



Interview with **Pablo Peñalver**

Spanish VET teacher & founder of G+ Community "Profesores Emprendedores" (Enterprising Teachers)

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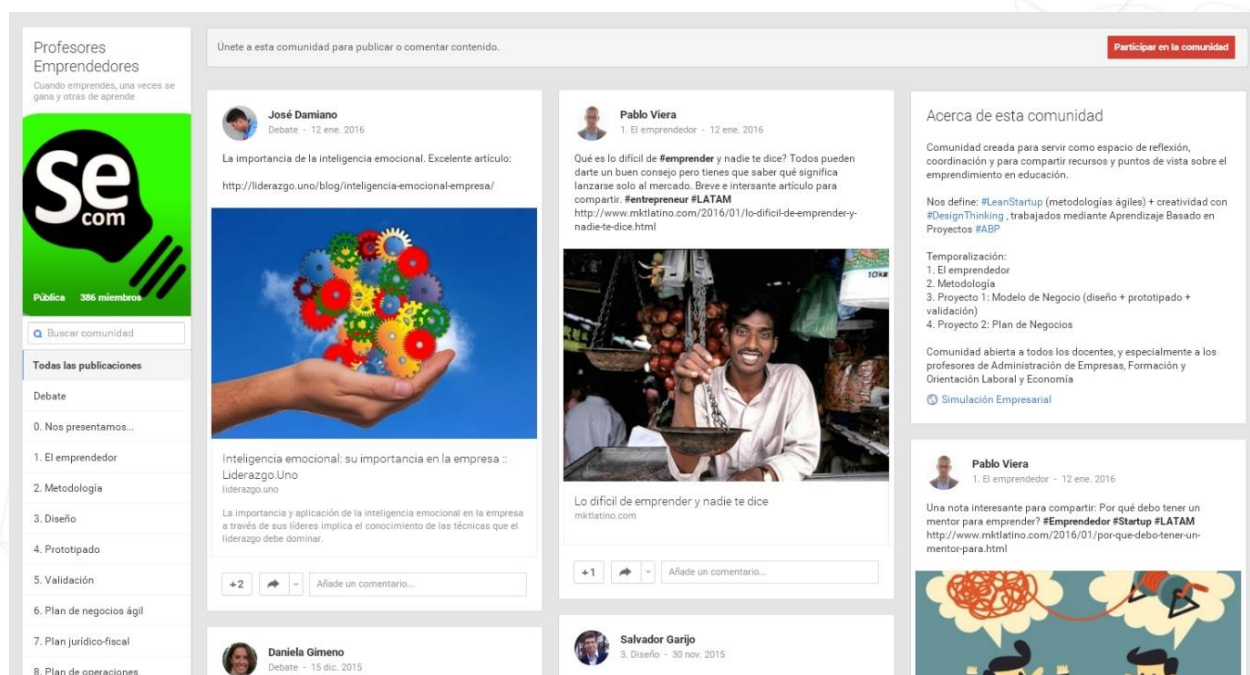
By way of scene-setting, who are you and what do you do for a living?

My name is Pablo Peñalver, I'm teaching at IES Consaburum, a Secondary Education/VET School in Consuegra, Toledo, Spain. I was the headmaster of the school during 4 years and I'm still assisting my successor.

What subjects do you teach?

I'm currently teaching 2 VET courses included in a Higher Level VET diploma on "Administration & Financing". To be more precise my subjects are "Business Simulation" and "Accounting and Taxation". Besides, I've also taught "Introduction to Entrepreneurship" for Year 9 students.

You are the creator of a Google + Community under the name "Profesores Emprendedores" (Enterprising Teachers) How did it spark into being?



The rise of social networking has had a massive impact in the way knowledge is built and shared. Social networks have enormously expanded the chances of meeting teachers and ultimately accessing a vast pool of working methods, experiences and activities. It was fundamental to set up a virtual space where all these fantastic teaching professionals with an interest in entrepreneurship education could share an overwhelming amount of resources, links, classroom

activities, experiences, conferences and events. The community is also a fantastic spot to participate in lively discussions and debates and definitely a great platform to disseminate “Lean Startup” methodology, which in my opinion, holds a huge potential to radically change the way we teach entrepreneurship at present and to reinforce the development of entrepreneurial skills and attitudes. So, as you can see, it's all about sharing, sharing and sharing... a key aspect of 21st century learning.

How many teachers have joined the community so far? What's their profile? What's their contribution? What are they mainly looking for?

Anyone can join our community. Open access has some pros and cons but we are keeping it like that for the moment. Currently we are 381 members, mainly VET and General Education teachers teaching entrepreneurship-related subjects. Not all members are equally active, but there is what I call an “elite” group who are eager to contribute in every single way you can imagine: They share a lot of content, activities, links to be and they lead discussions or enrich ongoing debates with their own personal insights.

For me, as its creator, the community has exceeded all my expectations: it is not only the fact of having access to excellent, state-of-the-art and free content but getting to meet great teachers and colleagues. Next natural step once you join the community is getting to meet them offline and share our passion for teaching.

INCUVET does support a school-based approach to embed entrepreneurship in education. In your opinion, what role are playing VET schools at present? What's missing?

Entrepreneurship is trendy and that's why it has made inroads into schools but there's a lot of aspects to be improved if we are to comply with the social demand to promote entrepreneurship.

In my opinion school curricula in its current shape do not favor the development of entrepreneurial skills. We have to draw a clear line between the good intentions found in the introductory paragraphs of the curricula and the working tool it represents. It's time to take advantage of the flexibility it offers so that we “dare, take risks” to craft a really interesting and relevant proposal for our students. We cannot longer afford to keep on talking about the “Business Plan” as the backbone of a curriculum on Entrepreneurship.

Besides, there's a substantial gap in teacher training. Teaching entrepreneurship goes hand in hand with the need to ponder what's the current meaning of education bearing in mind content has lost prominence in favor of competence-based approaches. The student has to be able to show competence in different contexts and that's something you don't learn by heart. Hence, our teaching methodologies need an urgent revamp.

Which are the key enabling factors to configure or reinforce this whole-school based approach to Entrepreneurship Education in VET?

As I have just mentioned, changing the way we teach is key. Teaching is not lecturing and learning is not only about memorizing stuff. And this is something the whole teaching staff must come to terms with. We have to ask ourselves what's truly relevant for our students, what's useful for their future and act accordingly.

The teacher should not be a mere transmitter of knowledge. We must ideate and provide authentic and memorable learning experiences. While it is true this may be easier to apply if you're teaching entrepreneurship, all teachers, no matter the discipline, must commit to make this happen. Anyone in the teaching profession should keep this in mind.

Let's talk about entrepreneurial teaching and learning, Are there any particular challenges to be urgently addressed in VET classrooms?

I would highlight three different aspects:

We have to be clear that entrepreneurship entails the development of a particular set of attitudes and skills. And for that, there's no other way than focusing on creativity, communication, cooperation and trust.

To achieve this, we have to take risks with active and student-centred methodologies. Teaching entrepreneurship is simply not possible if learning is not based in challenges, problems and projects.

In my opinion, Lean Startup is a fantastic scaffold to embed entrepreneurship in education. Lean Startup principles do perfectly dovetail and support all of my tenets about what does it take to provide an authentic entrepreneurial learning experience to our students.

INCUVET is always on the lookout for interesting entrepreneurship education initiatives in the field of VET? Does anyone come to mind?

I have already mentioned it twice. I'm a loyal defender of agile methodologies that are extensively used by the most successful startup accelerators in the world. In this sense, the application of Lean Startup as the backbone of a syllabus on Entrepreneurship is essential and this is an idea I've been supporting and disseminating for the last 4 years.

Lean Startup requires developing creative approaches using Design Thinking, understanding customer development as a key element to create innovative products and services and, above all, the need to understand that the customer is the focus of everything that we do.

In this sense, I have recently contributed a chapter on "[Lean Startup and Education](#)" to the editors of the book "España Lean Startup 2015" that's soon to be released.

Any last minute comments?

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to express my points of view about such an interesting and relevant topic.

Links

G+ Community [Comunidad "Profesores Emprendedores"](#)

Pablo's blog: <https://proyectoempresarial.wordpress.com>

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