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Is cafeteria learning enabling graduates to build entrepreneurial skills?

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Think of a cafeteria where you are served what you want. Similarly, think of a college curriculum like a 'cafeteria' where students are leaving with a 'balanced meal'. In order to homogenize the learning experience of the students, we often limit the learning through reliance on a limited number of pedagogies.

Imagine a student who is determined to become an entrepreneur. The key quality that he or she may

need to acquire is the flexibility through which an idea is approached. A successful entrepreneur is made of creativity, innovative thinking and problem-solving ability. The traditional form of learning limits the students to only limited subjects without giving much importance to the individuality and uniqueness of the new era of eager minds.

Cafeteria learning engages the students throughout the process and does not limit them to books, subjects or notes. It lets students explore their interests by enabling them to choose across specializations and create a basket of their own desired subjects that may help them to build selected skills for their career path. When it comes to pedagogy, a diversity of approaches is the best way to serve our students. Experiential learning such as cafeteria learning builds and augments entrepreneurial skills in students. Becoming comfortable with different ways of learning prepares students for the multitude of ways they will learn throughout their lives and careers.

An entrepreneur does not necessarily have to be someone who creates a startup or starts their own business. It is someone who has the right attitude to build something new and innovate.

Learning is generally considered to be a social activity which allows students to work together, share experience and build knowledge as a group. Just like in a real-life cafeteria, some may want to sample the courses that were not their own choice to get an idea if it's something they will like in the future. The key to this approach is flexibility within a set curriculum. There has to be a clear set of rules so the students are well aware of what the course offers and how they can combine it as per their interests to complete the course.

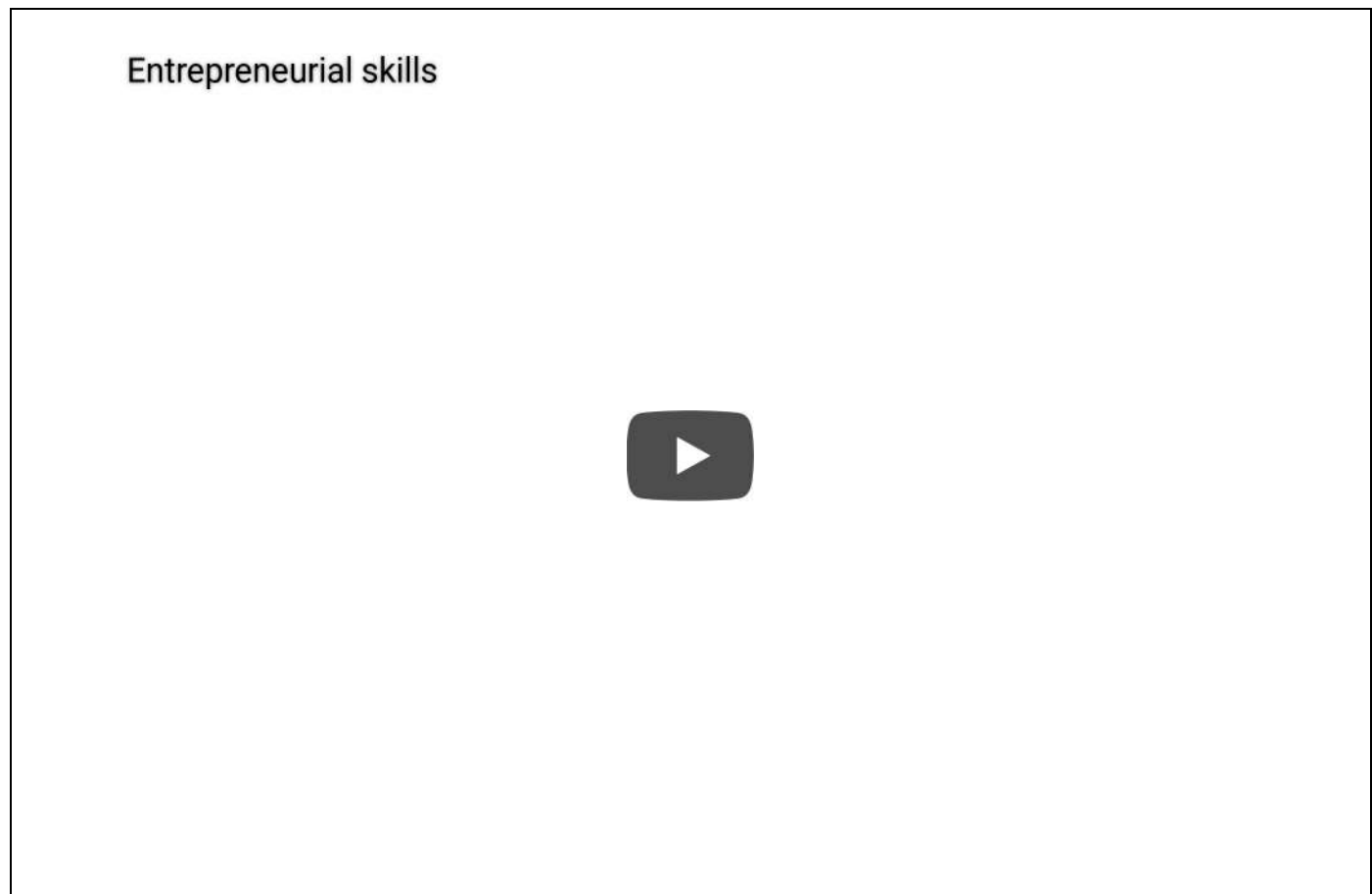
In order to understand how the cafeteria learning approach is influential to management students, let's probe in deeper. Let's take an example of an exquisite dining experience with a three-course meal. You begin with an appetizer (engaging), move on to the main course (performing the activities), and finish with dessert (reflect and debrief). The engaging activities enable the students to think about the content they will be studying and prepares the students to expect what they are about to learn. Students are geared up to adapt to what activities they are going to engage in order to obtain knowledge. The traditional learning curriculum involves students coming to the class, attending lectures, and preparing notes. Instead of this, what if students are prepared to experience the knowledge sessions in the form of an activity where the experience itself is exploratory and engaging.

It is not only important for students who aspire to become entrepreneurs to imbibe these new techniques of learning and designs to hone their skill sets and stand out of the crowd but also for management students who need to ideate, analyse and react to a problem statement. This is why institutes offering BBA as an undergraduate program have also started introducing such learning models in their curriculum in order to enable students to engage, brainstorm and work in teams in order to understand the importance of meaningful curriculum design. The liberty to choose subjects

from a basket of different stream specializations will enable their overall growth and development. Students can now learn environment management along with entrepreneurship. That is how the cafeteria approach will help students to grow holistically.

What entrepreneur skills you require to amplify your products or service?

Rachel Stockey, Head of entrepreneur skills, King's College London explains:



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