Horses for courses – are researchers just not that enterprising

Presented by

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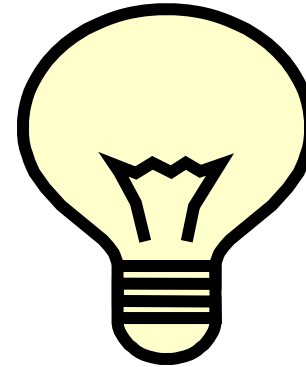Researcher Professional Development

Think Ahead

Background

Low researchers engagement

Research ideas not been explored

Enterprise training is optional

SOLUTION

Develop enterprise
skills while exploring a research
idea
- Idea of a PhD student, Pratik Desai,
during the poster display at
conference he organised - USES

The Socially Enterprising Researcher

Can apply for £500 - £750 of funding:

- include a researcher
- be based on a research area.
- include working with a community partner.
- a project manager must be identified
- one members of the project team to take part in a briefing/training
- ideally completed in six months
- risk assessment to be carried out
- NOT for buying capital equipment

- Involve a community partner so it includes **public engagement**

- Need to bid for funding so develops **application writing** skills and builds a **track record**

- Data collection can be used for **further funding applications**

- Can build a useful **network** by involving other collaborators

- Can be used as an example of **project management** – finance, communication etc

BENEFITS ATTRACTIVE TO RESEARCHERS

Research carried out alongside the project:
perceptions and attitudes of researchers to
- enterprise skills training
- commercialisation of research

Theoretical Framework

- Whilst holding a Critical Realist ontology we would seek to contribute to "the development of an approach to social theory that combines elements of realism and social constructionism" (Elder-Vass 2010 p145)

- We would also concur with Deleuze and Guattari (2013) that knowledge is created in a rhizomatic nature that cuts across structures in trajectories of flight.

- We suggest that the journey of the PhD student could also be related to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of nomadic oppositional use of space. (2013 p474)

Methodology

We are carrying out a mixed methods study:

- We used a questionnaire to confirm our research areas of interest.
- We will be further exploring the results by a series of semi structured interviews
- We will be conducting additional conversational interviews to explore participants views of research skills and whether participating in the projects has improved these skills

We believe that working with participants will help inform our development programme for the future.

Cohen et al (2007) list the strengths and weaknesses of the two types of interviews in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007 6th Edition) *Research Methods in Education*, London, Routledge Farmer

Research DATA collected covered:

- What skills they would find valuable?
- How they would like to learn?
- How should we promote learning opportunities?
- Did they think their research had commercial potential?
- Would they be interested in £500 of funding to try out an idea?
- How much encouragement is there to consider commercialisation?

Summary of ONLINE SURVEY

Introduction to survey:

Successful people usually possess what we call 'enterprise skills', however researchers often think this is about setting up a business, but in fact these are life skills that can help you in whatever career you decide to follow.

Was sent to all research staff and students - 134 responded

Which 'enterprise skills' do you think are important for research staff and students (scored over 75%)

collaboration skills   84.3%
creative and innovative thinking   80.6%
networking skills   79.9%
problem solving   81.3%
project management skills   78.4%
time management   84.3%
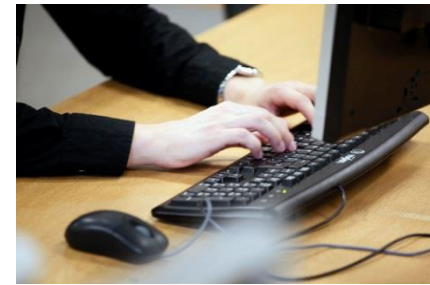
Is it important for researchers to know how to commercialise their research?
Yes   65.7%
No   34.3%

Do you see a commercial application for your current research?
Yes   49.3%
No   50.7%

Does the University encourage the development of enterprise skills?
Yes   36.6%
No   5.2%
Not sure 58.2%

Does the university encourage the commercialisation of your research?
Yes   19   14.2%
No   37   27.6%
Not sure 78   58.2%

How would you prefer to learn 'enterprise skills'

Competitions	17.9%
Guest speakers sharing their success stories	50.7%
Interactive workshops	73.1%
Online courses	44%
Taught sessions on individual skills	61.2%
Visiting newly formed business set up by young people	36.6%

What currently prevents you from taking part in Enterprise Skills sessions?
Lack of time
Do not think they are relevant
Don't know about them
Lack of support from supervisor /peers

Would you be interested in a programme that provided up to £500 to develop your research idea by trying it out by either:

Developing a prototype	44.1%
Trying out an idea with a community group	68.6%

Is it important for researchers to know how to commercialise their research?

impact on wider society doesn't necessarily mean commerce

May potentially bring more funding opportunities if research is successful

This increases the likelihood of translating research into a product or application which benefits people

Research cannot be dependent on whether it can be 'sold' or not to the public; research is about furthering knowledge

Is necessary to put in the real world and solve real problem

I really don't think it's appropriate to commercialise all research.

OUTCOMES

"I expect you all to be independent, innovative, critical thinkers who will do exactly as I say!"

- Projects are still ongoing
- Data collection and evaluation is still taking place
- Data collected supports continuing the project next year
- Initial findings suggest that an experiential learning process following the concept of andragogy as defined by Knowles (2015) is a useful model and that the projects have many inter-related benefits for participants.

Ideas are the future

"The real source of wealth and capital in this new era is not material things it is:

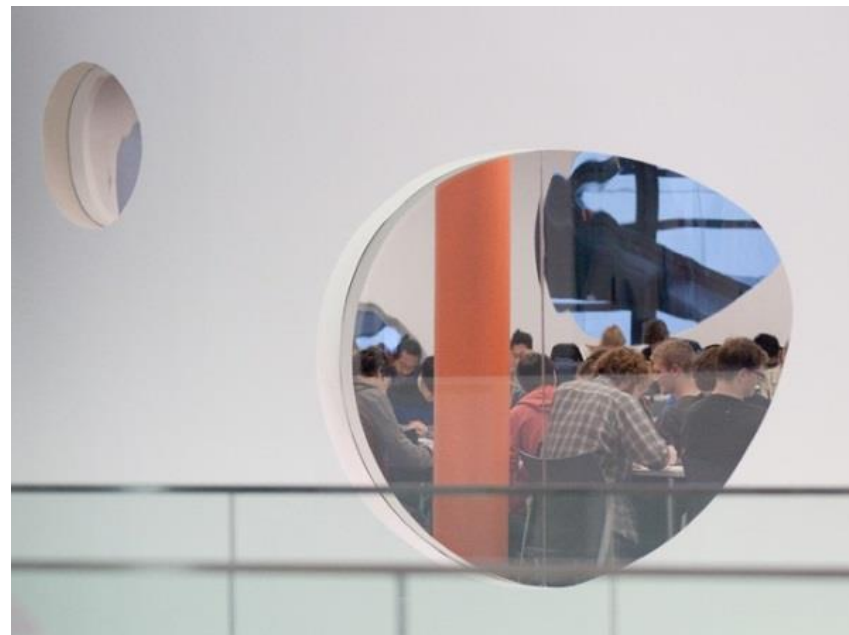-the human mind

-the human spirit

-the human imagination

and our faith in the future"

Steve Forbes (1999) The New Birth of Freedom: Vision for America

Researchers

- Eunice Lawton
- Pratik Desai
- Anita Kenny

Thank you for listening, any questions?