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Well versed in poetry of profits

By LINDA ANDERSON

Business schools produce highly qualified managers, experts in their fields. But concerns that students may be neglecting the creative side of their personalities are prompting some schools to hone other qualities.

Poetry, theatre, sculpture and improvisation are just some of the courses on offer to try to foster students' creativity.

At Goizueta Business School at Emory University, Atlanta, the school is running a "creativity boot camp" to show how to apply creative problem-solving in business. Topics covered include office space feng shui - showing students how to lay out the perfect space to encourage creativity.

"In general, business schools and especially MBA programmes are very left-brain, for good reason," says Harry Vardis, organiser of the boot camp at Goizueta.

"Creativity contributes to the bottom line in so many ways, from new product development to developing strategy to dealing with competition and customers," says Mr Vardis. Goizueta is not alone.

At Babson College, Massachusetts, students are enrolled in a creativity course at the beginning of their programme and can tackle, among other subjects, poetry, puppetry and improvisation.

Mary Pinard, poetry workshop instructor at Babson, believes there is similarity between entrepreneurs and poets.

Successful entrepreneurs, she says, are open to possibilities, take risks and find solutions to problems.

"Business people are perceived as being linear, which is not always the case. But if someone is not willing to be open to surprise, not a lot will happen that's fresh."

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