

***The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) presents***  
**Rethinking higher ed: Beyond {the buzzwords}**  
**November 7-8, 2013**  
**Sheraton Centre Toronto**

**Day One**  
**November 7, 2013**

**Session 3A | Nature or nurture: Can you teach entrepreneurship?**

*Perspectives on whether entrepreneurship is a mindset, a skillset, or something in between*

*Facilitator: Geoff Malleck, University of Waterloo*  
*Petra Kassun-Mutch, Imagination Catalyst, OCADU*  
*Valerie Fox, Ryerson University*  
*Joseph Wilson, MaRS Discovery District*

*Petra Kassun-Mutch, Imagination Catalyst, OCADU*

Universities are important networks that help entrepreneurs build support structures, but there is too much romance around entrepreneurship as an employment strategy. Not everyone can be an entrepreneur.

Many entrepreneurs possess courage, curiosity and confidence, but it's hard to nail down the demographics of an entrepreneur, except for one – women are definitely underrepresented. The term has become a catch-all for too many things and can mean anything like good leadership or collaborative skills, which are the same traits needed by a politician or CEO.

Most entrepreneurship is taught outside business schools. Entrepreneurs need mentoring and coaching, and skills to manage money, which should be taught at universities.

*Valerie Fox, Ryerson University*

Everyone can have the characteristics of an entrepreneur, like confidence and courageousness. There's a lot of learning when you become entrepreneur, and what would normally take a month to learn could be packed into a single day. As a result, students need a great deal of support to complement the rapid pace of learning.

Ryerson's Digital Media Zone supports students who want to work towards something with social or economic impact, and was started outside of curriculum and faculty. Now the space includes a fashion zone, an area for aerospace and more.

Entrepreneurship is a necessity that will teach us how to live in a world that is evolving. We no longer spend 30 years at one company and our systems have to change to reflect that. Regardless of whether or not a particular venture works out, entrepreneurship teaches economic resilience.

*Joseph Wilson, MaRS Discovery District*

You can teach entrepreneurship, but it's usually not taught in an effective manner. Entrepreneurship is best taught outside of formal curriculum because students need the opportunity to experiment.

People are shocked when they try entrepreneurship and fail, not realizing that successful people often have notches of failures on their belts, or that the average age of a founder is 40-something. Entrepreneurial learning should be project-based and centered on design and user or customer experience. Students need to learn digital literacy, business fundamentals and have access to adjusted-time mentoring.

Entrepreneurs are the ones who get to change the status quo. They need deep subject knowledge in a certain field; otherwise it's not likely they will disrupt that industry. There is currently too much emphasis on engineering and science, and not enough in the humanities and arts. In social innovation the main driver is change, and not making money.