
Using Enrichment Clusters In Out-Of-School Entrepreneurial Education For Youth Empowerment

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Abstract

The large youth population of developing countries need to be economically empowered to avoid poverty and social vices especially in view of the Millennium Development Goals. Nigerian Government and corporate bodies cannot provide all the employment needed. Youths will have to become self-employed entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, schools now do not provide the kind of entrepreneurial education they need. Even though the government has become aware of this need, it may take some time to re-fashion the education system, but out-of-school entrepreneurial education can be provided in youth camps immediately using enrichment clusters which has an added advantage of training youths in high-end learning. This study investigated the possibility of using enrichment clusters in a youth holiday camp to provide entrepreneurial education for youth employment. It used the bounded qualitative case study design to investigate four research questions. The subjects were 100 youths attending a holiday camp. The researcher's role, setting, events, and processes are defined. Multiple data collection method was used. Triangulation and member checks helped to enhance reliability and validity. Data analysis was done simultaneously, sorting, organizing and cross checking the different sources of information. Authentic type 111 products and services related to entrepreneurial education emerged and were shared successfully. Recommendations were made for further study and applications.

Background

Nigeria has a typically pyramidal population structure which is characteristic of developing nations. The bulk of the population is made of youths and children with 43% of its population between 6 and 15 (Federal Ministry of Education, (FME) 2006). Low per capita income, poverty and inadequate planning of the economy, general economic and technological dependence on the developed economy leave large number of these youths jobless. Despite tertiary and secondary education, several youths cannot find jobs; consequently, they join the primary school leavers to roam the streets resulting in continuous crimes and other vices in the society (William, Joseph and Carrlyn, 1998; Zinnah, 2003; Iloputaife 2005). High and growing unemployment increases poverty which contributes to

crime. Eradication of poverty is Millennium Development Goal No. 1. (Federal Government of Nigeria, (2006). The National Planning Commission (NPC) (2004) in its document, National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (2004, xvii) identified the following intervention strategies to save the youths from poverty; “education, entrepreneurial development, skill acquisition...” Youth empowerment is enabling youths to cope with their “economic, social and productive choices which will raise their status, promote acquisition of skills and reduce crime in the society (Iloputaife, 2005;2). Denga sees youth empowerment as “investing into the youths, virtues, knowledge, skills for capacity building, vocational information, education of the heart and all those attributes that can make them useful to themselves and to the society in which they live and operate.” (Denga, 2005; 7).

Ogomaka (2005;3) believes that empowering youths entails leading the youths to acquire quality “functional knowledge, skills and dispositions” that will enable them to adapt to their individual and group environments, solve their personal and societal problems and fulfil or actualize themselves”. Youth empowerment therefore begins with appropriate education.

School enrolment in Nigeria at all levels experienced a boom in recent years. Primary school enrolment increased from 17,907,008 in 1999 to 25,765,969 in 2003. Similarly, enrolment in junior secondary schools increased from 3,844,585 in 1999 to 6,509,772 in 2003 (Ekpunobi, 2005). The problem is not just with the availability of educated youth but more with the mismatch between the output of educational institutions and the demand of the labour market. The Nigerian education system historically has grown basically to inculcate numeracy and literacy to enable people read the bible, become translators or provide middle level manpower in offices. Higher level man power was the product of grammar schools that were expected to take-up white collar jobs on graduation. In 1983, the government tried to modify this by introducing the 6-3-3-4 education system incorporating pre-vocational subjects such as Home economics, agriculture, business education, local crafts in the junior secondary school. This was in the hope of diversification and better preparation for the world of work, before completion of school. This however, does not give the type of entrepreneurial education to provide a viable alternative to wage employment (Iloputaife, 2005). The national planning commission in its document, (NEEDS, 2004) confirms that the educational system emphasizes theoretical knowledge at the expense of technical, vocational and entrepreneurial education. School curricula need urgent review to make them relevant and practice oriented. (NPC, 2004; 34)

Entrepreneurial education is defined differently by different people. Omenkeukwu (2000) defined it as that aspect of education that is designed to enable the recipients acquire skills, ideas and managerial abilities necessary for self reliance. With proper content and process, entrepreneurial education should be able to re-orient Nigerian youths into self-reliance, (organizing and producing) which the Nigerian education system has lacked. It is through entrepreneurial education that Nigeria can flourish in modern times where jobs are no longer created in the small and medium enterprise section in the U.S, it is estimated that by 2015, with West Africa’s growth and development, 400,000-500,000 jobs will be created by government or large enterprises but by small and medium enterprise and entrepreneurs. (Arkhurst, 2005): to train youths to be entrepreneurs is therefore to equip them for living in the present and the future.

Strategies for delivering entrepreneurial education as recommended by Daly (2001) should engage students in experiential learning and lead them to observe, interpret, analyse, make

decisions, and consider consequences. Dwerryhouse (2001) prescribes teaching strategies that contextualize learning and provide students with opportunities to work and reflect over an extended period of time, emphasize self-reliance and flexibility, provide diverse ways of learning, deliver prompt feedback and contain on-going assessment. He says in this, teachers serve as facilitators, allowing students to construct their own knowledge through learning, application, action, review and reflection. Core areas of the entrepreneurial education curriculum should include as recommended by experts (Omenkeukwu, 2000; Iloputaife, 2005):

- Identification and selection of career preference for self-employment
- Development of entrepreneurial qualities such as innovative ability, risk taking, desire to achieve and goal oriented leadership
- Managerial understanding – office and marketing management
- Budget and forecasting
- Business financing and organization

This kind of education is yet to be provided in Nigerian Schools at primary, secondary or tertiary levels. The federal government has made one of the major policy thrust of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) “to strengthen Nigeria’s technological and scientific base by revamping technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial education and making optimal use of information and communication technologies to meet the economy’s manpower needs” (NPC, 2004;35). Since school reforms and curricula changes take time to be effected in Nigeria, globalization has caught up with Nigeria and employment of youths is becoming critical and does not need to wait for bureaucracy, out of school entrepreneurial education may therefore be an inevitable and ready strategy.

Youth camps provide out-of-school education to youths in different areas of life. Capital is time intensive and the camp environment is structured and supervised with the provision of significant educational experiences for the growth and development of the youths. Camps have several dimensions that set them apart from other youth. Diverse benefits of camps have been reported in several studies: self-concept enhancement and promotion of moral growth (Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields and Shewechuck, 1986), enhancement of emotional growth (Cason and Gillis, 1994) orientation and interpersonal skills and relationships (Gass, 1987) moral development (Webb, 1999; Obidoa, 2006).

This has been achieved through enrichment clusters. Enrichment clusters are non-graded groups of students who come together to pursue a common interest during specified periods in the school day. The learning model used in enrichment clusters is based on the inductive approach. Students are taught to acquire high order thinking skills and apply these skills authentically and realistically to produce solutions to real life problems (Renzulli, 1977; Reis Gentry and Parks, 1995, Renzulli and Reis; 1997). This approach has its theoretical base in the constructive theories of Piaget, Dewey and Bruner. The use of enrichment clusters is one of the several strategies developed to give opportunities for high-end learning to gifted and talented children. It affords them training in higher order thinking skills that could be applied to real world situations (Renzulli and Reis, 1985). Like other such strategies meant originally for the gifted, enrichment clusters are now used for general application to all children and have been successfully even in Nigeria (Obidoa, 2003 and 2004).

Enrichment clusters are fashioned after the ways that under-personal relations, thinking skills and knowledge are utilized in the real world. The topics they deal with centre around major

disciplines, interdisciplinary issues. All the work done in the cluster is diverted to the production of a service or product. The focus of an enrichment cluster is on:

- 1) What people with an interest in a given area do (e.g. Pressmen)
- 2) What Knowledge, Materials, resources and techniques they need to do it excellently and authentically
- 3) The ways in which a product or services can be used to have an impact on an intended audience (Renzulli and Reis, 1977; Reis, Gentry and Parks, 1995). Enrichment clusters offer a complete training in high-end learning through the use of type I, II and III enrichments which some other gifted and talented (G/T) programmes do not have. According to Renzulli, (1994, 1997) and Reis, Gentry and Parks (1995), type I enrichment or general exploratory experiences are designed to expose students to new fields of knowledge not covered ordinarily in the regular curriculum.

There are several techniques for administering type I but all serve the purpose of inviting students to engage in advanced level learning in a topic or area of interest. Type II or group training activities consists of methods, materials and instructional techniques that are designed to develop higher level thinking processes, research and reference skills and processes related to personal and social development. Type III, the highest level of enrichment is the production of solutions to real world problems, when students working individually or in groups change their roles from traditional lesson learners to first hand inquirers and actually come up with answers to their inquiries.

Enrichment clusters are imbued with the kinds of situations that are required for entrepreneurial training listed above. Type Is expose participants to various career options which they are expected to choose from guided by their interests. Type II give youths the opportunities to acquire skills and techniques used by professionals in their chosen field and finally come up with type IIIs, original products or services.

With the potentials of enrichment clusters in entrepreneurial education for youths, the advantages of youth camps especially in terms of time and intensity, a lot can be done for youths. Nigeria has expressed the intention of giving this kind of education in schools and out-of-school situations such as National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). Youths of the country cannot continue to wait for the bureaucracy to reach them; some may have left school before it gets fully into the school system. Providing entrepreneurial education through the use of enrichment clusters could be a feasible, fast and meaningful way of empowering youths. This study therefore set out to investigate the possibility of using enrichment clusters for promoting entrepreneurial education for youth empowerment in a youth holiday camp. No such study has been conducted using enrichment clusters for youth entrepreneurial education in a camp setting especially in Nigeria.

The study was guided by one grand tour question (Question one) which is a statement of the focus of the study in its most general form, and 3 sub-questions (2-4) as recommended by Miles and Huberman, (1984) and Cresswell, (1994).

1. How can enrichment clusters used to provide entrepreneurial education in a youth camp?
2. To what extent is it possible to relate Type I to entrepreneurial education?
3. How can type II related to skill acquisitions in entrepreneurial education be provided in a youth camp?

4. To what extent can type III related to entrepreneurial education be produced and shared in a youth camp?

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to achieve as full understanding as possible of a phenomenon, the use of enrichment clusters in entrepreneurial education of youths in a camp. The study seeks an intensive description of this unique, innovative programme. The qualitative case study design was therefore chosen as recommended by Sharon and Merriam (1988) and Cresswell (1994). For the purposes of reliability and validity, a bounded system as recommended by Miles and Hubberman (1984) was built into the design consequently there is a clear presentation of the setting or site, actors or subjects, the events or the evolving nature of the programme and the process.

The researchers' role: the researchers in this study are professional guidance counsellors who have had several years' experience working with youths in and out of school settings. They are currently counsellor trainers at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The principal researchers' skills in facilitating enrichment clusters were acquired at the National Research Centre on the gifted and Talented at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, CT, U.S.A, where the researchers did a post-doctoral training in the education of the gifted and talented under the supervision of Prof J.S Renzulli. She had also tried out the use of enrichment clusters in school settings (Obidoa, 2003 and 2004).

Although the researcher played a multiple role as the coordinator of the clusters and a participant observer, ethical issues were carefully considered. Multiple data collection procedure was also adopted to neutralize participant researcher bias.

Bounding study:

The research setting or site was the ROHI Residential Youth Leadership Camp (RRYLC) held in the Queen of the Rosary Secondary School, Nsukka in August 2005.

The actors/subjects/sample was 100 youths aged 12-21 years who were attending the RRYLC in August 2005. All the hundred youths in camp made up the sample for the study. The enrichment clusters formed an essential component of the camp experience. Each subject had equal opportunity to join any cluster. The RRYLC is organized yearly since 2000 AD by ROHI Educational Services and Training, an Nsukka Based NGO with a mission of "providing basic holistic and integrated training and practice that will ensure that the youths are empowered, motivated and challenged to use their minds and talents well for a lifetime of learning, self-reliance, responsible leadership, responsible citizenship and recreation, (ROHI Educational Services and Training, 2006)

Events and processes: the events comprise of type I and type II activities the subject/actors will be exposed to at different stages. The process in this study culminated in the various type IIIs that the subject actors come up with. There were five major stages in the study.

Stage I – defining the objectives of the study, choosing the site, actors, programme base and personnel. Arrangements for time and venue for each cluster.

Stage II – Training of facilitators for the clusters.

Stage III – Presenting type I. the campers received a talk on the importance of developing their abilities and talents and how to use this for income generation. Exhibitions of some products were made in the camp. A testimony was also given by a youth. They were then given a list of enrichment clusters that will be offered in the camp. These included hat making, mat and basket weaving, making detergent, body cream, fresh flower arrangement,

flower making, cake baking and decoration, making batik and tie-die, Barbing, hairdressing and stage arts, voice and musical instruments, choreography, drama and dancing. Each camper was expected to participate, based on individual interest and need, in any two of these clusters.

Stage IV – At the initial meetings in each cluster, facilitators explained the workings of the clusters, arrangements, time schedule and objectives among others. Each cluster then went into learning how the people in their chosen area of interest work. This is the skill acquisition stage.

Stage V – production and sharing of type IIIs

Data Collection

Descriptive case studies use qualitative data which consists of detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, observed behaviours, direct quotations from people...” (Paton, 1980; 22). Merriam (1988) says the end product of a case study is a rich “thick description” of the phenomenon under study. This means providing complete literal description of the entity being investigated. Following recommendations from experts, (Cresswell 1994; Merriam. 1988, Miles and Huberman, 1984), a multiple data collection procedure was adopted in this study as discussed earlier under research design as well as the use of observations, unstructured open-ended interviews, minutes of meetings, photographs, video tapes, write-ups, campers’ journals and notes, actual live performances, concrete items such as beads, mats, baskets and products from different clusters. The data collection was done at the three major stages of the work.

In stage one, which had to do with preparations and presentations of type I, data collected included text of the talk given to campers, minutes if training sessions for facilitators, and video coverage. Items exhibited were also collected and kept.

The second stage had to do with data related to type II. This was collected by observation, photos, video coverage, journals, notebooks and interviews.

At the third stage, data related to type III were collected basically from real products and services rendered on stage performances and exhibitions of products such as decorated cakes, dyed materials, beaded trinkets, photographs, video tapes and interviews.

Data Analysis

In conformity with the recommendations of Creswell, (1994), Merriam (1985); and Tesch (1990), data collection analysis, and report writing were done simultaneously in this study. Data was progressively collected, sorted, organized and put through the processes of reduction, interpretation and segmentation until large categories that embraced all the four research questions in the study emerged.

Synthesis of data that relate to preparations and type I was done first. Data used include those collected from the photographs, video tapes, minutes of training meetings, text of the talk and exhibits of products and interviews. These were arranged chronically and compared. They provided substantial evidence that a talk was given, specimens of products were displayed which kindled the interest of the campers in different clusters. This was confirmed by interviews and the signup of campers for different clusters.

To analyse type II, data were chronologically compared and contrasted between and among all informants and data sources. Member checks were done simultaneously especially using photographs and campers’ notes. Verification questions were also asked. Observed techniques were also compared with notes taken by the campers. The facilitators/resource persons for each cluster were also used to cross-check information gathered from campers.

All the information collected from various sources was synthesised and reconfirmed to establish that campers acquired type II. The last category of data is those related to type IIIs – actual products and services the campers came up with. Data from various sources were again arranged chronologically. Serialization was important in this study because one stage led to another. Earlier participation in types I and II by campers led to the production of type IIIs which were shared during the variety night in the camp – the last day at the camp. Each cluster displayed their products to the entire campers and staff and some guests with a brief explanation of how the product was created. Interviews and inspection were used to authenticate the productions. The sharing process was also photographed and videotaped.

Reliability and Validity

This paper has provided a detailed description of the focus, event and processes of this research as advocated by Lincoln and Guba, (1985) and Yin (1989) to guide anyone who wishes to replicate the study. Triangulation of the data was also done to enhance both the validity and reliability of this work by attempting to find convergence among the multiple sources of information used. A very high degree of concordance was observed between them.

To further increase the validity of the study, member checks were done through the study as data and interpretations of data were taken back to the subjects to confirm their correctness. The reader is however reminded that the basic purpose of qualitative research is to form a unique interpretation of events and not to generalize findings (Miriam, 1988).

Validity is further enhanced by the nature of this study. It is such that it has authenticity and validity built into it. Type III products arise only when type I and III have been put in place. Some professionals were invited to assess the products. Authentic type III is therefore a confirmation of the validity of the study.

Findings and Discussions

The findings of this study will be presented and discussed under each of the research questions.

How can enrichment clusters be used to provide entrepreneurial education in a youth camp?

Enrichment clusters were successfully used in a camp setting to introduce youths to a variety of products and services which could be income earners for them thus giving them economic, social and emotional empowerment. Type I created interest in and awareness of the types of jobs that youths can engage in for the dual benefit of high-end learning and entrepreneurial education. This satisfies the first step in entrepreneurial education of identification and selection of career programmes for self-employment as recommended by Stevens (1987) and other experts cited above.

Type II acquainted the campers with knowledge, skills, materials and other resources that people in each of the cluster areas use. This step helped the campers develop entrepreneurial qualities and understanding as they engage in budgeting, sourcing and acquiring the needed materials and gathering more information, observing, analysing and interpreting to help them work on their chosen projects. Finally, the campers produced type III individually and in groups which included artificial flowers, fresh flora; arrangements, tie-die materials, decorated and undecorated cakes, hats, bead trinkets, hair ruffles, dancing singing and playing various musical instruments. A mass choir evolved and performed beautifully. These products and services were shared.

What the campers did in the enrichment clusters is in accordance with Daly's (2001) recommended strategies for delivering entrepreneurial education cited above. The teaching strategies for entrepreneurial education prescribed by Dwerryhouse (2001) is identical to what was implemented in the clusters – "providing students with opportunities to work and reflect,.. Emphasize self-reliance and flexibility, provide diverse ways of learning,... teachers serve as facilitators allowing students to construct their own knowledge through learning, application, action, review and reflection."

Enrichment clusters satisfy all the prescribed objectives. Campers achieved among other things, development of entrepreneurial qualities such as innovative ability, risk taking, desire to achieve and goal oriented leadership with core areas of entrepreneurial education curriculum.

Reis, Gentry and Parks, (1995) after a study that examined the effects of implementing enrichment clusters with all students in selected schools reported that the enrichment clusters were organized with "minimum effort and minimal costs", and that "the greatest challenge to implement the program was finding a common block of time for all teachers and students to be able to participate in the program" (Reis, Gentry and Parks, 1995, XIV). Effort and cost also did not constitute a problem in this study. The cost of the clusters was built into the camp fee which the campers paid. Finding a common block of time also was not a challenge. In the planning of the camp, the cluster times were built into the schedules. Reis, Gentry and Parks (1995) and Obidoa (2003 and 2004) depended on 60 to 80 minute periods per week for 5-6weeks on the school time-tables, giving a total of about 5-7 hours for each cluster. Youth camps have the advantage of time intensity. It was easy to schedule it 1.5-2hours meeting twice daily for 4 days giving a total of 12-16 hours.

Although no previous study reported the use of enrichment clusters in camp settings for a purpose other than training in high-end learning for participants, this study attempted to do both. As an extension of the technical application of enrichment clusters and an extension of their situational usage, a lot of planning needed to be done. The 16 step procedure in Obidoa (2003) was modified and applied (see fig 1. Below)

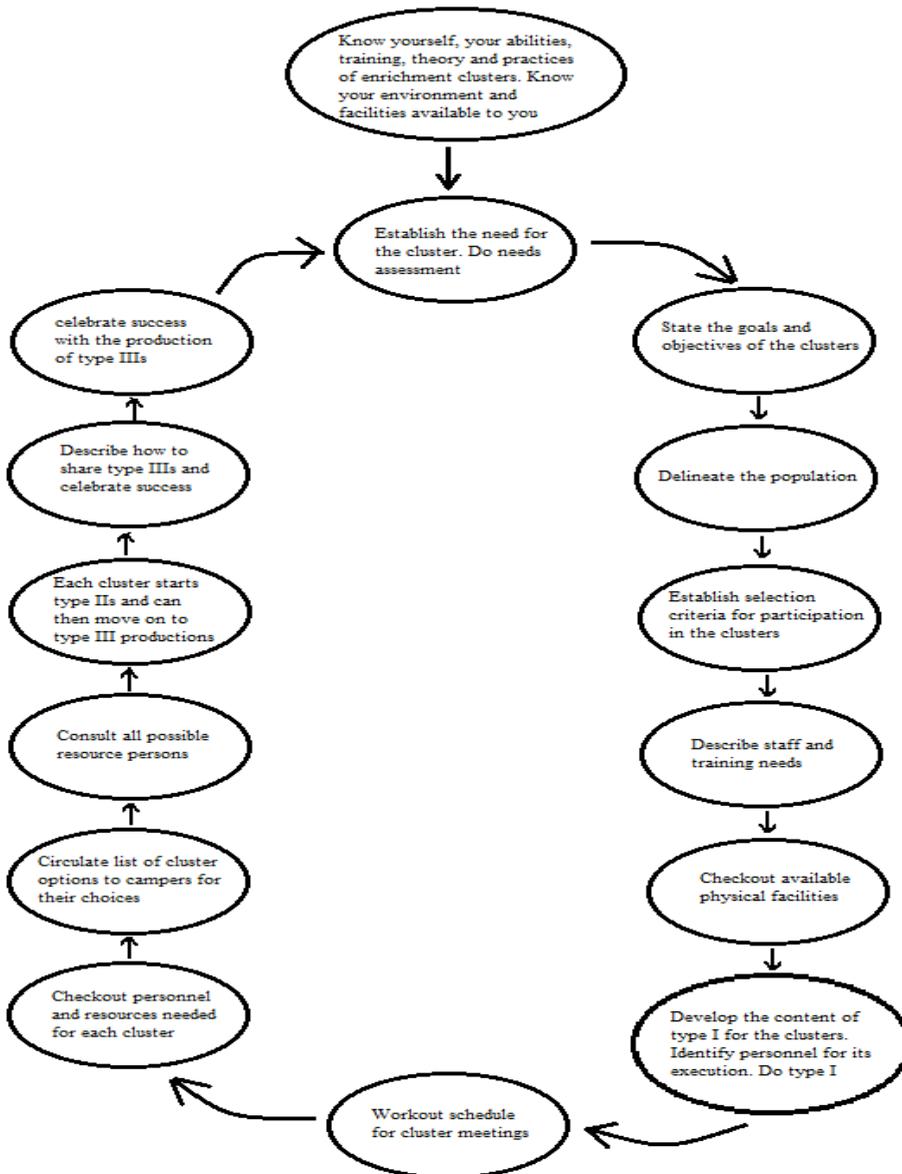


Fig 1:16 step procedure for the execution of enrichment clusters

To what extent is it possible to relate type IIs to entrepreneurial education?

The researchers are aware of the various strategies for introducing type I described by Renzulli & Reis (1985), Reis and Burns (1987), Beecher (1995), Reis, Gentry and Parks (1995), Obidoa (2003 and 2004). For the purpose of this study, three strategies were selected, a talk on “developing your talents and resources”, an exhibition of available products and a

testimony from a youth about how he started earning money for his needs from a “brood and sell” poultry venture which he started following a RRLC camping the previous year.

Although type I is general exploratory experiences in this study, it was related to entrepreneurial education based on the fact that focused on exposing campers to different innovative things they could do to earn knowledge and money as entrepreneurs. The talk as delivered by a volunteer manager of the camp who had good understanding and was enthused with the study and thus combined creating awareness, exciting the campers’ interest with brief introductions to the nature, purpose and prospects of each cluster advertised.

How can type II be related to entrepreneurial education?

Type II started as soon as the campers reported in their various cluster venues, they were debriefed and chose their project areas. Even within the same cluster, interests varied for some from the initial meetings and for others at subsequent meetings. In clusters such as tie-die, beading, mat and basket weaving, floral arrangements, cake baking and decorating, the campers listened to exposition from professional on techniques and skills of production including budgeting, shopping, acquiring material, choosing designs and patterns among others. Subsequently, they split up to work on projects of their choice, singly, with partners or in groups as they preferred. The facilitators now became consultants to them as they chose, made estimates, sourced for materials, practiced and acquired techniques and skills.

In the stage arts, campers broke up into interest areas at the initial meeting – voice, playing musical instruments, dancing, mining and drama among others. Instructors/facilitators were available for each area and they gave initial debriefing techniques and skills and then stood by for consultation.

Several sub-groups emerged from cluster – clusters within a cluster as has been observed and reported by Reis, Gentry and Parks (1995) and Obidoa (2003 and 2004). The campers changed roles from traditional lesson learners to first hand investigators and producers. With a great deal of interest and task commitment, they worked on their various projects in conformity with Dwerryhouse (2001) recommendation presented earlier. The campers now dictated the direction and tempo of their work. High-end learning was being acquired in contextualized situations. The force of interest as a motivator in learning as described by Dewey (1913), Renzulli (1997), Deci and Ryan (1985), Obidoa (2003) was clearly observed. The researchers also observed a high degree of creativity and spontaneity which enhanced the clusters that they did not previously observe with similar subjects in the school setting. Could this be attributed to the more relaxed and free atmosphere of the camp?

In summary, type II provided an ideal way of imparting entrepreneurial skills in a practical, interesting and contextual manner.

To what extent can type II relate to entrepreneurial education be produced and shared?

Several authentic products and services listed above came up as type III. Relating type I and IIs to entrepreneurial education made it easy to produce type III that are also related to entrepreneurial; education. At the end of the second day in the clusters, some campers started producing type III. Late evening programmes at the camp allowed for the sharing of type III with all campers, and camp staff – bead trinkets, floral arrangements and their hair pieces, hair ruffles were produced and shared. Some choreography and songs were shared but the big day for sharing all type III was the last night in camp at a variety show where every enrichment cluster was given time to present its type III. The sharing involved display of the products or services and an interview followed where campers were asked what new skills they learnt, how their products/services were assembled, and how it could be used as a

money earner. The evening's grand finale came from the voice training cluster which organised a mass choir that entertained all campers, camp staff and visitors.

Summary and Conclusion

Out-of-school, in a youth camp, an emotionally stable, threat free and conducive atmosphere was created with abundant time for the implementation of Renzulli's enrichment clusters. These clusters gave opportunities for high-end learning which was successfully combined with entrepreneurial education. Authentic products and services were produced and shared. Renzulli (1997) believes that given opportunity, resources and encouragement, gifted behaviours will occur. This study has shown that gifted behaviours as well as entrepreneurial abilities can be developed in persons who have above average abilities, creativity and task commitment. With this and previous studies by Obidoa (2003 and 2004) the researchers affirm the "outstanding talents are present in youths from all cultural groups" (U.S Dept. of Education, 1993; 26). Enrichment clusters have multiple averages and can help solve Nigerian immediate problems with youth unemployment and empowerment.

Qualified persons could try out the use of enrichment clusters for entrepreneurial education in camps. Schools may also want to give entrepreneurial education with the enrichment clusters. Youth camps can be greatly enriched with enrichment cluster experience especially when the clusters are for entrepreneurial education.

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