



Views from the
NCGE/UKSEC
International Entrepreneurship
Educators Conference

Shaping the Future Today

10th - 12th September 2007
Robinson College, Cambridge, UK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

For 3 days in Cambridge, UK delegates at the 2007 NCGE/UKSEC International Entrepreneurship Educators Conference explored the challenges and opportunities facing the entrepreneurship education community. The conference identified **Priorities for Change** in 10 critical areas to positively **Shape the Future for entrepreneurship education**. Action is required by all stakeholders to ensure that these challenges are fully addressed:

Institutional Culture:

Over 90% of respondents believe that the current institutional culture needs to change if entrepreneurship education across further and higher education is to be grown and developed.

The process of embedding entrepreneurship education across the further and higher education sectors is likely to be incremental. There needs to be strong entrepreneurial leadership in those who take up the challenge.

Clarity of Goals:

Over 90% of respondents agreed there is a lack of clarity about what outcomes are being sought.

There needs to be agreement with key stakeholders of the desired outcomes for enterprise education and clarification of their roles in contributing to their achievement.

Degree of Embeddedness:

Over 90% of respondents believe there is a long way to achieving embeddedness of entrepreneurship education.

There needs to be more deeply embed entrepreneurship education opportunities across all departments and subjects in further and higher education.

Impact:

Three quarters of respondents believe that there is a lack of understanding about the impact of entrepreneurship education on society.

There needs to be greater focus upon the measurement of desired learning outcomes and a greater sharing of knowledge in how to achieve this.

Resource and Commitment:

Three quarters of respondents feel that the level of resource and commitment is insufficient to ensure long-term sustainability.

There needs to be a resource stream and commitment over time that will enable a steady build up of scale and scope in provision and demand.

The Policy Environment:

Two thirds of respondents believe that the policy environment for entrepreneurship education is not the best it can be and that there is need for improvement.

The environment needs to be stable and consistent over a sufficiently long period to underpin cultural and institutional change.

Progression Through the Education System:

6 out of 10 respondents agreed there was insufficient clarity about the progression of entrepreneurship education throughout the education system.

There needs to be a determined stance to create a clear and deliverable progression from primary, through secondary and further education to higher education. Such a framework will need to clarify the nature of the educational contract at each stage of the education system and agree the desired outcomes required at different stages.

Competence of Personnel:

Over 50% of respondents agree that the current level of educator competence is inadequate to ensure sound progress.

There needs to be an enhanced capacity to deliver effective education programmes and experiences across a number of different contexts: with institutional leaders; entrepreneurship educators; policy and delivery supporters.

Needs and Demand:

Almost half of respondents remained neutral about the high level of student demand for entrepreneurship education. Many were uncertain through a lack of information.

There needs to be further monitoring of students changing perceptions, needs and demands. There is much greater scope for awareness campaigns targeted upon the student population.

Curriculum and Pedagogy:

Almost half of all respondents believe there are insufficient curricula and materials to support entrepreneurship education.

There needs to be more context-related materials and pedagogical approaches in entrepreneurship education, particularly outside the traditional business education context.

Shaping the Future for Entrepreneurship Education

Introduction

The 2007 International Entrepreneurship Education Conference took place at the University of Cambridge, UK between September 10th and 12th. For 3 days 230 delegates from 26 countries explored the challenges and opportunities facing entrepreneurship education stimulated by contributions from the US (Kauffman and MIT), China, Denmark and the UK. The aim of the conference was to create an agenda for change for shaping the future for entrepreneurship education. This was successfully achieved.

This report focuses upon the results from an electronic poll of conference delegates around the key themes emerging throughout the event. The aim of the poll was to provide a framework for summing up the views of participants following three days of intensive discussion and debate. The report also provides views as to the degree to which the basic conditions for progress in entrepreneurship education are being met in key areas of policy, institutional culture, student demand, clarity of goals, measurement of impact, availability of resources, personal competence, curriculum embeddedness, availability of teaching materials and progression throughout the education system.

The need for development of these basic conditions identifies key opportunities for shaping the future for entrepreneurship education.

The poll provides a very clear insight into the priorities facing the entrepreneurship education community. It is therefore a valuable contribution to our understanding and informs our priority development needs. This summary of the poll complements the full conference report which will be published separately.

Approach

The issues to be raised were captured in 10 questions posed to the conference (see Annex 1) by means of an electronic polling system. All questions invited a 5-point Likert Scale response (i.e. respondents identified their preference on a scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'). Each question was shown to the conference and, after voting was closed, the results were displayed and used as the basis for a short facilitated debate between the audience and an international expert panel.

Report Structure

Each question is presented as a title underneath which is displayed a 3D bar chart showing the response distribution across all 5 options. The short commentary reflects audience and panel responses to the displayed results. The results lead to an identified Priority for Change.

1. THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

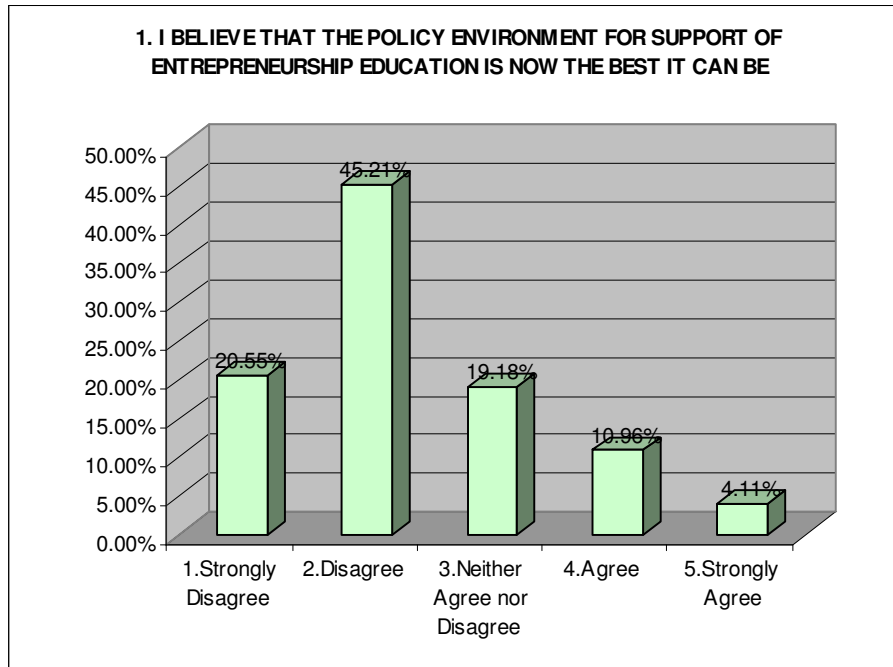


Table 1: Response Distribution for Question 1

Almost two thirds of the participants felt that the policy environment should be improved and only one in seven felt that it was the best it could be.

There is therefore a perceived substantial need for improvement. Key areas highlighted in discussion were a lack of coherence, connectivity and continuity. In particular questions were raised about the likely sustainability of the status quo and uncertainty about the future policy environment given the short term horizons of many current publicly supported initiatives.

Priority for Change

The key issue is that of creating a policy environment for entrepreneurship education that is stable and consistent over a sufficiently long period to underpin cultural and institutional change (see below).

2. INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

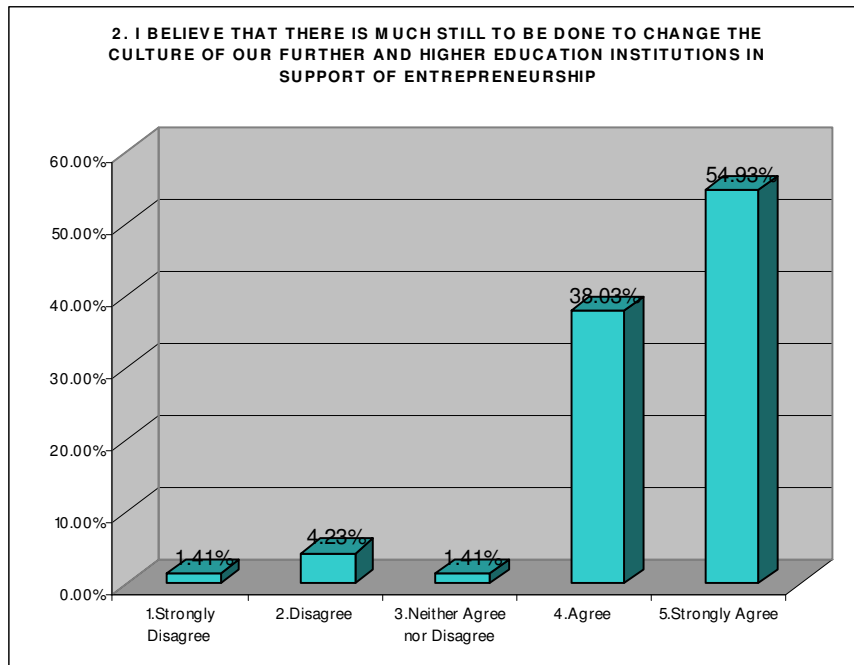


Table 2: Response Distribution for Question 2

This clearly demonstrates an overwhelming perception that current institutional culture needs to change if entrepreneurship education across further and higher education is to be grown and developed. Over half of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement and overall over 90% agreed to a greater or lesser extent. The poll result underpinned earlier views presented in the conference that the sector as a whole has been slow to change and that there is a considerable uphill task still to be undertaken.

Priority for Change

Behind the results of the poll is recognition that the process of embedding entrepreneurship education across the further and higher education sectors is likely to be incremental and will demand entrepreneurialism in those who take up the challenge.

It will also demand that the further and higher education sectors take more positive attitudes to working with the environment, appraising the relevance to society of what they teach, and become more aware of the wider range of pedagogies that might be used in pursuit of learning. Several of these issues are touched upon further below.

3. NEEDS AND DEMAND

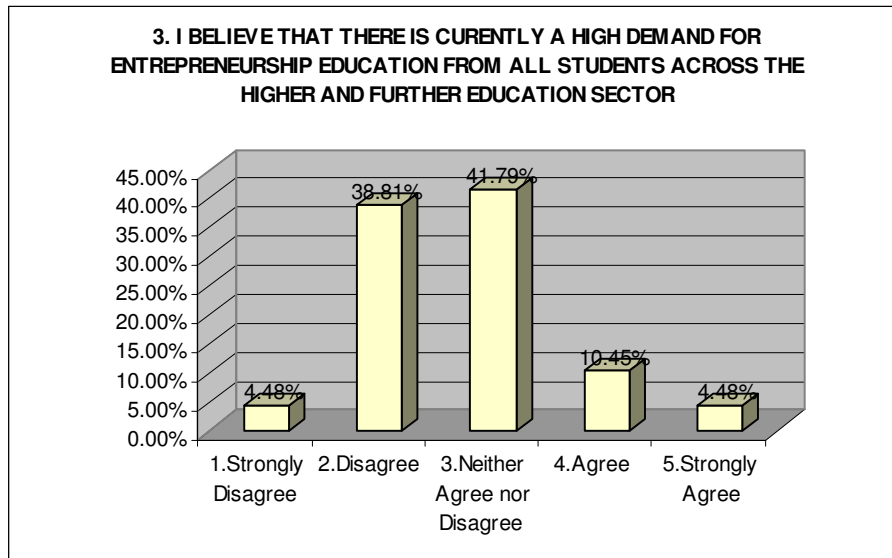


Table 3: Response Distribution for Question 3

A substantial number of respondents remained neutral to this statement. A high proportion of the remainder felt that there is not a high demand among students for entrepreneurship education.

Underpinning the responses are a number of interesting points. Firstly the inclusion of 'all' in the question raised the issue as to whether to expect or indeed to encourage a high level of demand from students in all disciplines and at all levels of experience and capability. Secondly, views from the delegates and panel indicated that one reason for the large proportion of participants 'sitting on the fence' is that there is little hard information on student demand. Relatively few higher education institutions regularly assess student entrepreneurial aspirations. Thirdly, some respondents felt there is a latent untapped demand. While this has grown substantially in recent years it is perceived that there remains further scope for student engagement, especially as school pupils who have been exposed to enterprise education arrive at the doors of further and higher education institutions.

Priority for Change

It is clear that there needs to be further monitoring of student perceptions, needs and demands. There is also much greater scope for awareness campaigns targeted upon the student population.

4. CLARITY OF GOALS

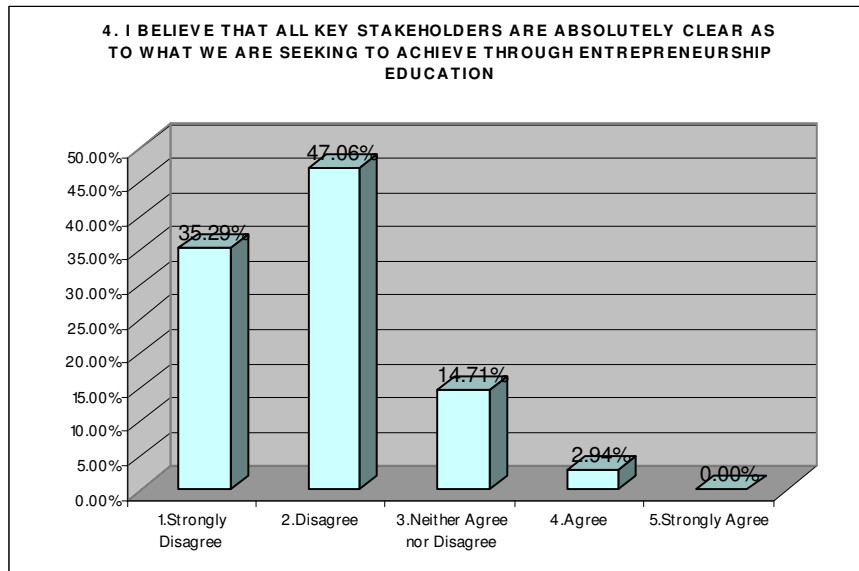


Table 4: Response Distribution for Question 4

Question 4 provoked a strong response. Overwhelmingly, respondents felt that there was no clear agreement among stakeholders as to the immediate or ultimate goals.

The discussion reinforced the view that while there is now a great deal of activity, as provision has grown during recent years, this remains fragmented. When asked to consider who bears responsibility for this, the point was made that education institutions need to be clearer about what they are seeking to deliver and then work closely with key stakeholders to develop understanding and shared goals. There also needs to be greater clarity as to the role of different stakeholders.

Priority for Change

There needs to be an organised debate about outcomes for enterprise education with the various key stakeholders. The role of different stakeholders and the rationale for their interest also needs to be clarified.

5. IMPACT

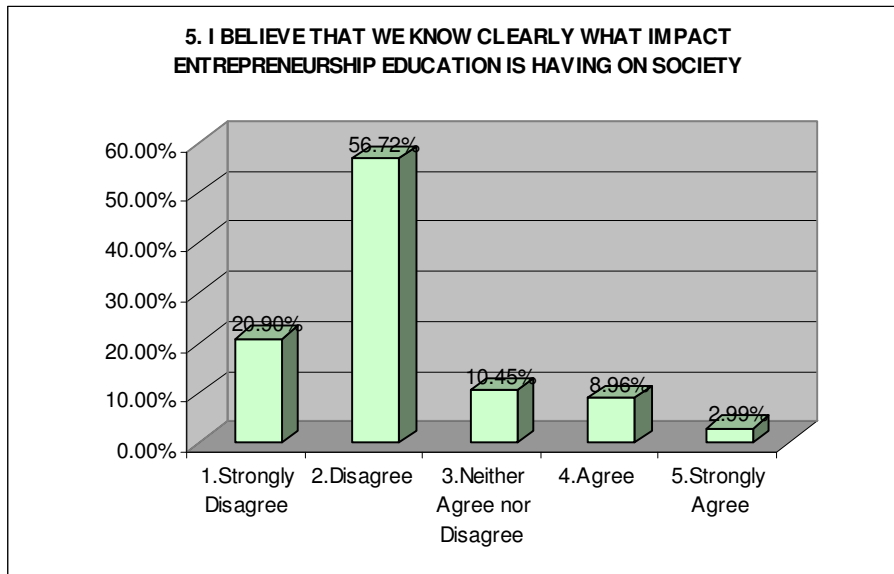


Table 5: Response Distribution for Question 5

Three quarters of participants indicated that we are as yet unclear as to the impacts of current efforts in the field of entrepreneurship education. Discussion revealed that part of the problem is that impact can only be fully measured over a generation whether or not the aim is to create more graduate start-ups or more broadly change culture. Nevertheless measures of self efficacy and intentionality can be taken and, if desired learning outcomes are clarified more appropriate measures can be taken.

Priority for Change

There needs to be greater focus upon learning outcomes in their measurement. There also needs to be greater sharing of knowledge in this respect.

6. RESOURCE AND COMMITMENT

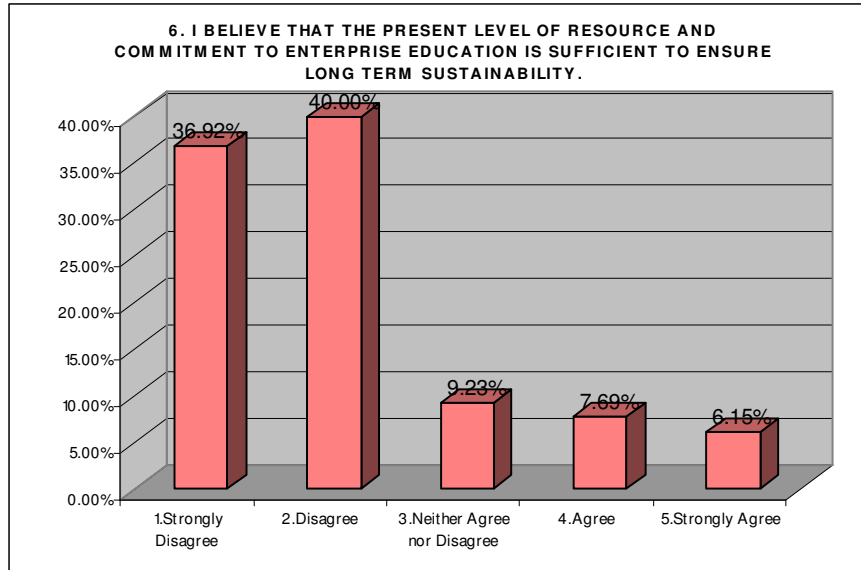


Table 6: Response Distribution for Question 6

The views of delegates as to the inadequacy of resources and commitment were strongly expressed. The focus of much of the concern is the short term nature of the funding that has driven much activity and interest to date. The resultant uncertainty can create risk-averse behaviour in institutions. The discussion emphasised the high dependency on public sector funding – which seems to be a particular characteristic of the UK/EU and China. The few respondents who felt that resource was adequate shared a concern as to future availability. The need for private sector engagement was seen as important.

Priority for Change

The main priority seems to be to create a resource stream and commitment over time that will enable a steady build up of embeddedness and credibility. It is clear that if the target is to build both a more entrepreneurial institutional culture in further and higher education and embed entrepreneurship education across the curriculum then there is a need to take a much longer time horizon to resource commitment than presently seems available.

7. COMPETENCE OF PERSONNEL

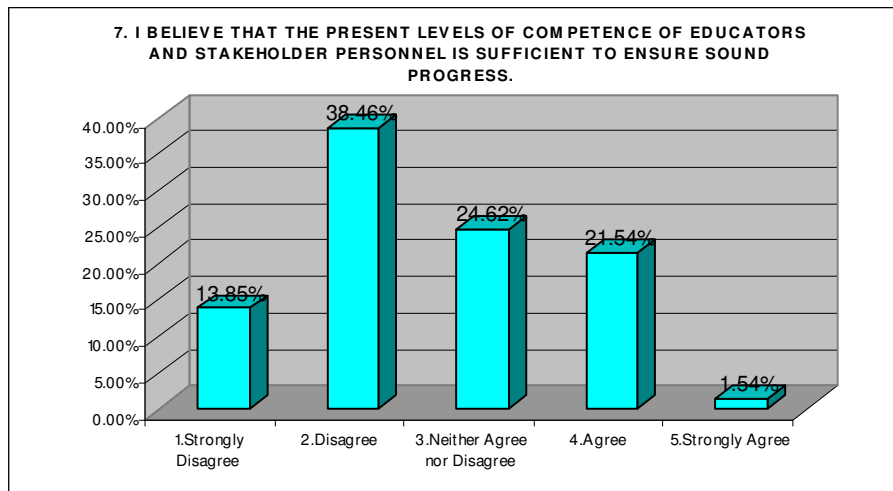


Table 7: Response Distribution for Question 7

Over half of respondents felt that the current level of competence was inadequate although one quarter felt the opposite. The results are indicative of a changing entrepreneurship educator development environment where institutional support and opportunities for professional development are increasing. This is currently on a small scale, sometimes lacks conceptual underpinning and availability is as yet fragmented. Educating stakeholder personnel is also seen as essential in shaping the future for entrepreneurship education.

Priority for Change

There needs to be an enhanced capacity to deliver sound education and training programmes in a number of different contexts. There are those charged with spreading entrepreneurship education across their institution. There are those in different subject and curriculum areas who wish to embed entrepreneurship education into their existing approaches, and there are stakeholders for example the regional development agencies who see the development of enterprise culture as a regional priority.

8. DEGREE OF EMBEDDEDNESS

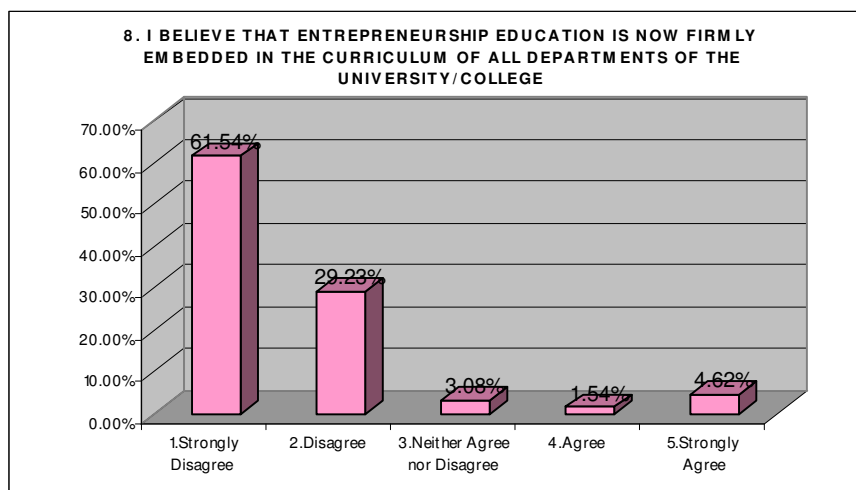


Table 8: Response Distribution for Question 8

It is clear from the responses that there is a long way to go in achieving embeddedness. The discussion revealed that there is an uneven playing field across further and higher education institutions with students' exposure to entrepreneurship education being department-contingent. The majority of provision is still driven by business/management schools. The discussion highlighted a split between the notion of delivering subject/context specific education and more traditional start your own company/business entrepreneurship provision.

Priority for Change

There is a clear need to develop pedagogies and curriculum right across all departments in further and higher education. This also means wider recognition of the application of the entrepreneurship concept to situations beyond that of starting a business.

9. CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY

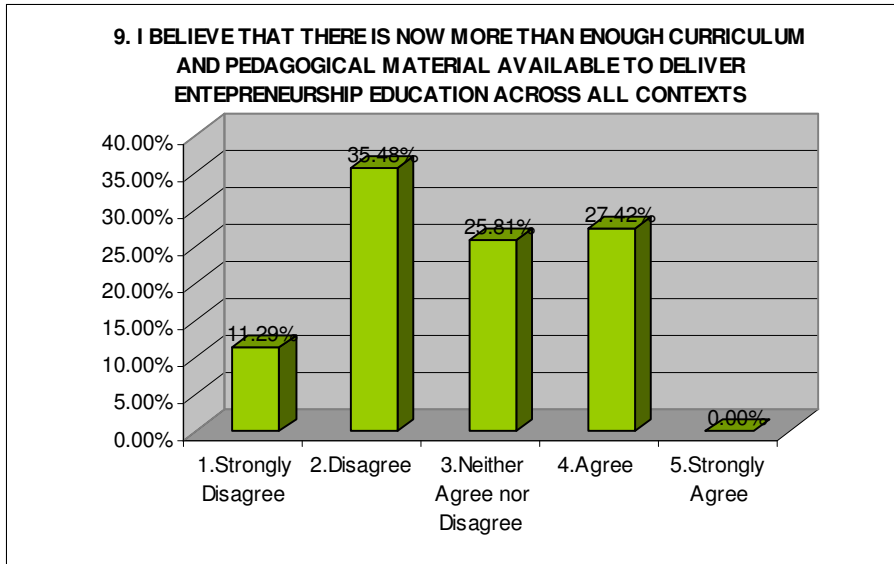


Table 9: Response Distribution for Question 9

There was a strong element of disagreement among respondents although approximately half felt there was a need for more curriculum/pedagogical availability. Among those who felt there was sufficient curriculum and material available across all contexts, there was the view that not all students would welcome or need material. The view also reflected the efforts that have already been made in developing materials. There was wider agreement about the need for developing greater understanding of the use of pedagogy.

Priority for Change

There remains a need to develop more context-related material and pedagogical approaches in the entrepreneurship education field. There is also a need to conduct more research into the needs of students outside the traditional business education context.

10. PROGRESSION THROUGH THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

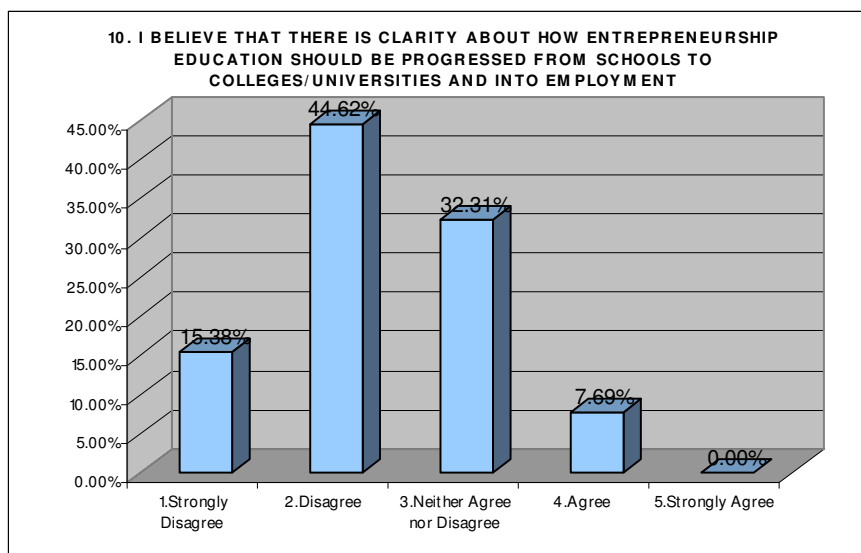


Table 10: Response Distribution for Question 10

While six out of ten respondents felt there was a need to address the issue of clarity in progression a large number 'stayed on the fence'. The clear majority view is that we have an environment where key components of the education system at different levels remain unconnected in respect of entrepreneurship education. The current investment in schools is likely to create a different set of expectations and aspirations amongst pupils. Further and higher educational institutions need to be able to build upon this experience rather than duplicate it. Currently there are no agreed entrepreneurial outcomes that link together across the education system.

Priority for Change

The need is for a determined stance to create a progression from primary, through secondary and further education to higher education. Such a progression needs to explore carefully the nature of the educational contract at each stage of education and the way that this dictates the potential for embedding entrepreneurship education. It also demands clarity in desired outcomes at different stages.

ANNEX ONE

KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL DAY POLL

1. I BELIEVE THAT THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT FOR SUPPORT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IS NOW THE BEST IT CAN BE
2. I BELIEVE THAT THERE IS MUCH STILL TO BE DONE TO CHANGE THE CULTURE OF OUR FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SUPPORT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP
3. I BELIEVE THAT THERE IS CURRENTLY A HIGH DEMAND FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FROM ALL STUDENTS ACROSS THE HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION SECTOR
4. I BELIEVE THAT ALL KEY STAKEHOLDERS ARE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR AS TO WHAT WE ARE SEEKING TO ACHIEVE THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION
5. I BELIEVE THAT WE KNOW CLEARLY WHAT IMPACT ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IS HAVING ON SOCIETY
6. I BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENT LEVEL OF RESOURCE AND COMMITMENT TO ENTERPRISE EDUCATION IS SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY.
7. I BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENT LEVELS OF COMPETENCE OF EDUCATORS AND STAKEHOLDER PERSONNEL IS SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE SOUND PROGRESS.
8. I BELIEVE THAT ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IS NOW FIRMLY EMBEDDED IN THE CURRICULUM OF ALL DEPARTMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE
9. I BELIEVE THAT THERE IS NOW MORE THAN ENOUGH CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGICAL MATERIAL AVAILABLE TO DELIVER ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ACROSS ALL CONTEXTS
10. I BELIEVE THAT THERE IS CLARITY ABOUT HOW ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION SHOULD BE PROGRESSED FROM SCHOOLS TO COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES AND INTO EMPLOYMENT