

## **New Academia Learning Innovation: Introducing The Job Creation Program for Undergraduate Students in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia**

Azlan Abdul Latib,<sup>a,\*</sup> Ahmad Ariffian Bujang,<sup>a</sup> Yusri Kamin,<sup>b</sup> Amirmuddin Udin,<sup>b</sup> Wilfredo Libunao<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Centre for General Courses and Co-curricular, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 Johor Bahru, Johor

<sup>b</sup> Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 Johor Bahru, Johor

\*Corresponding author : marfathi@utm.my

### **Abstract**

Job Creation program has been introduced in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) since Semester 2, Session 2012/2013. Job Creation is one of UTM's credited general courses under the Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship cluster. This is under the university's New Academia Learning Innovation smart partnership project of the Vice Chancellor's office. The project aims to enhance student's entrepreneurship and other generic skills using project based and experiential learning approaches. Through this program the students will gain knowledge and skills in managing their own business. The students are encouraged to develop a business plan with emphasis on project profitability and sustainability. Successful proposals receive funding for the project thereby giving the students the opportunity to practice what they have learned for the project. This paper will introduce the UTM's concept of Job Creation based on the university's New Academia Learning Innovation program.

*Keywords:* Job creation, new academia, project base learning, entrepreneurship

### **INTRODUCTION**

In line with the aim to produce graduates who can contribute in achieving Malaysia's New Economic Model, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) needs to plan and execute the courses that can cultivate entrepreneurial thinking. The goal is to enable graduates to get different exposures and expertise and not just to get a degree. According to Zaini (2011), the students have to master the knowledge and skills including generating business model, capital accumulation, build networking, work culture, the establishment of downstream companies, copyright and professional membership (Zaini, 2011).

Many parties must work together to achieve the university's agenda of creating a student for future competitive workforce and with high employability. Consequently, institutions of higher learning must transform in response to environmental, scientific and socio-cultural pressure. (The aspect emphasizes is the diversion of educational methodologies due to space constraints, resources optimization and provide appropriate mode for Information Technology savvy generation. this statement seems not appropriate here) In addition, the university is expected to increase the student's employability skills and expand their potentials for the need of job market. UTM as a research university has took a positive action in academic and non-academic approach towards a comprehensive soft skills development by applying actual entrepreneurial program. This has led UTM to introduce a new entrepreneurship program called JOB CREATION.

### **DEFINITION**

Job Creation was established by the university for students who are interested in business and entrepreneurship. The Job Creation program consists of two different courses in the university curricular course and general university course. Job Creation allowing students to exercise their true entrepreneurial practices start from the establishment of a company, and completed the project acquired through a tender method provided by UTM. Through this course, students individually or in groups will be actively involved in planning, managing and implementing the actual project bids obtained in UTM.

### **OBJECTIVE**

The Job Creation main aim is to expose the students to actual experience in the field of entrepreneurship. It has six purposes.

- Unleashing Malaysia's New Economic Model in higher education.
- Helps create more entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial thinking and techno-preneurship.
- Transforming the employability mentality of the students.

- Establish a downstream companies that can contribute to the continuation of the Research University status through patents and copyrights.
- Diversifying the knowledge and students' skills.
- Train the students through real-life experience in entrepreneurship.

#### COURSE STRUCTURE

Job Creation consists of 2 courses as shown in Table 1 below

**Table 1:** Job Creation Courses

| Core / Cluster   | Course code | Course name                  |
|--|-------------|------------------------------|
| Entrepreneurship Core (Co curricular course)             | UKQU 2101   | Entrepreneurship Practice I  |
| Entrepreneurship sub-cluster (University General Course) | UKQU 2102   | Entrepreneurship Practice II |

Entrepreneurship Practice I (UKQU2101) is classified under co-curricular course with the value of 1 credit. While the Entrepreneurship Practice II (UKQU2102) is a 2 credit course grouped under the sub-clusters of Entrepreneurship in general university course.

#### Entrepreneurship Practise I (UKQU 2101)

Entrepreneurship Practice I is running as other extra-curricular courses under the control of Centre of General Courses and Co-curricular (CGCC). The student who is taking this course will be exposed to the basic entrepreneurship, business strategic planning, financial foundation, contract documents, bid (quotation and tender), and the establishment of the enterprise. Moreover, the students need to build up and register a company.

#### Entrepreneurship Practise I (UKQU 2101)

Entrepreneurship Practice II is offered for the students and their company members who have successfully won the tender or quotation bidding. The goal of this course is to help students manage their companies and acquired projects. Students will be exposed to a variety of knowledge and skill related to project management, planning, scheduling, human resources, and future plans for the sustain of their company. To help in starting the project, the company will be offered to apply a micro credit loan from UTM's Student Affair and Alumni Office (SAAO) up to RM5000.00 for each student.

#### TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES

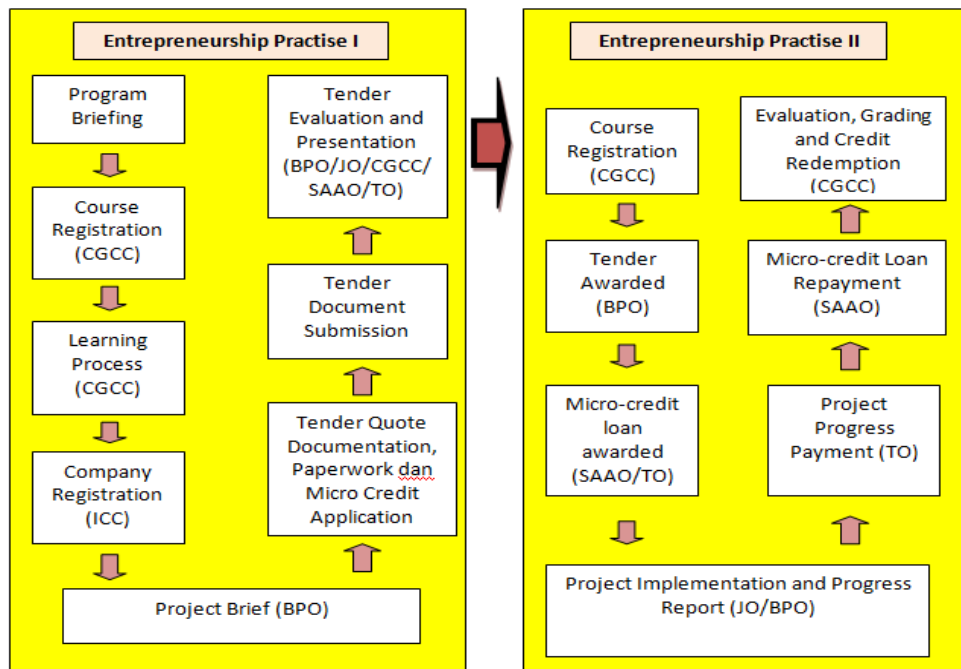
Job Creation is conducted using a mentoring system rather than the traditional method of teaching -oriented 'chalk and talk' that gives less impact on student learning. Therefore, it has been tuned to be more effective and appropriate to the students. The latest teaching methods need to be used to suit with a new generation students who want effective teaching technique suitable with adult learning approach especially at the university level. A variety of teaching and learning approaches will be used to improve the entrepreneurial skills of students through this course. Students will be actively involved in discussions and also face to face meeting with their mentor. In addition, students will go through the process of experiential learning process that is appropriate to the learning design of the course in the form of applications, internship or project.

Experiential learning theory is a learning process in which the development of the knowledge constructed through the transformation of experience ( Kolb and Baoatzis , 2000 ). The word itself is basically shows the learning means where success is determined by the involvement of individual in the learning session and experience. It was not merely happen through direct teaching and learning but also conducted through group work, observation, listening, learning about the theory or hypothesis and the transfer of knowledge and skills. This experiential learning is focussing on the internal aspects of individual development. The process of human development is to produce individual who is confident, gain self-satisfaction, personal strength, and enhance students' behavior. According to Oxendine , Robinson and Willson (2004 ) , Kolb's experiential learning theory is based on the cycle starts from the experience, critical reflection, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation which is parallel to the Job Creation mode of learning approaches. In Job Creation, students will acquire knowledge and skills through concrete experience or through abstract conceptual continuum of thought on the opposite or concrete. Concrete experience means students acquire information and knowledge as a result of which provide hands-on experience while conceptual abstract will give particular understanding of the concepts and principles (Rohaila , Norasmah and Faridah, 2005).

Further learning occurs when students through the process of reasoning in which critical reflection will occur during a brainstorming session or the process of problem solving. In addition, learning can also occur through active experimentation as doing yourself an activity or project, the result of critical reflection has been done. Experience-based learning method and perform active experimentation through projects undertaken will be practiced in this Job Creation courses. Generally, these courses do not involve formal weekly meetings as other academic courses. However, students who are involved with the Job Creation from time to time will be called upon to participate in training programs, short training, and seminars related to the program. Experienced experts such as qualified professors, entrepreneurs and accountants will be engaged to give lectures, training and motivation courses depending to their respective areas of expertise. Students are given a new learning environment that are more enjoyable as professional entrepreneurs courses. Through these activities, students are exposed to a variety of skills, particularly to manage the acquired companies and projects. In addition, students also have the opportunity to gain a wealth of knowledge and skills related to the management, planning, scheduling, human resources controlling, and plans for the sustain of the company.

### JOB CREATION FLOW CHART

Figure 1 shows the flow chart of the process involved in the overall implementation of Job Creation program.



**Figure 1:** Job Creation Process Flowchart

Figure 1 shows that the Entrepreneurship Practise I will start from the briefing to the students regarding the Job Creation program by Centre of General Courses and Co-curricular (CGCC). The students can register for the program and register for this co-curricular course at CGCC. Students will follow all the programs arranged, including academic programs, company registration, preparing the tender documents, evaluation papers and presentations for bidding projects.

Students will fill out a written quotation and provide the necessary paperwork to be submitted before the closing date. Students will be invited to present papers quote for evaluation purposes. This session will be attended by responsible officers from Building Property Office (BPO), Student Affair and Alumnus Office (SAAO), Bursar Office (BO), Internationalisation and Commercialisation Office, Job Owner (faculty or centre) (JO) and Centre for General Courses and Co-curricular to evaluate the company's ability in handling the project, assessing the repayment capability of micro-credit, the credibility of the students and staff of the company.

Companies that have the potential will be awarded an offer letter of the quotation. An official submission process for award letter and documentation will be held by the BPO. This process will also be used by the SAAO and BO for the application of micro-credit loans.

Students who obtain a tender project will be asked to register the course Entrepreneurship Practice II (UKQU2102) at CGCC. Students through their company will handle the project awarded and proceed the project progress report to the JO and BPO. In addition, CGCC will schedule the academic programs to improve the students' ability in managing the company.

Lastly, the complete projects will be submitted to the BPO for evaluation. BPO will report to the BO for clearing the project payment. The students will be asked to settle their micro-credit loans to SAAO. Meanwhile, CGCC will manage the assessment aspect and course grading. Assessment and grading will be done on credit redeemable for certain cases if past over the semester course registration. In summary, the Job Creation responsibility office function flowchart can be found in Figure 2.

## PROJECT

List of quotes projects will be coordinated by BPO. The JO will propose a list of the actual projects in the quotation bid, including the synopsis of the project, the purpose of the project and the project cost to the BPO for evaluation process and to prepare the tender document. Most of the projects will be estimated to a value of RM30,000. The projects that are listed for bidding should take into account in various aspects such as the level of difficulty, copyright and intellectual contribution to the intellectual property of the universities.

## CONCLUSION

Job Creation aims to provide exposure and actual experience to students through the concept of student-centered learning. Thus, the concept that will be emphasized in Job Creation courses is through active learning method that provides a real experience (experiential-based learning) and an emphasis on a variety of soft skills and entrepreneurship. The concept of adult learning (Knowles, 1990) allows students actively engaged in learning activities such as performing self-review process, case studies, action research and preparing the project proposal paperwork. This activity will trigger towards improving the soft skills of students in critical thinking, problem solving and teamwork skills.

Job Creation is an entrepreneurship shaping program for UTM student to practise and managing a actual quote tender project. By having Job Creation experience, the student will be exposed to a real company management, project handling, progress reporting and project submitting as a real contractor. Therefore, it was a challenge to UTM students to take this opportunity to build up their entrepreneurial skill and other generic skills such as problem solving, communication skills and etc. An actual exposure in this type of entrepreneurship course given in Job Creation will be beneficial to the students and difficult to find at any other university. Rather than that, the mode of problem base learning, scenario base learning and mentoring system used in this program will make the process more realistic and helpful in giving a new learning experience to the students.

In addition, students will be exposed to entrepreneurial practices such as communication skills and teamwork through brainstorming activities (brainstorming), the presentation and implementation of quotations or tenders. Various other skills were applied in practice when implementing projects such as leadership skills, negotiation skills, project management skills, management companies, managing human resources and financial management of the company. All these skills are integrated through Job Creation program that will provide a great benefit to students in improving confidence in their potential to produce more innovative entrepreneurs and global in nature, inline with the UTM's tagline "Innovative, Entrepreneurial, Global".

## REFERENCES

- Azlan Abdul Latib, Ahmad Ariffian Bujang and Yusri Kamin (2013). *Job Creation*. Zaini Ujang, Rose Alinda and Baharuddin (EDs.) *Akademia Baru Inovasi Pembelajaran*. Johor Bahru : Penerbit UTM Press.
- Kelly, C. (1997). *David Kolb, The Theory of Experiential Learning and ESL*. The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. III, No. 9, September 1997. Retrieved <2/10/2012>, from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Kelly-Experiential/>
- Knowles, M. (1990). *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Houston, Texas: Gulf.
- Kolb, D.A. dan Baotzis, R.E. (2000). *Experiential Learning Theory: Previous Research and New Directions*. R.J. Sternberg dan L.F. Zhang (EDs.), *Pespectives on Cognitive, Learning, and Thinking Styles*. NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Oxendine, C., Robinson, J. dan Willson, G. (2004). *Experiential Learning*. In M. Orey (Ed.), *Emerging perspectives on Learning, Teaching and Technology*. Retrieved <2/10/2012>, from <http://projects.coe.uga.edu/epllt/>
- Rohaila Yusof, Norasmah Othman dan Faridah Karim (2005). Strategi Pembelajaran Pengalaman Berasaskan Model Kolb dalam Pendidikan Perakaunan. *Jurnal Pendidikan*. (Vol. 30). 113-128