Danish University Colleges

27 Hours a Day: A Dual Career Course

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Publication date:
2019

Document Version
Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (APA):

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Workshop organised by VIA Student Incubator, Denmark

**Workshop summary**

Target group: non-business students

In our Student Incubator, we offer entrepreneurship activities for students following educational programmes within health, teaching, pedagogy and social work. So far, we have seen students with specific ideas for start-ups join our Incubator courses.

However, we have also become aware that these students are very committed to their studies and, therefore, they find it difficult to engage in Incubator activities.

Our typical students are not educating themselves for a future as full-time entrepreneurs. They dream of careers as skilled educators, physiotherapists and nurses. And, alongside that dream, some of our students would like to carve out a career as a part-time entrepreneur and create projects of different value. This sometimes leads to conflict for the students in different ways: partly in relation to the curriculum and organisation of their respective educational programme, and partly in relation to the fact that their undergraduate educational programme will often encourage the students to prioritise that, while we, at the Student Incubator, would like to encourage them to combine both careers.

If the student is to experience having two parallel careers, they need to be able to identify with both their profession and see themselves as an entrepreneur at the same time. Therefore, visualisation as a method for the student to gain greater clarity of their own identity is part of the process.

We are interested in supporting the students in balancing both careers. Therefore, we have taken inspiration from elite sports talent development in Denmark. Inspired by Team Denmark’s focus on dual-career courses for talented elite athletes, we have developed a course called 27 Hours a Day. It is not Team Denmark’s talented mind-set/winner mentality that we are inspired by, but rather their framework for performance optimisation, whereby athletes are coached in topics, such as diet, sleep and time management.

The course accommodates the needs and interests of students who do not view Incubator activities as a free time activity but rather as an integral part of their studies.

The course offers the participating students the knowledge and tools for achieving the best possible everyday-life balance and avoiding burn out.
In the workshop, we will work with the following question: how do we motivate students to be more productive and achieve more without burning out? That is, how can we help the students to best balance the hours of the day available to them?

**Underpinning theories and models**

Students, who are involved in both their studies and the Student Incubator, are engaged in two different career paths simultaneously. Dual careers are described in research on creating activities for talented elite athletes as part of their education (EU, 2012), (Team Danmark, n.d.).

The student being able to identify themselves with two careers demands that the student can imagine both possible paths (Thrane anf Bak in: Greve & Kirketerp, 2011), (Schumpeter, 1934). Similarly, in the fields of sport and psychology, the importance of supporting the students’ sports ambitions as part of their life strategy is made clear (EU, 2012). Living out a dual career with both possible paths involves a certain degree of perseverance and self-control (Seligman, 2011).

In terms of performance optimisation, our starting point is in Team Denmark’s restitution model (Team Danmark, 2014). These activities were an inspiration to us while we were developing the course. Moreover, the teaching on the course is further inspired by elements of Kirketerp’s SKUB method (Kirketerp, 2012).

**Activities and Outcomes**

The workshop session will contain two parts. The first part is introductory, based on a case study: who are our typical students, why are we offering this to them and what is the offer?

The workshop facilitators will introduce specific elements from the 27 Hours a Day course to be held at VIA University College Campus Holstebro and Campus Viborg, Denmark. The following topics are part of the course:
- Personal attitude
- Understanding the surrounding world
- Readiness to take action
- Mindfulness
- Sleep
- Sexuality
- Diet
- Exercise
- Time management

This is supported by selected practical examples, which you will be allowed to try during the session.

The second part is dialogic. Here, participants will work hands-on in groups with the key question and template developed for the course. And, based on this, participants will then be asked to discuss the following questions:
1. Should/must an incubation environment involve itself in the individual entrepreneur’s way of life?
2. What are your experiences of students who either do not perform in both of their dual careers and/or are burned out?
3. And how do you handle it?

In advance:

- Consider what kind of students attend your educational institution – full-time entrepreneurs and/or part-time entrepreneurs?
- Consider how you, at your educational institution, can accommodate students with dual careers.
- Consider how far you want to take personal guidance with students. Will your guidance include the optimisation of time, diet and sleep and life balance in addition to entrepreneurial tools?

Expected participant outcomes and takeaways
Workshop participants will be introduced to a course, which can be implemented entirely or partly in order to support students heavily involved in both their studies and in creating value for others.

Workshop participants will become aware of a group of students, who do not view the Student Incubator as a natural part of their student life, but who still have an interest in and a need to create social, cultural and/or economic value for others.

A template reflecting the topics of the overall course will be handed out during the workshop.

References


https://www.teamdanmark.dk/