

**An Assessment of PR Educators' Perceptions of and
Approaches to Teaching Entrepreneurship**

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Abstract

Advances in technology have flattened the public relations playing field as the industry focuses on new media and related opportunities. At the same time, entrepreneurship among practitioners is increasing. The number of independent practitioners in the Public Relations Society of America increased from 15.5 to 18 percent from 2010 to 2011 (Lagorio, 2011). *Forbes* ranked public relations as one of 10 most promising careers for aspiring entrepreneurs (Casserly, 2012). Public relations students have also expressed interest in learning about entrepreneurship in their classes (Hays & Sidlow, 2010).

What remains unknown is whether and how public relations educators are preparing students for these entrepreneurship opportunities. This study seeks to fill this gap by assessing public relations educators' attitudes and opinions toward entrepreneurship education and whether and how they are teaching entrepreneurship to undergraduate students. The researchers used a triangulated approach by implementing a survey and conducting in-depth interviews with public relations educators.

One hundred and fourteen full-time public relations educators responded to an electronic survey in June 2012. Sixty-one percent of respondents teach entrepreneurial skills or concepts. Public relations educators believe that entrepreneurship should be embedded in certain courses, such as Public Relations Campaigns and Public Relations Management, and that students should learn how to understand financial information, secure clients, and work with vendors. In the in-depth interviews, educators said that teaching entrepreneurship in public relations is important, although their ideas differed regarding its priority in the curriculum. Pedagogies included folding entrepreneurship into lectures in beginning courses, tying ideas into the management of student-run firms, and having students in the capstone campaigns course prepare and present proposals to clients. Assessment of these activities includes some nontraditional ideas such as incorporating client and peer input.

Implications for teaching future entrepreneurs are provided.

An Assessment of PR Educators' Perceptions of and Approaches to Teaching Entrepreneurship

The practice of entrepreneurship is not new to public relations practitioners. However, with advances in technology flattening the public relations playing field and economic changes taking place, more practitioners are considering new and independent business opportunities. As such, the focus on blending entrepreneurship and public relations continues to increase.

Business media has predicted the growing interest in public relations entrepreneurial ventures. *Forbes* ranked public relations as one of 10 careers for aspiring entrepreneurs in 2012 (Cassery, 2012) and *Inc.com* included public relations on its 2011 list of "Best Industries for Starting a Business" (Lagorio, 2011). Indeed, interest in entrepreneurship is evident by the rise of independent practitioners. Independent practitioners in the Public Relations Society of America increased from 15.5 to 18 percent from 2010 to 2011 (Lagorio). The fact that public relations has few obstacles to starting a business makes it favorable for small firms and independent practitioners (Lagorio). Moreover, in addition to the impact of digital media on public relations practice, the increase in independent practitioners likely stems from other practitioner motivations.

One motivation for becoming a public relations entrepreneur is the unpredictability and subsequent lay offs within the industry. Second, some public relations practitioners intentionally become entrepreneurs, many because they want "to be in charge" (Hays & Ritchey-Escovedo, 2009). In Hays and Ritchey-Escovedo's interviews with 75 practicing public relations entrepreneurs, practitioners described their entrepreneurship motivations as the need for being independent, being one's own boss, having creative control, being directly rewarded for business

success, and having the ability to run their firms as they see fit. Third, some practitioners opt for the entrepreneurial route because they view it as a shrewd business decision (Hays & Ritchey-Escovedo).

Public relations practitioners with the desire for business ownership typically work for someone else in order to gain general industry experience. Rayburn and Hazleton (2006) found that independent practitioners' experience prior to starting their own business ranged from two to seven years for an average of 4.4 years (2008), compared to two to six years for an average of 3.8 years in an earlier survey (Rayburn & Hazleton). These independent practitioners also had been entrepreneurs an average of seven years in 2008 and an average of eight years in 2006, both increases from a five-year average in two previous studies (PRSA Survey Profiles Independent Practitioners, 2003; Survey Provides Profile of Independent Practitioner, 2005).

While recent public relations research has focused on the motivations of practitioners for becoming an entrepreneur (Hays & Ritchey-Escovedo, 2009) and undergraduate public relations students' interest in learning how to be an entrepreneur (Hays & Sidlow, 2010), scant research has focused on the perspectives of public relations educators toward entrepreneurship pedagogy. This is the gap this study proposes to fill.

Literature Review and Research Questions

The Coleman Foundation, established in 1951 for the purposes of supporting educational institutions offering entrepreneurship education across the country, defines entrepreneurship as "self-employment through business ownership which has significant elements of risk, control, and reward" (n.d.). The teaching of entrepreneurship has been an active research subject since the mid-1980s, even though it has been a component of business schools since the early 1970s (Kuratko, 2005). Much of the research findings regarding entrepreneurship

relate to the debate of whether entrepreneurship is a teachable craft versus being an instinctual behavior. Arguments for including entrepreneurship in the curriculum was first distinctly noted by well-known management thought leader Peter Drucker, who addressed the value of teaching entrepreneurship in *Innovations and Entrepreneurship* in 1985. Drucker argued that “everyone who can face up to decision making can learn to be an entrepreneur and to behave entrepreneurially. Entrepreneurship, then, is behavior rather than personality trait. And its foundation lies in concept and theory rather than in intuition” (1985, p. 26). In Gorman, Hanlon and King’s (1997) meta-analysis of entrepreneurship research and literature published from 1985 to 1994, they concluded that entrepreneurship could be taught. Gorman et al. contended that the increase of entrepreneurship classes would lead to more academic awareness, and subsequently, more positive acceptance of entrepreneurship as a legitimate area of study.

As predicted, the growth of the discipline did change as its acceptance within academia developed. According to the Kauffman Panel on Entrepreneurship Curriculum in Higher Education, about 250 entrepreneurship courses were offered across U.S. college campuses in 1985; by 2006 more than 5,000 courses were offered (n.d.). Entrepreneurship centers have also increased. Now, more than 500 majors, minors and certificates in entrepreneurship are offered as compared with 104 in 1975 (Kauffman Panel on Entrepreneurship Curriculum in Higher Education, n.d., p. 6).

More recent research has focused on examining and describing how to best teach entrepreneurship to university students (Kuratko, 2005; Mueller, 2011; Soloman, 2007). Even as an accepted academic discipline, entrepreneurship still brings a challenge to educators. The key task for teaching students to be successful entrepreneurs is to blend real-life examples and experience with the expected rigor required by academia (Soloman). Also, educators need to

prepare students for whatever comes their way as an entrepreneur in what could become a “chaotic and ill-defined” experience (Soloman, p.169).

Direct observation of practicing entrepreneurs is one effective way that students can learn how to be entrepreneurs (Kuratko, 2005). By analyzing entrepreneurs' behavior through interviews, surveys and case studies, students gain a better understanding of the daily routine, responsibilities and traits as well as the motivations of current entrepreneurs (Kuratko). Mueller (2011) recommends facilitating student learning of entrepreneurship through role models and student-oriented classes as opposed to lectures. Mueller also suggests that universities should link entrepreneurship learning with practicing entrepreneurs, both on- and off-campus. Finally, the Kauffman Foundation (n.d.) recommends creating an entrepreneurship environment on a college campus by offering dedicated offices and workspaces, resources of information, special residence halls, regular opportunities to meet and learn from local and alumni entrepreneurs, and more entrepreneurship internships.

Research suggests that undergraduate entrepreneurship teaching and learning is positively linked to entrepreneurship job creation, leadership, economic growth, and technological innovation (Charney & Libecap, 2000; Kaufmann report, n.d.; Rubin, 2011). More specific, Charney and Libecap's research indicates that an entrepreneurship graduate has a 25% greater likelihood of being involved in a new venture over a non-entrepreneurship graduate, and entrepreneurship graduates are 11% more likely than non-entrepreneurship graduates to own their own business. Lange, Martin, Jawahar, Yong and Bygrave at Babson College conducted a study (2011) with 4,000 alumni to determine if those who studied entrepreneurship while in college would be more likely to practice entrepreneurship after graduation. Results indicated that taking two or more entrepreneurship classes did influence a graduate's choice to engage in

entrepreneurship. Another key finding was that entrepreneurship intentions were still evident many years after graduation, suggesting that core entrepreneurship courses inspire graduates to actually launch an entrepreneurial career. Finally, Lange et al. found that 900-plus of their 4,000-plus sample have “founded or co-founded companies that have created more than 25,000 jobs for an investment of \$50,000 per job” (p. 219).

Despite the prevalence of research and literature that describes recommended teaching approaches and positive learning outcomes associated with entrepreneurship, little is known about entrepreneurship education in communication fields. Although there has been recent interest in entrepreneurship and journalism (Baines & Robson, 2001, Ferrier, 2012, Rae, 2002, 2004), there has been less focus in public relations scholarship. One exception is the study published by public relations educators Hays and Sidlow (2010), who documented interest of public relations students for the study of entrepreneurship in the public relations classroom. In their research, six out of ten, or 60.5% of 436 student respondents, indicated moderate to high interest in taking courses in public relations entrepreneurship, and one in three, or 29.6%, could envision themselves in some type of public relations entrepreneurship venture in the future. Of the public relations entrepreneurship options, more than half of the respondents (52.1%) were interested in owning a small public relations agency of 50 employees or less (Hays & Sidlow). A small percentage of students, 10.6%, said they might own a medium-sized agency with 50 to 200 employees, and 16.1% were interested in a sole proprietorship.

Although public relations students have expressed interest in learning about entrepreneurship, research (Hays & Sidlow, 2010) indicates that few classes in public relations are devoted solely to entrepreneurship. In Hays and Sidlow’s review of undergraduate programs, they could find evidence of only one undergraduate class designed for public relations

entrepreneurship, two graduate classes with strong entrepreneurship content, and one joint venture of a student-run public relations agency and a university entrepreneurship center.

In summary, this literature has indicated that public relations entrepreneurship is increasing as a viable career option in the field. Entrepreneurship education has been practiced and examined, primarily in business programs. Public relations students have expressed interest in the subject. Are public relations educators as enthusiastic about entrepreneurship as public relations students and practicing entrepreneurs? This study seeks to examine public relations educators' attitudes and opinions toward entrepreneurship education and whether and how they are teaching entrepreneurship to undergraduate students by answering these four questions.

RQ1: To what extent are public relations educators comfortable teaching entrepreneurship?

RQ2: Which entrepreneurial attitudes and skills do public relations educators believe can be taught?

RQ3: What do public relations educators consider to be the most effective practices and appropriate courses for teaching entrepreneurship?

RQ4: How are public relations educators teaching entrepreneurship to their undergraduate students?

Method

In phase one of the research, a survey questionnaire was developed based upon entrepreneurship and public relations education scholarship. The questionnaire was pre-tested with five educators to assess question clarity. Based upon the feedback provided, a few minor changes were made to the questionnaire. The Institutional Review Board of the university where one of the researchers works then approved the study.

In June 2012, a survey invitation was sent via listservs to members of the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the Public Relations Division of the National Communication Association, the Educators Academy of the Public Relations Society of America, and the faculty advisors of the Public Relations Student Society of America. Due to the overlapping membership among the listservs, it is difficult to provide a precise population size. However, the four listserv lists totaled to approximately 900 emails. A link to the online survey was embedded in the survey invitation. A follow-up reminder was later sent to the four listservs. The survey was created in Qualtrics, an online survey software.

In the second phase of research, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 15 educators to explore perceptions and practices related to entrepreneurship and education. The subjects of these interviews were self selected via the online survey, as these public relations educators indicated a willingness to discuss this subject further. Interviewees were comprised of five full professors, four associate professors, four assistant professors, one visiting scholar, and one professor emeritus. Most of those interviewed teach in the United States -- 14 of them represent 12 different states -- but one educator teaches in an Eastern European country. Data from these interviews was analyzed to identify themes, similarities and distinct differences in both perceptions and methods of entrepreneurship instruction in public relations.

Results

Descriptive Data

One hundred and fourteen educators responded to the electronic survey, although only 85 fully completed the survey. Fifty-one percent of respondents are female and forty-nine percent

are male. The majority of respondents are Caucasian (86%). The remaining 14% include Asian (6%), Other (4%), Native American (2%), African American (1%), and Hispanic/Latino (1%).

Respondents have varied amounts of full-time years of teaching experience: 5% have less than two years, 20% have between two and five years, 22% have between 6 and 10 years, 24% have been 11 and 15 years, and 29% have 16 or more years of full-time teaching experience. Respondents' academic rank includes 2% lecturers, 4% instructors, 32% assistant professors, 34% associate professors, and 28% full professors. Sixty-nine percent of respondents teach at a public university, and 31% teach at a private university.

Eighty-six percent of respondents have a doctoral degree, 13% have a master's degree, and one percent of respondents have a bachelor's degree. Responses to the question, "How many full-time years of public relations experience do you have?" include 16% have less than 2 years, 20% have between 2 and five years, 16% have between 6 and 10 years, 14% have between 11 and 15 years, and 33% have 16 or more years.

Respondents were asked to select a statement that best defines their experience with entrepreneurship, not just public relations, but entrepreneurship of any kind. The statements are provided in Table 1. In summary, 60% of respondents consider themselves an entrepreneur.

Table 1
Public Relations Educators' Entrepreneurship Self-Assessment

Statement	Percentage (N)
I have been an entrepreneur since before attending college	17% (14)
I became an entrepreneur when I began practicing public relations	28% (23)
I became an entrepreneur once I became a public relations professor	16% (13)
I am not an entrepreneur, but I would like to be.	16% (13)
I am not an entrepreneur, nor would I like to be.	24% (20)

PR Educators' Level of Comfort Teaching Entrepreneurship

Research question one asked to what extent PR educators are comfortable teaching entrepreneurship. Respondents indicated their level of agreement on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for the following two statements: (1) I am comfortable teaching entrepreneurial concepts and skills to my PR students ($M=3.6, SD=1.12$), and (2) With some training I would feel comfortable teaching entrepreneurial concepts ($M=3.8, SD=.87$). Overall, the mean scores of these two statements indicate that respondents are moderately comfortable teaching entrepreneurship. There are no statistically significant differences to the statement "I am comfortable teaching entrepreneurial concepts and skills to my PR students" based upon academic rank ($F(4,79) = .348, p = .844$), respondents' self-definition of entrepreneurship ($F(4,77) = 1.93, p = .114$), and whether participants teach at a public or private university ($F(1,82) = .010, p = .922$)

Forty-eight percent of respondents indicated that their university has an entrepreneurship center that promotes entrepreneurial practices and thinking among students and faculty. Respondents who said they have an entrepreneurship center were next asked whether they have ever consulted or worked with the entrepreneurship center for resources or assistance; 30% said yes, and 70% said no.

Entrepreneurial Attitudes and Skills That Can be Taught

Research question two sought to answer which entrepreneurial attitudes and skills public relations educators believe can be taught. Educators indicated the greatest amount of agreement that students can be taught to recognize an opportunity ($M=3.92, SD=.82$) and an attitude toward risk ($M=3.62, SD=1.07$). Educators indicated slightly less agreement for the idea that students can be taught motivation ($M=3.14, SD=1.11$)

Effective Practices and PR Courses for Entrepreneurship

Research question three examined what PR educators consider the most effective practices and appropriate courses for teaching entrepreneurship. Respondents were first asked four questions pertaining to how entrepreneurship pedagogy should be incorporated into the undergraduate curriculum. As indicated by Table 2, educators indicated the strongest agreement with the statement that entrepreneurial concepts and skills should be embedded in certain courses ($M=3.97$, $SD=.86$). Conversely, educators indicated the least amount of agreement with the statement that there should be a dedicated course to entrepreneurship in the public relations curriculum ($M=2.88$, $SD=1.07$). Respondents indicated that PR Management ($M=4.43$, $SD=.66$) and PR Campaigns ($M=4.11$, $SD=.88$) are the two courses where entrepreneurial skills and concepts should be embedded. Overall, educators do not believe that Public Relations Writing ($M=2.88$, $SD=1.08$) is the appropriate class to teach entrepreneurship (see Table 2).

The survey next asked respondents what entrepreneurial skills and concepts should be taught. As indicated in Table 2, respondents indicated the highest level of agreement with the idea that students should be taught to understand financial information ($M=4.31$, $SD=.83$) followed by securing clients ($M=4.01$, $SD=.87$) and working with vendors ($M=4.01$, $SD=.87$).

Participants next indicated the most effective way for educators to teach entrepreneurial concepts and skills (see Table 2). Educators indicated the highest agreement with using guest speakers who are entrepreneurs ($M=4.21$, $SD=.78$), student-led entrepreneurial projects ($M=4.16$, $SD=.91$), and case studies about entrepreneurship ($M=3.8$, $SD=.79$).

Table 2
Educators' Perceptions of Entrepreneurship Education

Statement	Mean (SD)
PR educators should teach entrepreneurial concepts and skills in courses throughout the PR curriculum.	3.70 (.96)
There should be a dedicated course to entrepreneurship in the PR curriculum.	2.88 (1.07)
Entrepreneurial concepts and skills should be embedded in certain PR courses.	3.97 (.86)
There is not room in the PR curriculum to teach entrepreneurship in a stand-alone course.	3.42 (1.82)
Entrepreneurial concepts and skills should be incorporated into the following classes:	
PR Management	4.43 (.66)
PR Campaigns	4.11 (.88)
PR Case Studies	3.79 (.97)
PR Research	3.38 (1.11)
Introduction to Public Relations	3.35 (1.11)
PR Writing	2.88 (1.08)
At some point in the PR curriculum, students should be taught how to:	
get started as an entrepreneur	3.51 (.94)
secure clients	4.01 (.87)
work with vendors	4.01 (.86)
establish work/life balance	3.84 (1.05)
form partnerships with other service providers	3.83 (.84)
understand financials	4.31 (.83)
The most effective way for PR educators to teach entrepreneurial concepts and skills is to use:	
Case studies about entrepreneurship	3.88 (.79)
Entrepreneurial articles in professional and trade journals	3.66 (.90)
Student-led entrepreneurial projects	4.16 (.91)
Group discussion about entrepreneurship	3.78 (.85)
Guest speakers who are entrepreneurs	4.21 (.78)
Out-of-class exercise that requires students to interview entrepreneurs	3.91 (.81)
In-class exercises and/or simulations related to entrepreneurship	3.73 (1)
Students shadowing entrepreneurs	3.83 (.96)
On a 5-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5)	

How PR Educators Teach Entrepreneurship

Research question four investigated how public relations educators are teaching entrepreneurship to their undergraduate students. Sixty-one percent ($n=52$) of respondents indicated that they teach entrepreneurial skills or concepts in the public relations curriculum. There are no statistically significant differences to whether respondents teach entrepreneurial skills or concepts based upon whether they teach at a public or private university ($X^2 (1, N=85)=1.02, p=.312$), academic rank ($(X^2 (4, N=85)=2.15, p=.708$), or whether the respondent's university has an entrepreneurship center ($(X^2 (1, N=84)=.808, p=.369$). However, there is a statistically significant difference based upon respondents' self assessment of their entrepreneurial background ($(X^2 (4, N=82)=21.81, p=.000$), suggesting that respondents who consider themselves an entrepreneur are more likely to teach entrepreneurship compared to those respondents who do not consider themselves entrepreneurs. The mean score to the statement, "I am not interested in teaching entrepreneurship to PR students" was a 2.02 ($SD=1.02$), indicating that most participants are interested in teaching entrepreneurship.

Table 3
Public Relations Courses Where Educators Teach Entrepreneurial Concepts and Skills

Class	Percentage (N)
Introduction to Public Relations	27% (23)
Public Relations Writing	12% (85)
Public Relations Case Studies	19% (31)
Public Relations Management	26% (22)
Public Relations Research	9% (11)
Public Relations Campaigns	29% (25)

"entrepreneurial thinking" was considered important, and not just under the guise of owning a PR firm, but even using this perspective in nonprofit organizations as well as within corporations and agencies where one serves as an employee.

In-Depth Interviews

Fourteen public relations educators were next interviewed via telephone and one via email to further discuss perceptions and best practices about teaching entrepreneurship in the public relations curriculum. Results from these interviews indicate significant interest and perception of importance in teaching entrepreneurship in public relations, albeit in a myriad of forms.

In the in-depth interviews, educators said that teaching entrepreneurship is important, although their ideas differed regarding its priority in the curriculum. All of the educators interviewed believed that it was important because of the reality that many public relations practitioners do some sort of entrepreneurial work "on their own" – either as a solo practitioner, freelancer, or as head of their own company. Aside from self-employment, the concepts of selling (ideas or products/services to publics and the value of PR to internal and external audiences), creativity, opportunity recognition, and "entrepreneurial thinking" are all valued in the public relations profession and serve as important curriculum pieces, according to the respondents. Other related subjects such as management skills were also mentioned as important. While not all respondents were actually teaching entrepreneurship as part of their courses, they all indicated that they believed in its value to students. One respondent believed very strongly that the ideas were essential to her students, but found that her particular students were not very interested in the idea of self-employment. Another respondent taught in an Eastern European

country, and her answers echoed those of the educators in the U.S. She indicated an even greater need for this content due to her country's state of economic transition.

Regarding where these concepts should be taught, most respondents indicated that teaching ~~about~~ entrepreneurship is best done as part of current courses as few believed in its curricular importance as a stand-alone course, except perhaps at the graduate level where such concepts might be more immediately utilized, or as something offered via an extended education or similar program. There was a sense of "there is only so much we can squeeze into our courses" among several respondents. Respondents believed that while self-employment might be a reality among their graduates, there was concern and lack of support for encouraging students to become PR entrepreneurs immediately after graduation.

How entrepreneurship should be incorporated depended on the course involved. Those who discussed the ideas in their introduction to public relations course typically used lectures to discuss concepts and included entrepreneurship as a potential career path. Some have their students do case studies or create white papers regarding how public relations relates to a business' success. Most used their campaigns class to infuse these ideas into the curriculum, having students take on client projects and simulate working in a public relations agency environment. Often the topics of pricing, budgeting and managing the business function are included. Even if the content was not specifically labeled as "entrepreneurship education," topics such as time tracking, the difference between different types of organizations (S corporation, partnerships, solo practitioners, etc.), and new business development are sometimes covered. Some respondents even went as far as to include the creation of income and expense statements as well as budgeting. Many have students present their campaigns in class to both their student colleagues and the client. One educator had her students debate the merits of the presentations

and vote on the best projects. Some have the students actually implement their campaigns, giving further “real life” experience with regard to client relations. The inclusion of guest lecturers, people who were solo practitioners or heads of agencies, are used and found to be of significant value. One educator takes his students on field trips to have the students see firsthand a successful organization in action. Another taught a PR management course at his previous university and wove his entire curriculum around starting a boutique agency. He covered everything from finding a location, creating a business plan to secure financing, deciding on insurance needs, hiring employees and developing clients.

One respondent, who believed that teaching entrepreneurship in public relations was important, indicated they he didn't specifically teach it in his courses due to a large number of sections of each of their courses and the need for a consistent syllabus across all of the sections. The educators interviewed who were in smaller programs and had more control over their syllabi were the ones doing the most in the area of teaching entrepreneurship.

Another respondent reported that his Dean had asked him to head up a task force to explore the ways entrepreneurship could be included in the department's courses, and initial discussions have began with faculty. One educator plans on adding an entrepreneurship course to his public relations master's program. Yet another has developed a “How to Launch Your Own Consultancy” course as part of her PR graduate program. This course, meeting two Saturdays a month, attracts students both inside and outside of her program. One university is just beginning a master's degree program in media entrepreneurship. It is more geared toward the journalism industry but could potentially serve as a springboard for related programs. This university is using “intrepreneur” to market the program and to encourage recruitment of those who want to bring an entrepreneurial attitude to their work.

The educators interviewed use a myriad of strategies for assessment, including grading the quality of the projects themselves (via a written document and/or public relations materials created), quality of presentations explaining the projects, responses to client or peer questions, quiz questions relating to guest speakers, feedback from the clients, feedback from classmates, portfolios, and traditional exams. Several of those interviewed cited the importance of the ambiguity piece of their real world assignments, and the value of seeing how implementation rarely goes how it is laid out on paper. This was mentioned frequently, as was the importance of allowing the students to learn how to problem solve and succeed despite obstacles – key entrepreneurial skills. One educator has an oral review – 90 minutes per student – where the student has to articulate what he/she learned in the form of performance appraisal (a simulation for why the student should be “promoted”). Students have to bring evidence and demonstrate why his/her work had value. At one university the Office of Service-Learning assesses all project with nonprofits, including the work the PR students do for their clients.

There does appear to be some university linkage or support between the public relations educators and their teaching of entrepreneurship in their course, with a few exceptions. Several respondents, including the educator in Eastern Europe, even reported strong encouragement by their universities to teach entrepreneurship in their courses. Those educators who work for universities with Entrepreneurship Centers tend to have ties to them via support for their efforts. Some share students with the business school/entrepreneurship center, funneling public relations students into the entrepreneurship minor and funneling entrepreneurship students into the PR minor. Another educator was anticipating tying in his student-run firm to the entrepreneurship center on his campus once the center opens. An additional source of support on campus was the center for service-learning, which often helps these educators find clients for their campaigns

courses. One educator was sent by his university to a workshop about service-learning and entrepreneurship.

And while most of those interviewed record their activity in their tenure or promotion files, and the general consensus was that these efforts contribute to a solid file, there wasn't a feeling that these activities significantly aid in promotion. One educator did use his course that included entrepreneurship as his sample course used to document his quality as an educator, believing that it showed his innovation in teaching. Another felt that entrepreneurship activities helped her prove her value in the area of curriculum development. There was also a feeling among one respondent that entrepreneurial activity strengthened the PR program and could potentially be used for recruitment.

Most of those interviewed had personal entrepreneurship experience, primarily in public relations consulting. In fact, many indicated that they would have benefited from such knowledge and curriculum prior to their own entrepreneurship activities.

Discussion

This study provides a benchmark of current practices and thinking among public relations educators regarding teaching entrepreneurship in public relations. Overall, public relations educators are moderately comfortable teaching entrepreneurship, although there is certainly room for growth and improvement. A good majority of respondents (61%) indicated that they teach entrepreneurship skills or concepts.

As far as entrepreneurial content, public relations educators believe their students can be taught opportunity recognition and risk taking skills, but they are not as certain that motivation can be taught in the classroom. Additional content ideas include teaching students how to use

and process financial information, how to secure and manage clients, and how to effectively work with vendors. With respect to pedagogy, there should be a focus on applied and experiential learning, best achieved using guest speakers who are entrepreneurs themselves, student-led entrepreneurial projects, and case studies about entrepreneurship. These findings mirror those in previous research that looks at best practices for entrepreneurship education, in general (Kuratko, 2005; Mueller, 2011; Soloman, 2007)

With regards to where to teach entrepreneurship, there is strong agreement that entrepreneurship should be embedded into the public relations curriculum and not be the subject of a stand-alone course. This gives educators an opportunity to infuse entrepreneurial content with two angles -- for those who want to be in business for themselves, and for those who will use the concepts for their professional success as an employee, or "intrapreneur." Courses where entrepreneurship should be taught include PR Campaigns and PR Management, not PR Writing or PR Research. There is some support for the focus of entrepreneurship in public relations to be at the graduate level, further adding to the notion that a "sprinkling" throughout the curriculum is a more appropriate approach than a specific course.

The findings in this study offer a myriad of opportunities to move entrepreneurship education forward in the public relations curriculum. There appears to be an opportunity for public relations educators to more fully embrace entrepreneurship teaching, as it is clear that, especially given the current tougher economy, entrepreneurship leads to economic growth and increased opportunity (Charney & Libecap, 2000; Kaufmann report, n.d.; Rubin, 2011). Research from entrepreneurship educators indicates that entrepreneurship can indeed be taught (Gorman et al., 1997), and public relations educators agree that many of the key skills are teachable to students.

Perhaps a next step could include developing some consensus on best practices regarding both content and pedagogy for teaching entrepreneurship in public relations, as there is certainly more opportunity to focus more fully on entrepreneurship practices in these existing courses and develop electives that are entrepreneurship-centric. Another avenue to explore would be more developed partnerships with entrepreneurship programs and centers to establish cross-disciplinary courses and projects that would benefit both groups of students. Many campuses have student business incubators, and many campuses have student-run PR firms, and a marriage of these entities seems to make sense from an experiential learning perspective. In addition, there are many resources available for public relations educators to utilize to become more comfortable with teaching entrepreneurship, and some effort to share these with the broader public relations educator academy might encourage faculty who are not entrepreneurs themselves to be more comfortable with this content and curriculum. Partnerships with regional public relations practitioners who are entrepreneurs will also increase both the knowledge and comfort levels of public relations educators.

As with any study, there are limitations to this research. One limitation is the low to moderate response rate to the survey. Second, participants may have differed in their definitions of entrepreneurship, thereby affecting responses in the survey and interviews. Finally, the respondents who participated in the interviews self-selected themselves.

Future research might include the creation of a resource guide for public relations educators who are interested in teaching entrepreneurship in their courses. This could include online articles and resources, a list of educators who are willing to mentor on this subject, a list of in-person or online workshops or seminars, and a repository of in-depth case studies or assignments that could be widely utilized. In addition, a survey of current public relations

entrepreneurs could be conducted in order to assess their perceptions about priority knowledge, skills and abilities.

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