of complex skills and competences is needed
- ASTEE dimension of entrepreneurial skills\*: *Exploration* through creativity, *Evaluation* through planning and financial literacy and *Exploitation* through marshalling of resources, managing ambiguity and teamwork (Moberg, Vestergaard, Fayolle et al. 2014, p. 37)
- in order to enhance **creativity** a design thinking course could be integrated into the introductory week for all first semesters and / or could be mandatory as part of the elective area within the course of study

\*for a definition of the above-mentioned terms see full conference paper, section 4

# Training-Programme for Entrepreneurship in Higher Education

- in order to gain **planning and financial competence** a business model canvas-course could be offered in cooperation with the startup service center of the respective university; it would be advisable to participate in it later in the course of studies when some subject-related content has already been imparted, but it should be completed at the latest before the start of the final thesis phase
- through the completion of at least one, better two, cross-semester projects as part of each study course at HTW Berlin **marshalling of resources, managing ambiguity and teamwork** could be trained
- all in all, the success of entrepreneurial trainings at universities also depends on the overall university environment being entrepreneurial

# References\*

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- Ebbers, I. 2004. *Wirtschaftsdidaktisch geleitete Unternehmenssimulation im Rahmen der Förderung von Existenzgründungen aus Hochschulen*. FGF Entrepreneurship-Research Monographien: No. 42. Josef Eul Verlag: Köln, DE.
- Lackéus, M., Williams Middleton, K. 2018. Assessing experiential entrepreneurship education: key insights from five methods in use at a venture creation programme. In *Experiential Learning for Entrepreneurship. Theoretical and Practical Perspectives on Enterprise Education*, Hyams-Ssekasi D, Caldwell EF (eds). Palgrave Macmillan: Cham, CH: 19
- Moberg, K., Vestergaard, L., Fayolle, A. et al. 2014. How to assess and evaluate the influence of entrepreneurship education. A report of the ASTEE project with a user guide to the tools. *The ASTEE project – Assessment Tools and Indicators for Entrepreneurship Education* June 2014.

\*for the full reference list see conference paper