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# Who are we?

- The Institute for Enterprise is a Centre for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETL) funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The Institute is one of 72 such funded centres throughout the UK.
- The Institute for Enterprise seeks “*to make Leeds Met first choice for students seeking enterprise teaching and learning across the whole range of academic disciplines offered*”.



# Our paper title

A longitudinal approach to evaluating undergraduate students studying 'enterprise education' modules; pitfalls, problems and struggles



# Focus of our 'original' research

- Address the lack of evidence on policy priorities
- To look at the + / - affect and impact of enterprise education on the career aspirations, decisions and intentions of HE students
- To look at whether enterprise education affects self-efficacy
- And whether various levels of increased self-efficacy affect:
  - Entrepreneurial desires/intentions
  - Other career decisions – non enterprise related



# Research question

***“To explore the impact of enterprise modules in higher education on student’s own perceptions of their self-efficacy and their motivations towards particular career intentions”***

- Across all subject disciplines:
  - Business & Management
  - IT & Computing
  - Health
  - Arts
  - Sport



# Content

- Design & Methods
- Problems encountered
- The future



# Proposed Design

- 3 year longitudinal study – Oct 2007
- Tested & used research instrument (CMI)
- Generated quantitative data
- Each semester 07/08, 08/09 & 09/10
- 1 pre-test and 2 post-test completions – 3 times
- Incentivised scheme
- Rationale - Current research short-term
- Deepened by generating Qualitative data i.e. 1-1 student interviews (Not CMI objective)
- Triangulated with module learning outcomes & CMI project data



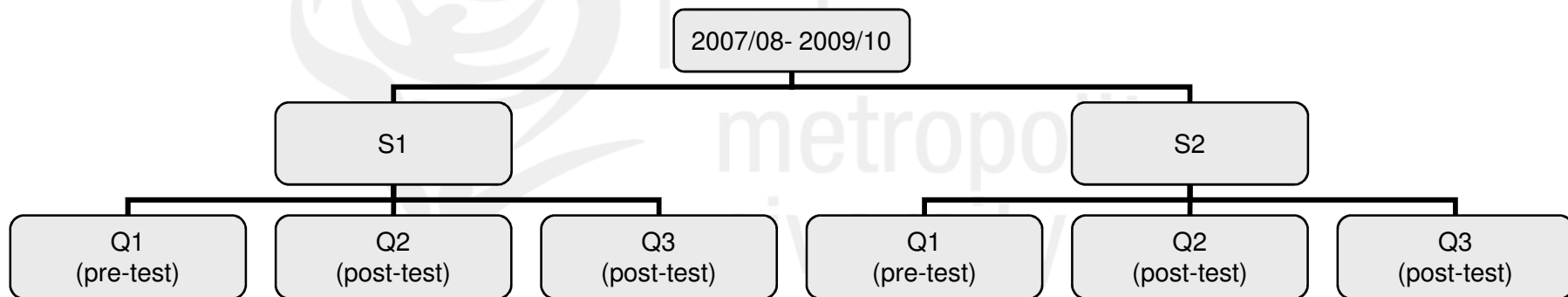
# Research instrument

- Designed by the Cambridge & MIT management institute.
- Questionnaire designed to generate 100% quantitative data.
- 3 completions per participant, per semester were necessary – start of module; end of module; point in time following end of module.
- Measured by the student rating their perceptions of themselves against the particular module they were studying.
- Questions were related to general & specific entrepreneurial aspects.





# Proposed data collection period



# 'Proposed' Data collection

This didn't happen!!!!  
We never really got out of the  
starting blocks!!!!!!



# So what happened?

What happened in year 1 – 07/08

- WAVE 1
  - S1 First year 07/08 – **lecture distribution**
    - n=200 in S1 – ***pre-test***
    - n=300 in S2 – ***pre-test***
- WAVE 2
  - S2 First year 07/08 – **online completion**
    - n=13 in S1 – ***post-test***
    - n=0 in S2 – ***post-test***



# Longitudinal research – Problems & struggles

- In the first year the method of data collection was changed from paper to online completion.
- This was a management decision heavily related to ‘budget constraints’.
- Online completion would save on inputting costs, reduce errors and be in-keeping with the ‘Gen-Xers & Millennials’ of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



# 'Gen-Xers & Millennials'



# What did we do?

- Lecture distribution at WAVE 1 (pre-test) – to prevent high attrition at WAVE 2
- WAVE 2 (1<sup>st</sup> post-test) produced very high attrition & non-response.
- Change in data collection method.
- ***THEREFORE***, decision whether to continue was key.
- Decision to change the design was inevitable. Radical thought was needed.
- Proceed with much smaller sample.



# New design

- Smaller sample was of no more than 30 students per year.
- Recruited via existing students i.e. those that had been responsive to the initial research.
- Recruited via Faculty contacts i.e. Enterprise Pioneers.



# New design - results

- Worked to some extent but not enough.
- Students were initially very interested.
- Concerns over sample size i.e. rigour.
- Natural bias relating to some specific subject disciplines.
- Some resistance from academics to the use of the questionnaire.





# Factors hindering research

- Questionnaire too long
- Questions too complex
- Questions too personal
- Privacy & confidentiality concerns
- Worry of third parties
- Respondent burden too high
- No perceived, interest or benefit
- Lack of incentive i.e. financial reward
- Nature of completion web or paper



# Concerns of the research

- Hindsight – lecture distribution may have indirectly ‘pressured’ students into completing – ethics observed & adhered to.
- Bias – high concentration in Business & Management & Sport disciplines.
- Changing the method of data collection may have been a key factor.



# The future!

- Research has ended. The decision not to continue was easy.
- There is no quantitative data that can be reported meaningfully in relation to the effects of enterprise education on self-efficacy or career intentions.
- Some very interesting qualitative data does exist on students perceptions of their enterprise modules.
- A spin-off survey addressing attrition has been carried out. Initial results are just in.
- Determining reasons for attrition & non-response to survey research via another survey!



# Our conclusions & observations

- Questionnaire is not suitable for HE where control of completions cannot be guaranteed.
- Undertaking of research in HE where student participation is required is highly problematic.
- Our research is showing initial results that questionnaire was too long & questions too complex.



# Thank you

## Any questions?

