Instructor’s Guide

**Welcome**

Thank you for adopting this book for your class. We’re sure that you noticed that this book is different and hope that’s part of what drew you to it. So, we felt that the instructor’s guide should follow the same path. We wrote the book in a way that we hoped would be useful both to folks with no prior knowledge of Social Entrepreneurship and those with some level of expertise. We approach this instructor’s guide in the same spirit. So, if there are sections of this guide that are already familiar to you, please do go ahead and skip over them and move on to the points that are salient for your classroom. This guide also takes the same approach as the book, in that it moves from the larger and more critical points to the smaller and more discrete issues. We hope that you find it useful.

**Teaching Social Entrepreneurship**

The first and most important point in this guide is that teaching entrepreneurship (in any context) is not the same as teaching accounting, finance, or even chemistry. In those fields (and many others) there is one right answer, so assessment of learning is easily accomplished through test banks, true–false questions, and other quantitative measures. At its core, entrepreneurship education is about teaching a way of thinking and an approach to problem solving, so there can often be more than one right answer to a particular problem. This makes many of the standard tools of academic instruction and evaluation inappropriate.

Further to this point, the pursuit of entrepreneurial solutions is often a process of trial and error, where external feedback is critical. To implement this in the classroom, the instructor needs to become familiar with the basics of Experiential Education. The student and the instructor travel down the path of exploration together, and learning is assessed in reflection and revision. To illustrate how this applies to the entrepreneurial journey, please consider the analogy of the studio class in an art school. Be it sculpture, painting, or any other fine art, students typically bring their work to class while it’s in progress. As a group, the class then examines the work, pointing out aspects that are working well, and offering alternatives for those parts of the work that are less well executed. In some cases, major revisions are called for, while in other cases substantial progress is made.

Effective entrepreneurship education works in the same way. It is not a subject than can be studied in the abstract, with quizzes, exams, and other quantitative evaluations as the sole source of assessment of learning. To be effective, students need to experience the process of entrepreneurial problem solving for themselves. They also must begin to learn how to articulate the thought process that was used in arriving at their particular conclusion. Assessment of learning is then made by evaluating the process rather than the specific conclusion, and the instructor serves more as a facilitator and coach and less as an arbiter of truth and fallacy.

To explore this point further, we would highly recommend two resources. The first is the United States Association of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, known as USASBE ([www.usasbe.org](http://www.usasbe.org)). Despite its name, this is an international organization focused on the teaching of entrepreneurship and contains vast resources on many aspects of entrepreneurship education as well as an annual conference. USASBE also has a Special Interest Group focused on Social Entrepreneurship (where you will often find either of us hanging out). The second is an annual workshop taught by Dr. Michael Morris (currently at Notre Dame) called The Experiential Classroom. This workshop does move around a bit, but a quick web search should produce information on the next cohort.

Before we dive into more specific tools and techniques, there is one more point that must be made at the onset. When evaluating student entrepreneurs, the effective educator must avoid the tendency to grade on viability. The entrepreneurial journey is often about finding out what will not work rather than trying to “sell” an idea that is either not viable or not fully thought through. Accordingly, the student who thoughtfully articulates the reasons why a specific idea will not work should be rewarded more highly than the student who produces a flashy set of slides and presents a winning personality that may obscure substantial flaws in a concept. This also means that the instructor must develop an ability to see through superficialities and recognize authenticity in a student’s work.

In the same vein, we would like to caution you against pitting the students against each other in pitch competitions or “shark tank” type events. While these events may be entertaining, there is research that suggests that they may be harmful to the learning process – that “Competitions may present themselves as a reasonable and easy-to-replicate strategy to create fun and drama in the short term, raise awareness of business and enterprise and engage the private sector, but these perceived benefits may obscure adverse reactions for some participants” (Brentnall, Rodríguez, & Culkin, 2018, pp. 41–42).

Rather, we suggest that students present concepts in a showcase format, where all ideas are rewarded equally. Should an instructor choose to grade these presentations, they should be graded based on quality of presentation and logical consistency, ranked against an objective standard. If an external panel is used as part of the experience, we strongly suggest that the panel be used for feedback purposes only, and not as judges choosing a particular winner. This point is particularly vital for the training of social entrepreneurs, where empathy, trust, community engagement, and the dignity of the constituent are critical to the success of the enterprise.

Finally, we ask the instructor to recognize that the traditional lecture hall model of instruction is not the best way to teach social entrepreneurship. At the very least, a more Socratic method should be employed. Ideally, the classroom should work more along the lines of the “flipped classroom” model, where students work on projects and assignments outside of the classroom, and class meetings are devoted to discussion, analysis, and shared insights.

We recognize that each of the points raised here may require an instructor to modify their teaching style. While recognizing that this is not an easy nor a simple task, we make no apology for the suggestion. Further, we would suggest that just as the entrepreneurial journey asks the student to step out of their comfort zone, it should ask the same of the instructor.

**Use of the text for assessment of learning**.

There are three main features of this text that can be quite useful in assessment of learning.

The first of these is the discussion questions that can be found at the end of each chapter. In addition to using them as prompts for class discussion, individual discussion questions may be assigned as essays which students can complete independently.

The second is the case studies that are offered at the end of each section of the text. These case studies also provide opportunities for written analysis that can then be graded. They can also be the source of in-class presentations, offering students an opportunity to develop presentation skills in advance of presenting a final social venture plan.

The third element is the “build it yourself” prompts that appear beginning in Chapter 5. These prompts offer the student the opportunity to develop their own plans for a social venture. The appendix offers a sample of a final plan that can be used for formatting purposes. Instructors may also choose to use one of the many business planning tools available to support this process. This element also provides an ideal opportunity for the “studio classroom” concept described above.

**Class Presentations and Class Size**

In smaller classes, it is possible for every student in the class to present their concepts multiple times over the semester. In larger classes, this may not be practical, and some sort of rotational system should be assigned. We would suggest that the assignment of specific presentation slots be randomized in some way (i.e., not assigned in alphabetical order). Further, the instructor must assure that an equal number of presentation slots are assigned to each student over the course of the semester.

**Student teams**

In larger classes, it may also be useful to group the students into teams, particularly when it comes to the business planning exercises. While there are many ways to develop these teams, we would recommend that you avoid having students self-select, as the selection process tends to become a popularity contest. As with class presentations, we would also recommend against assigning teams by alphabetical order. For purposes of expediency, random assignment can be used.

One of the more interesting tools for developing student teams is a Delphi technique, where students are asked to define areas of social concern (as suggested in the Build it Yourself assignment at the end of Chapter 5). Students can then self-select for teammates that are aligned in terms of areas of concern. This can be a very effective group exercise, done with sticky notes on a wall, dry erase markers on a whiteboard, or through any number of digital tools such as Miro ([www.miro.com](http://www.miro.com)).

One additional matter that must be addressed in the use of student teams is grading. It is often the case that one member of the team does a disproportionately greater or lesser amount of work than their teammates. While a team effort must be graded as a single whole (i.e. as if a single student produced the work), there must also be some means for recognizing inequalities of effort within the team. We have had success using confidential peer reviews, where each team member is asked to answer a series of questions regarding the efforts of their teammates. The instructor then develops two distinct grades. The first is the group grade, which assesses the team’s work product. The second is the adjusted individual grade, which can be higher or lower based on the instructor’s assessment of the peer reviews. Should this process be adopted, the instructor should also seek to have the increases and decreases be equal in effect. For example, in a two-person team, if one student’s grade is reduced by 10 percent, the other student’s grade should go up by 10 percent. In a five-person team, if one student’s grade is reduced by 10 percent, each of the other students’ grades should go up by 2.5 percent. If you choose this method, these individual adjustments should be clearly communicated to the students at the outset.

**Instructional Design**

*Sequencing*

You will note that this book has 14 chapters. If you are teaching a course in a traditional 15-week semester, we recommend that you leave the last week of the term open, so that students can work on their social venture plans. In the penultimate week, the reading is also quite light, so the instructor may choose to compress that reading into week 13, leaving the last two weeks for presentations. The instructor may also choose to allow draft plans to be submitted (possibly at the end of week 13), to allow students to receive constructive feedback prior to submitting a final plan.

If the course is being taught in a compressed format (e.g., an eight-week summer session), we suggest the following compressed schedule:

Week 1 – Chapters 1 & 2

Week 2 – Chapters 3 & 4

Week 3 – Chapters 5 & 6

Week 4 – Chapters 7 & 8

Week 5 – Chapter 9

Week 6 – Chapter 10

Week 7 – Chapter 11

Week 8 – Chapters 12, 13, & 14

*Teaching Online*

This text (and the experiential method underlying it) can be easily adapted to an asynchronous learning environment using any of the generally accepted learning management systems (e.g., Blackboard, Canvass, etc.). The interaction between students and instructor can be done using various video recording tools such as Voice Thread, ScreenCastoMatic, Loom, and others. The peer review methodology can be replicated by having students post a draft of an assignment in a discussion forum (ideally two-thirds to three-quarters of the way through a specific week), and then provide constructive criticism to the post of a peer, with each activity (the draft post and the response) being graded individually. Students can also post presentations using video recording tools that can then be commented on by peers, instructors, or both.

**Building a Social Venture Business Plan**

In our experience, one of the biggest hurdles in educating entrepreneurs is the technical details of constructing a business plan, with the financial forecasting often presenting a particular challenge. While we had provided a sample of a brief business plan for a social enterprise as an appendix, the instructor may want to take additional steps to support the student effort. While the instructor would certainly be within their rights to require the student to develop the spreadsheets necessary to produce the financial projections, others may choose to support or adopt any one of the commercially available business planning software tools currently available.

As you may note, our sample plan was assembled using LivePlan, which is one of the more widely used tools. While we receive no compensation for this, we do recommend LivePlan for several reasons. First, it is very hard to “break” the software, as all the coding and formulas are in the background.

Second, the folks at LivePlan are extremely supportive of the academic user. To that end, LivePlan has provided us with a generous discount off the commercial user rate. The terms of that discount are as follows:

Used by hundreds of colleges and universities, LivePlan, created by Palo Alto Software, is a cloud-based business plan software that is educational, supportive, and offers a guided user experience, making the process of writing a business plan much easier. Additionally, LivePlan makes the financial part of a business plan engaging and intuitive, leading the user through questions and a step-by-step process.

To have your students sign up for LivePlan with an academic discount, simply give them these directions.

Instructions for setting up your LivePlan account.

1) Navigate to [https://www.liveplan.com/signup](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.liveplan.com%2Fsignup&data=04%7C01%7Cjkucher%40umaryland.edu%7C638fc00e5ab54195bef308d9458fc0f9%7C3dcdbc4a7e4c407b80f77fb6757182f2%7C0%7C0%7C637617305997832104%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=ha1ZcecoestQxNqCqA3qFfETPVPTRgxP6asWDcDZBAo%3D&reserved=0).

2) Enter your academic discount promo code and click Apply.

3) Fill in your name, email, and create a password.

4) Click Continue and follow the prompts.

There are two options for promo codes for the academic discount.

**6MMLPSTAND** This promo will get your students access to LivePlan for a full semester (180 days) for $65

**3MMLPSTAND** This promo will get your students access to LivePlan for a condensed course (90 days) for $45

**Final Thoughts**

As you read through the text, you will notice several key themes. From an instructional standpoint, perhaps the most important of these themes is the messy and complicated nature of the pursuit of social innovation. Prior to teaching a course using this text, we would encourage the instructor to become comfortable with this concept and embrace the understanding that conversations and interactions with students will be rich and complex. A deft hand is called for in balancing the need for clarity with the space for reflection and experimentation. In our combined experience of over 20 years teaching this subject, we’ve found that tension to be both challenging and invigorating, and hope you will as well.

Enjoy the ride!

Jim & Stephanie

Brentnall, C., Rodríguez, I. D., & Culkin, N. (2018). Enterprise education competitions: a theoretically flawed intervention? In *Creating Entrepreneurial Space: Talking Through Multi-Voices, Reflections on Emerging Debates*. Emerald Publishing Limited.