



E- MCDB: The Movie Clip Data Base for Entrepreneurship at Syracuse University

Using film to support teaching objectives is not new. What is new is the objective of using video clips for the purpose of teaching specific attitudinal and behavioral aspects of entrepreneurship that cannot be conveyed by the experiential pedagogies traditionally used to teach entrepreneurship (e.g., business plan, case study, internship, guest speakers, etc.). Instead of requiring students to watch a full length film, it is proposed that carefully selected video clips (each no more than 3 to 5 minutes in length) from well-known films be used to teach specific entrepreneurial competencies such as risk-taking, proactiveness, innovativeness, etc.

Although student responses to this teaching approach have been overwhelmingly positive, there are typically four obstacles to effective use of film in the entrepreneurship classroom:

- Firstly, selecting and capturing the video clips is enormously time-consuming, and to construct a database of suitable video clips that could properly support teaching of these competencies is beyond the scope of an individual faculty member.
- Secondly, it seems unreasonable to invest all the time, money and energy in creating a video clip data base for personal use only. Broader dissemination and sharing of this potentially valuable resource so that other faculty would not have to duplicate the effort make more sense. Yet this requires an additional investment in resources from the person developing the database. This resource requirement leads to the third issue.
- It is plausible that other faculty have developed video clips that are effective for teaching one or more entrepreneurial competencies. Pooling resources by creating a central database that

all entrepreneurship educators can access could potentially cover multiple competencies or have a variety of options for a single competency.

- Lastly, although most instructors appreciate the potential that film or video clips have to enhance the classroom, uncertainty about how to create a connection between the clip and content or an inability to find suitable films for classroom use, limits the potential usefulness. As a result, some instructors use film clips merely as ‘eye candy’ or as a way to bring life to the boring routine of lectures -- without ever linking the clips to content. Only a very few have discovered the full potential that film clips have to spawn a sense of adventure, exploration, and insight — and they do so by carefully crafting a teaching strategy that incorporates film as an important vehicle for conveying the subtleties of entrepreneurial behavior.

In an effort to overcome some of these constraints, Syracuse University will create and host an online movie clip database for entrepreneurship (E-MCDB) that is searchable. The proposed movie clip collection will be organized by individual entrepreneurial competencies, each of which will be associated with a description (including keywords) and a lesson plan. Additionally, each lesson plan will have a one page “viewing guide” that can be copied and given to students -- helping to direct their focus and attention while they watch the movie clip in class.

Ideally, entrepreneurship educators will continue to submit entries to the E-MCDB beyond the closing date of the “Lessons from Hollywood” competition on March 1, 2006, making this a current and valuable resource that spans a broad range of topics and competencies. Members of the online forum associated with E-MCDB would have a user-friendly platform for a

collaborative investigation to determine the effectiveness of this pedagogy for teaching entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors.

Access to the video clip depository would be free of charge, but will be based on three levels of membership:

- Level 1: Unlimited/unrestricted/free access to members signing up for general access to E-MCDB. Members at this level will have access to a searchable list of movies with suggestions of specific entrepreneurship topics/competencies it can be used for. Membership is obtained by providing contact details and an e-mail address of the user.
- Level 2: Members at this level will have access to a) Level 1 information; and b) detailed information related to the movie clips in E-MCDB e.g., a description of the scene in the clip, keywords from the clip that are related to the entrepreneurship topic/competency; d) a lesson plan, and a viewing guide. Access at this level is obtained by submitting a movie clip with its associated lesson plan and a brief description of the scene (with key words), i.e. access is determined based on an agreement of *“submit one to share all”*;
- Level 3: Access to a copy of the movie clip is restricted to Level 3 and will depend on prevailing copyright laws. SU can therefore not guarantee that members will be able to make copies of movie clips in the online database. Level 3 access will be determined by the extent to which legal restrictions prohibit SU from: a) displaying movie clips from big screen movies in an online depository (even though it is for educational use only); b) facilitating duplication of movie clips by members; or c) providing access without charging royalties or an amount set by the film industry or another governing body. This issue is currently being investigated.