

My experiences with Experiential and Entrepreneurial Learning

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Who am I, and why am I here?

My name is Nathaniel Bagnell, and I'm 25 years old from Toronto

I've been an explorer and challenger of the educational system, and have approached it in ways that isn't normal/the standard

I've been doing entrepreneurial endeavors since the early years of 11 years old
Co-Founder of Physicalytics, A member of the Ryerson Digital Media Zone

How do I see Experiential and Entrepreneurial Learning (E&EL)?

- It's a scary-looking thing relative to traditional education, because:
 - It's less structured, and can take a life of its own
 - It has more ambiguous "answers"
 - It's difficult to quantify in size, grade, and required time
 - Success factors are relative
- *That said though, it's **the best way to learn***

It's not Traditional Education

How traditional education is summed up:

“the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university.”

- Oxford Dictionary

How Experiential and Entrepreneurial Learning is summed up:

“For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them”

- Aristotle

Enter: the Digital Media Zone (DMZ)

- Had its beginnings in 2009
- A student approached the University's President Sheldon Levy with an idea for a business and the problem of not knowing where to start
- Mr. Levy polled the community to see if there were others like this student who had the same interests and problems, and there were!
- **The DMZ was born!**

The DMZ Today

- It evolved from simply a place where a handful of startups had a central place to work
- It's now a thriving community of innovation with over 68 current companies and 80 alumni companies
- Has a large pool of advisors, tools, and resources for startups
- Established an investment arm called Ryerson Futures Inc. to participate in companies financially

How the DMZ and the University Mesh

- Provides research assistance by means of focus groups, think tanks, and consultancy services to external companies
- Provides an opportunity for those in university programs that require co-op, employment, or internship experience to work with startup companies
- Gives entrepreneurs a world-renowned incubation centre to help add credibility to their business as well as access to soft-landing programs in countries around the world

Why is it important again?

- I worked for over seven years as a software developer straight from high school, working with the likes of Microsoft, BlackBerry, Netflix, and more
- I went through a business degree program majoring in Entrepreneurship
- The amount of business knowledge, interpersonal skills, presentation skills, confidence, and overall critical and creative thinking skills I've attained running Physicalytics is more than the previous two noted sources of knowledge

It's not for everyone, nor should it be

- To truly want to take the path into the unknown is something some don't want to do, nor should they be forced to do
- Some might want to meet half way, and be an internal entrepreneur
- If everyone was an entrepreneur, things could get messy!
- It's about catering to those who want to take this path, just as much as we cater to other interests that are more traditional such as being a doctor or an accountant

Start from the ground up!

- One idea I always thought was interesting was to modify the traditional school fundraiser
- Instead of giving a fixed product, with a fixed price, and a fixed quantity, let the students choose from being a single or multi-product seller, with the option to choose their price for their product
- That little amount of experience of entrepreneurial thinking can be a great introduction to the world of E&EL

Thank you!

I'm extremely passionate about this topic, so please reach out if you would like to discuss things more in detail!

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