

SWANSEA INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Professional Practice for Artists and Designers and Marketing and Self

University	Swansea Institute of Higher Education (University of Wales)
Course Title	BA (Hons) Graphic Design and BA (Hons) General Illustration
Module Title	Module 1 Professional Studies for Artists and Designers Module 2 Marketing and Self Promotion
Course Deliverers	Faculty of Art and Design School of Visual Communication
Partners	Business Professionals and Alumni
Commencement of course	1995
Qualification	Module credits (12 CAT points per module)
Course Leader(s)	David LaGrange Duncan McClaren
Module Business and Enterprise Leaders	Andy Penaluna (Senior Lecturer) Kathryn Penaluna (Associate Lecturer)

Promotion

INTRODUCTION

One example that reflects measured success with evidence of change into the delivery of Creative Enterprise Education can be found at Swansea Institute of Higher Education. This case study discusses the research, which underpinned the content delivery of two modules developed by Dr Andy Penaluna and his wife Kathryn. The entrepreneurial learning environment is enhanced by alumni input and is offered to illustration and graphics students within the School of Visual Communication.

The Professional Practice for Artists and Designers and Marketing and Self Promotion modules were developed through research and reveal methods of strong relevance to the Creative Industries. External examiners have applauded the module and reported it to be, “**industrially relevant to the fast changing design industry and a model of good practice**” and declared Swansea as “**clearly well equipped to enter the competitive world of design with confidence... many have already engaged real clients**”¹ The Faculty has also received a rating of ‘Excellent’ in the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales subject reviews (Wales QAA / HEFC equivalent - these measure the extent to which aims and objectives are met at subject level).

¹ edExcel external verifier Michael Caddis, and BA (Hons) external examiner Neil Breedon (June 2005) were unanimous in their comments. Note that both HND awards and BA awards are available through these programmes; hence two external assessors are appointed.

BACKGROUND

Economic Development

According to research, Wales was reported to be at least 30% behind the average for the UK for new business generation in terms of economic development.² This fact showed a need to develop a stimulating climate for the development of new enterprise and highlights the fact that entrepreneurship education is of key importance to the area.

The management team within the Faculty of Art and Design aimed to attempt to consider and redress the UK/Wales balance through a process of research and continuing development of entrepreneurial programmes which would aim not only to improve their students creative business acumen but also consider: -

'How best to equip individuals with the pre-requisite skills that will enable them to exploit the commercial potential of their ideas and concepts.'³

Micro Case Study Research

Since 1987 the college has taught business skills to design students, although the subject was not well favoured amongst many students. The two modules within this case study are in effect the updated business studies course, which have been transformed to have more relevance to the real commercial world for illustrators and designers through the research activities of Andy Penaluna Senior lecturer and his wife, Kathryn, an Associate Lecturer for the School. Their joint academic research into developing enterprise curriculum for art and designers was instrumental in developing a micro case study, developed to review a range of modified teaching strategies that were introduced to the second year within two core modules '**Professional Studies**' and '**Marketing and Self-Promotion**'.

Since 1998 the School has pro-actively sought advice from alumni students whose responses have not only informed the curriculum but become the basis of the marketing module. For the past three years analysis of questions completed by the student cohort during and at the end of the module (x184 students) and has provided opportunity to evaluate teaching methods and content.

Last year at the International Conference for Entrepreneurship IntEnt 2005⁴, where much debate was undertaken about the realignment and restructuring of enterprise education for the Creative Sector and as a whole, the Penalunas jointly presented their key findings in a paper 'Entrepreneurship for Artists and Designers in Higher Education'. Their work strongly represented the design discipline student and indicated the constructive influences that successful recent graduates can have upon the current student to change their perception and to bring closer to them the realities of the future. The opportunity to identify and liaise with role models that entered the professional arena with the same education opportunities afforded to them has had a significant motivational impact.

² Entrepreneurship Action Plan for Wales, March 2000, p5. Cited in Penaluna, A and Penaluna K 'Entrepreneurship for Artists and Designers in Higher Education' p3. IntEnt 2005 Conference Paper (as yet unpublished).

³ Penaluna, A and Penaluna K, Entrepreneurship for Artists and Designers in Higher Education, p3. IntEnt 2005 Conference Paper (as yet unpublished)

⁴ IntEnt 2005 Conference School of Management, University of Surrey.

Summary of Research Findings

Their summing up lists four key areas which are of importance when considering the motivational approach of delivering curriculum approach to students who, for the most part, show a considerable disinterest in business modules within a design led course:

1. *Students respond well to, and can better relate with, successful graduates from their own programmes of study.*
2. *The higher visibility tactic when informing the curriculum with direct experiences of alumni enhances student motivation.*
3. *These strategies generate confidence within individuals and better facilitate entrepreneurial-type approached (in conjunction with other course work).*
4. *Team work value is enhanced when the full programme team is seen to proactively engage with a broader team of professionals when designing the overall learning environment.*⁵

The research over five years shows an impact on grades achieved. Findings also indicate a correlation between high achievement in the module and successful outcomes in terms of entrepreneurial activity.

KEY DEVELOPMENT TRIGGERS

The research, which focused mainly on graphics and illustration students, showed a strong resistance to business lectures, which the students found to be a **'divorced subject, difficult to integrate with other elements'**.⁶

Andy Penaluna is a practicing design consultant to small businesses and consultant editor to the German-based magazine ARTSCENE INTERNATIONAL, enabling him to keep up to date with current commercial trends across the arts world. Andy as an illustrator and graphic designer, and Kath, who was formerly a bank manager with responsibilities that included a substantial volume of monetary loans to SMEs and self employed individuals, understands at first hand the difficulties experienced in self-employment within the sector. Their strong complimentary professional backgrounds, together with their left and right brain partnership, seemed to be a positive dual sided support system for a successful approach to understanding business development. During their own career each learnt from, and listened to each other, often acting as each other's mentors. They have worked together to help structure an approach to cultivating a realistic and action orientated enterprise module, supported by other professionals, which is now firmly embedded into the curriculum delivery at Swansea.

In many Art and Design schools, entrepreneurial teaching is often delivered as a bolt on elective type 'enterprise' or 'contextual studies' module, historically delivered in a 'lecture' transmission style of approach, where business activity is considered within an academic business framework. Student enterprise aptitudes are, accordingly, calculated through their ability to produce a business plan or discuss relevant theoretical frameworks. Swansea were keen to alter the route of the traditional tack of entrepreneurial theory and strategic business planning to encourage students to be able to relate better to understanding basic real life practices in their chosen fields including working in teams, how to translate and deliver a design brief to budget and time constraints, how to interact with clients, and how to promote themselves and market their work as part of their commercial future.

⁵ Penaluna, A and Penaluna K, 'Entrepreneurship for Artists and Designers in Higher Education'. IntEnt 2005 Conference paper (as yet unpublished).

⁶ Op cit p4

Initiated in 1987 as a means by which students could respond to work opportunities, the main triggers in the development of two distinct modules in 1995 was to enable further student development. A positive change of attitude was clearly identified within research undertaken. This research revolved around the continuous collection of comments from alumni since they had transferred to the commercial world.

Further to the research findings, the key focus of change was the introduction of material assimilated from the experiences of ex-students within the programme including:

- Case study analysis
- Role models
- Informal consultancies
- Formal presentations
- Active involvement in the assessment process

The new courses were built with what Penaluna classifies as **'an enabling strategy'** and are based on quantifiable research into both the needs of industry and the motivations and characteristics of the students, thus considering the entrepreneurial personality of the artist and designer so as to derive best practice when designing pedagogical approaches. These have met with considerable success with the students. Strongly supported and assisted by alumni students who are now engaging in practice, their intention was to **"to develop entrepreneurship for entrepreneurship as opposed to purely development of business skills"**.⁷

The supporting methodology is where 'creatives' mentor both the students and the business educator. He proposes that these pedagogies could enhance entrepreneurship development both within and beyond the creative industries. It highlights the challenges of 'capability' issues and suggests that 'entrepreneurial education' demands 'entrepreneurial educators'.⁸

"Working on the premise that entrepreneurial capacity is reliant upon two major factors - an appropriate skills base and the motivation to start or creatively influence a business, it is all too easy to think that the skills elements are primarily business related. In the creative industries this is far from true as design is, by definition, reliant upon a broad range of restricting factors and specific objectives".⁹

Also central to the evolution of the business modules were students' characteristics.

"The pedagogic approach that can equip such cohorts with entrepreneurship and business skills can be enhanced by strategies that recognize and develop personality characteristics that are normally inherent in these students and, coincidentally, are frequently evidenced in successful entrepreneurial initiatives."¹⁰

Penaluna points out that the admissions process to Higher Education is via a specific route such as a portfolio of artistic work, or supported by essays and academic achievements and not based on their enterprising spirit or capability. He claims that lecturers can often spot or recognise

⁷ Op cit p2

⁸ Penaluna, A and Penaluna K. Paper abstract for Int Ent 2006, Business Paradigms in 'Einstellung': A Creative Industries Perspective on Enhancing Entrepreneurship Education.

⁹ Penaluna, A and Penaluna K. Paper abstract for Int Ent 2006, Stepping Back to Go Forward: Alumni in Reflexive Design-Curriculum Development

¹⁰ Penaluna, A and Penaluna K, 'Entrepreneurship for Artists and Designers in Higher Education' p2. IntEnt 2005 Conference paper (as yet unpublished).

entrepreneurial characteristics and seek to develop them, and that entrepreneurial personalities are both distinguishable and common with entrepreneurial traits. Entrepreneurial 'features' ¹¹ inherent within creative prospective students are suggested to be:

- Conceptual ability
- Creative and innovative desire
- Preference for some degree of personal autonomy and recognition

Research undertaken into first year student personality traits highlighted strong conceptual ability, but also non-conformists with a dislike for rules and regulations. They often just wanted to get by using their skills and were more interested in survival at University rather than in future commercial and material matters. Whilst they were creative and innovative towards their approach in design and had a desire to be independent and work for themselves whilst at University, their views on business content in their courses was initially of disinterest with them. Quoting one student, who quite categorically told his course leader:

'I didn't come here to learn about business I want to draw and paint'.
*Student quote (2001)*¹²

For students, in their sheltered and somewhat cosy University design studios and desks, the real world seems a distant place. It is difficult to administer commercial rules and speed within traditional academic delivery strategies, yet experience indicates that the environment in which they are asked to perform can influence students' output and opinion. Penaluna cites Henry (2001) from Creative Management:

'What dictates their behaviour is not rigid inner structure but the demands of the interaction between them and the domain in which they are working.'¹³

Subsequent follow-through interviews with Alumni showed a strong change of attitude following the transfer to the real world of commerce. Those who were initially not very keen on business as a subject could see the value in hindsight, as is reflected by the following sample of comments collected from ex-students. Notably, these and other comments are now incorporated into the lecture elements of the programme:

'I have a copyright problem – any chance of the notes – tell them from me only a fool would miss those lectures... why didn't you force me to listen?' ¹⁴ [Ex-student]

'Thanks for the continued help and support... my web site (designed as a part of the module at Swansea Institute) now receives over 55, 000 hits per month. I am now hoping to develop the content into an interactive CD ROM. Without my experience on the course none of this would have happened, not bad when you consider that I studied painting and drawing eh?' [Nigel Williams Artist / Editor Welsh Arts Archive]

'What can I say about work? The biggest thing I've noticed is the timescale for projects, there's not enough time. Deadlines can range from a couple of days to

¹¹ Op cit p2

¹² Op cit p2.

¹³ Henry J (ed) (2001) Creative Management: Sage

¹⁴ Information supplied from research from Andy Penaluna

half an hour. I don't often get time to mock up ideas, I design as I go'. [Stuart Palmer – Manchester United Interactive]

'My first tip to you all is don't forget to complete all your tasks for this module including the timesheet!! I know of at least one person who failed and didn't get their degree because a timesheet was missing. If I was back in college now my advice would be... don't leave it until next week, do the work week by week, it is more important than you think!

College work is a piece of p, you have so much time, prepare to be shocked when you get a job! For example me and my colleague had to produce a 25 page proposal in 5 hours a few weeks back'. [Simon James – Swansea College Web Designer]**

'Nothing can prepare you for industry, it travels at a completely different pace and if you think commitment and determination finish in the third year you are sorely wrong. Don't get me wrong... really enjoying the experience but it's bloody hard!' [Anne Scourfield – Blacksheep / Hello Advertising]



Neil (Nibby) Williams and Charlene Hickey with their Greetings Card and Certificates from Abbey Business 2004.
(Now trading as 'To You Design')

LEARNING METHODOLOGIES

Swansea's solution was to highlight best practice by pulling back successful students to tell 'the fresher' the importance of commercial understanding. They have subsequently integrated alumni students as case studies, consultants, speakers and assessors. Information and knowledge that comes from people to whom they relate with and have resonance other than the lecturers has proved highly motivational and successful as a methodology. It is inspiring for students to engage with their peers who are only a few steps ahead of them and this, once again, supports the strength of peer-to-peer learning.

"An aspect of our way of working with alumni that we are currently exploring is the value of the informal support we give to graduates when liaising with them to

develop the curriculum. Just like measuring entrepreneurship though - it is difficult to provide a body of evidence - as it is predominantly anecdotal.¹⁵

Their strategy enables what is described as an 'osmosis' of the enterprise and business related activities into the rest of the curriculum. Alumni expertise is used as a specific resource; as they not only enable reflexive responses through their direct experiences, but their comments become an integral part of the delivery. Within this approach it has been noted that the broader staff team have significant personal expertise and experience that is integrated into the study programme - with most staff being practitioners in their own right.

COURSE CONTENT

The 'Professional Studies for Artists and Designers and Marketing' (module 1) is a mandatory module on the Graphic Design and Illustration degree course. 'Marketing and Self Promotion' (module 2) is offered as an elective, though in the past 5 years only 5 students have opted to undertake an alternative; some of these switching the moment they had feedback from their colleagues who attended the introductory lecture. The primary purpose of these courses is to allow students to develop business acumen and to facilitate a more hands-on feel for enterprise related activities midway through the three-year programme.

Timing is deliberate, with Module 1 at the beginning of year 2 and Module 2 at the end of year 3 when student motivation and responsiveness are at their highest. The first year that art and design students attend a college course they are not receptive to business considerations and simply want to unleash their creativity and engage with creative exploration. In order to do so, any connection to business is maybe best avoided and kept to the minimum whilst they focus on their creative discipline. Historically, a large majority of business courses for art and design students have only been offered in their third year as a precursor to them preparing for industry. This course introduces the subject at the beginning of the second year - encouraging students to consider commercial aspects of their creative talents and to think about business from this stage onwards.

The modules are run in conjunction with other specialist studies that deliberately integrate some of these practices.

MODULE 1: - THE PROFESSIONAL STUDIES FOR ARTISTS AND DESIGNERS

This course introduces the students to ideas generation in the context of developing a business proposal. Students choose whom they are going to work with and teams consisting of 2-4 students create a business plan. There are no rules to the business development of an idea; the teams have to come up with a plan and are encouraged to use bank pro-formas as a guide, then make them more innovative and creative to match their business concept.

The task determines organisation decisions (as opposed to rules and regulations) with team working seen to operate in the fullest sense as it does within the graphics industry and seems to be high on the list for many art and design sectors. Team changes are permitted and recruitment and redundancy issues discussed.

¹⁵ From notes made following discussion with Andy Penaluna, 3 April 2006.

'Glorious failures' are rewarded for innovation – changes and adaptations are encouraged, as they are one of the underlying keys to successful entrepreneurship.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Develop a business plan or a project proposal for an external funding agency which reflects the student's professional ambitions as an artist or designer, with an awareness of enterprise skills i.e. marketing and finance.
2. Demonstrate an awareness of the contemporary professional context and business related issues – in order to operate professionally in that field.
3. Demonstrate team skills – planning, decision making, communication and presentation.

COURSE CONTENT

- Costing and estimating (including tax issues)
- Time management
- Intellectual Property Rights
- Premises and location
- Types of business and trading
- Cash-flows
- Business plan preparation and presentation
- Briefing strategies

All the above require reflexive responses to specific business ideas, as requested by alumni e.g. trends and forecasts.

ASSESSMENT

A business plan remains the primary submission method supported by a formal business presentation by each 'business team' of students to their peers who have to come up with the assessment evaluation. Assessment is based on the presentation of a team business plan to other participants. Assessors include alumni and external specialists i.e. graduate to enterprise representatives.



Elements of Business Plan from 2001 (i.e. graduated in 2002).

One of the most successful groups
Man Utd Web Designer, Head of Toy Design for
Tigerprint (M&S) and Senior Creative for SDC
Advertising (European contracts with blue chip
companies).

MODULE 2: MARKETING AND SELF PROMOTION

Marketing and Self Promotion is a third year module which focuses more on the evidence of soft skills such as selling, networking and presentation skills. These develop the students' ability to explore a range of approaches when seeking employment. This module consolidates the learning

from Module 1 whilst covering personal and portfolio development. As stated by Claire Guyton, an Account manager at advertising agency Saatchi and Saatchi during a dummy interview session with students at Swansea, “**You probably know more about your portfolio than you do about yourselves**”.¹⁶ Other needs, such as those defined by alumni professionals are addressed e.g. briefing abilities and interview strategies, dealing with clients and understanding the networks behind businesses and organisations. Students develop logo design and branding material for themselves as this concentrates their ideas and steers them in a business direction.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. *Knowledge of organisations and procedures pertinent to the profession.*
2. *Ability to market work and evaluate its worth.*
3. *Ability to plan, conceptualise and design an integrated promotional package.*
4. *Ability to present themselves and their work in a professional manner.*

COURSE CONTENTS

- *Hidden opportunities*
- *Networking strategies and contacts in the industry*
- *Branding and identity issues*
- *Interpersonal skills*
- *Portfolio design*
- *Presentation techniques*
- *CV types and uses*
- *Job pyramids and mapping your abilities*

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is based on student's process shown through the production of a personal diary, professionally presented for peer and professional review. The recording of the processes experienced, when presented in a professionally designed way, has had the added bonus of impressing potential clients and employers, as well as an 'aide de memoire'. This 'document' is often referred to in glowing terms by alumni and described by many as 'their personal bible'. Accompanying this is a portfolio of work, appropriately prepared with supporting materials such as costs and schedules/planning. Professionals and alumni conduct dummy interviews and briefings.

INDUSTRY PLACEMENT AND LIVE PROJECT WORK

In the last semester of their third year students have to provide at least one creative solution to an external live brief and to produce it as in a commercial setting. These are totally client driven and assessed by external practitioners and alumni. Evidence is sought that students can work to the demands of a live brief and to engage in teamwork to produce it as in a commercial setting. They have involved placement for prestigious clients such as e.g. Tigerprint (Marks and Spencers) or working in studios, e.g. set artwork for ITV's forthcoming programme 'Losing IT'.

DIFFERENTIALS/SPECIAL FEATURES

- Alumni design students help to design the curriculum.

¹⁶ Claire Guyton, Saatchi and Saatchi, July 2002 – during a question and answer session that followed a series of dummy interviews with final year students of Graphic Design at Swansea – recorded on video.

- Best practice example of culturally 'giving back from' Alumni.
- Student characteristics and entrepreneurial personalities are distinguishable and can be nurtured.
- Strong emphasis on teamwork.
- Flexibility and reflexive responses to ever changing (externally driven) constraints.
- Business skills are provided by a business practitioner, but mentored by a creative specialist.
- The strategy enables adjustment of the pedagogical processes to suit the learners' profile.

LESSONS LEARNT

- Whilst literature and third stream business support advocates that designers listen to business people the opposite is also beneficial. It is appropriate for business educators and students to listen to creative practitioners and ex students to understand the learning curve process.
- The 'language of business' in textual format is deemed boring and uninspirational to the design student who is visually literate and anticipates a graphically sophisticated presentation of evidence for consideration. Visual slides and other interactive teaching materials are creatively designed. PowerPoint presentations are well received, as are interactive live speakers who engage with the students' questions thoughtfully. High visibility and participatory approaches are proven to successfully engage with the students and maintain their interest.
- One interesting consideration is the way in which creative students interact with information given to them. They consistently question the validity of statements and look for alternatives that may provide a quicker or more efficient alternative. The lecturer has to remain reflexive and be prepared to consider the alternative points of view before moving on. If there is a failure with a business student to understand the facts, the evidence suggests that the original view is simply reinforced - teaching methods would be to repeat the information in some way until they understood. A vital technique when teaching art and design students is to offer them the challenge of working out why they don't agree with, or are not interested in, a particular problem or situation. The techniques require the lecturer to engage them and to encourage them to embrace the challenges that are presented to them.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Creative courses and design led courses often lack project planning for industry projects. This is an important skill in the industry, and essential to those who wish to productively exploit their skills. To know how to manage a large project is imperative to the work undertaken by any sector professional that plans to engage with the challenges of creating a large team to work with. Developing a module on this subject as part of a modular MA programme is in the plans. Debate around the title of this module – possibly 'Design Management' is still ongoing, though feedback from alumni and other professionals suggest it to one worthy of serious consideration.

The recently published 'Cox Review of Creativity in Business'¹⁷ and DTI economics Paper No. 15 'Creativity, Design and Business'¹⁸ are offered as encouraging indicators that the approaches

¹⁷ Cox, G (2005), Cox Review of Creativity in Business: Building on the UK's Strengths. Commissioned by HM Treasury

¹⁸ Department of Trade and Industry, (November 2005), Economics Paper No. 15: Creativity, Design and Business Performance

developed in Swansea, and discussed in detail at IntEnt 2005, are worthy of further consideration.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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REFERENCES

Research Papers

Penaluna, A and Penaluna K, **Entrepreneurship for Artists and Designers in Higher Education** IntEnt 2005 Conference Paper

The Penaluna's research papers **Stepping Back to Go Forward: Alumni in Reflexive Design-Curriculum Development**¹⁹ and **Business Paradigms in 'Einstellung': A Creative Industries Perspective on Enhancing Entrepreneurship Education**,²⁰ continue to inform on best practice for lecturers and teachers in the Creative Industries. IntEnt 2006 Conference in Brazil.

¹⁹ Paper abstract entry for IntEnt Penaluna, A and Penaluna K 2006 'Stepping Back to Go Forward: Alumni in Reflexive Design-Curriculum Development'

²⁰ Paper abstract entry for IntEnt Penaluna, A and Penaluna K 2006 'Business Paradigms in 'Einstellung': A Creative Industries Perspective on Enhancing Entrepreneurship Education'