

## Chapter 6

# Sustainable Development in Business Education: The Role of Entrepreneurship as Pedagogy

**Fernando Lourenço**

*Institute for Tourism Studies, Macao, China  
& Manchester Metropolitan University Business School, UK*

**Natalie Sappleton**

*Manchester Metropolitan University Business School, UK*

**Weng Si Lei**

*Institute for Tourism Studies, Macao, China*

**Ranis Cheng**

*University of Sheffield, UK*

### ABSTRACT

*This chapter highlights the challenges of teaching sustainability in business schools. The authors provide a discussion of economic liberalism and different forms of stakeholder theory to explain the varying attitudes among educators towards ethics, responsibility and sustainability. The assumption that business schools encourage a 'profit-first-mentality' is fleshed out, and it is argued that this attitude likely affects the effectiveness of teaching and learning in respect to ethical, responsible and sustainable values. The chapter later questions whether it is better to flow with the dominant economic-driven values as prescribed by conventional business education or to challenge it in order to nurture sustainability-driven values among students. These options are explored and the suggestion that entrepreneurship has a role to play as a pedagogical tool to support the teaching of sustainable development is offered. It is argued that entrepreneurship does not confront, but supports the extant values of conventional business education and therefore is a feasible approach for business education. Finally, implications for business and management education, as well as, the role of entrepreneurship to promote sustainability-values are discussed drawing on models and two case studies (UK and China).*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Sustainable development has emerged as an important agenda for a wide range of stakeholders across the globe. It is not only a matter for global leaders and politicians. A critical stakeholder in this regard is the Higher Education (HE) institution. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the role played by one type of HE institution, Business Schools, in inspiring and developing future practitioners with sustainability values. The evolutionary process of how business education has progressed through the integration of sustainability in the curricula is discussed leading to examining potential barriers and obstacles. The core purpose of this chapter is to shed light on the opportunity to use entrepreneurship as pedagogy to inspire students about opportunities in the sustainability area, instead of viewing responsible values as bothersome and costly superfluities. Examples of how educators can apply the entrepreneurial approach are discussed and two case studies (Manchester Metropolitan University and the Institute for Tourism Studies) are used to illustrate the application of our conceptions.

## **ORGANISATION BACKGROUND**

### **Manchester Metropolitan University Business School, Manchester (UK)**

Manchester Metropolitan University has a total student population of more than 37,000. It is the largest campus-based undergraduate university in the UK. The University started from a centre of Technology, Art and Design from Manchester Mechanics' Institution in 1824 and later added Manchester School of Design in 1838, Education in 1878, Domestic Science in 1880 and the School of Commerce in 1889. Colleges were also added at multiple locations in the Northwest of England in early 1910s. Today, the University has eight faculties offering research to the government and

industry as well as offering over 1,000 courses and qualifications at undergraduate, postgraduate and professional development. In 2011, the University was the most popular University as measured by undergraduate applications in the 2011 intake, receiving more than 56,000 applications (MMU, 2013a). Manchester Metropolitan University Business School (MMUBS), previously known as the School of Commerce, has been supporting industry and commerce since 1889. The business school is one of the largest schools in the UK, offering courses to around 4,000 undergraduate and 1,000 postgraduate students in 2012-13 (MMUBS, 2013).

The University puts sustainability as a top priority with nine areas set up to support sustainability strategies: Environmental Management Systems; Energy Management; Water Management; Waste Management; Built Environment; Sustainable Procurement; Sustainability in the Curriculum; Travel Planning; Communication of Environmental Sustainability (MMU, 2013c). Prior to the commitments made to sustainability, the University was ranked 91<sup>st</sup> in the People and Planet Green League (a league table that ranks UK universities by their environmental and ethical performance) in 2006. In 2012, the University jumped to become the 10<sup>th</sup> greenest universities in the UK and was awarded 1<sup>st</sup> class in the People & Planet Green League 2012 (People and Planet, 2012). In 2013, the University has moved to the top of the People and Planet Green League Table (People and Planet, 2013).

Sustainability and curriculum at the University is taken very seriously. There are policies in place to ensure that all its students become 'sustainability literate' when they graduate (MMU, 2013b, 2013c). To support his aim, a group called Curriculum for Sustainable Living was established to facilitate academics from across all faculties to incorporate sustainability content into core units at all levels and to develop sustainability values commensurate with specific discipline areas (MMU, 2013b). The Business School has

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