Revitalizing Entrepreneurship Education

Within mainstream scholarship, it’s assumed without question that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education are desirable and positive economic activities. Drawing on a wide range of theoretical approaches and political-philosophical perspectives, critical entrepreneurship studies has emerged to ask the questions which this assumption obscures.

Students of entrepreneurship need to understand why and how entrepreneurship is seen as a moral force which can solve social problems or protect the environment, or even to tackle political problems. It is time to evaluate how such contributions and insights have entered our classrooms. How much – if any – critical discussion and insight enters our classrooms? How do we change when students demand to be taught “how to do it”, not to be critical or reflexive?

If educators are to bring alternative perspectives into the classroom, it will entail a new way of thinking. There is a need to share ideas and practical approaches, and that is what the contributions to this volume aim to do and to illuminate new ways forward in entrepreneurship education.

Karin Berglund is Professor of Business with specialization in entrepreneurship at Stockholm Business School, Stockholm University, Sweden, and Visiting Professor at Linnaeus University in Växjö.

Karen Verduijn is a Senior Lecturer in Entrepreneurship at the Department of Management & Organization, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
The current focus on entrepreneurship as a purely market-based phenomenon and an unquestionably desirable economic and profitable activity leads to undervaluing and under researching important issues in relation to power, ideology or phenomenology. New postures, new theoretical lenses and new approaches are needed to study entrepreneurship as a contextualized and socially embedded phenomenon. The objective of this series therefore is to adopt a critical and constructive posture towards the theories, methods, epistemologies, assumptions and beliefs which dominate mainstream thinking. It aims to provide a forum for scholarship which questions the prevailing assumptions and beliefs currently dominating entrepreneurship research and invites contributions from a wide range of different communities of scholars, which focus on novelty, diversity and critique.

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Revitalizing Entrepreneurship Education
Adopting a Critical Approach in the Classroom
Karin Berglund and Karen Verduijn
Revitalizing Entrepreneurship Education
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Karin Berglund and Karen Verduijn
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Contributors

Editors

Karin Berglund is Professor of Business with specialization in entrepreneurship at Stockholm Business School, Stockholm University, Sweden, and Visiting Professor at Linnaeus University in Växjö.

Karen Verduijn is a Senior Lecturer in entrepreneurship at the Department of Management & Organization, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Contributors (in alphabetical order)

Leona Achtenhagen is a Professor of Entrepreneurship and Business Development at Jönköping International Business School, Jönköping University, Sweden.

Pascal Dey is an Associate Professor in Organization Studies at the People, Organization and Society Department, Grenoble Ecole de Management, France, and a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Business Ethics, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland.

Denise Fletcher is Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the Faculty of Law, Finance and Economics at the University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg.

Patrizia Hoyer is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Research Institute for Organizational Psychology, University of St Gallen, Switzerland.

Ulla Hytti is a Research Director in the Entrepreneurship Unit at the Turku School of Economics, University of Turku, Finland.

Hanna Jansson is Head of the Unit for Bioentrepreneurship at the Department of Learning, Informatics, Management and Ethics, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden.

Bengt Johannisson is Professor Emeritus at the Department of Organization and Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Economics and Management, Linnaeus University, Växjö, Sweden.
Contributors

Christian Garmann Johnsen is Associate Professor at Copenhagen Business School, Denmark.

Sally Jones is a Reader in Entrepreneurship and Gender Studies at Sylvia Pankhurst Gender Research Centre, based in the Faculty of Business and Law, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK.

André Kårfors is a master’s student in management studies at the Stockholm Business School.

Madeleen Lek is a project manager at the Unit for Bioentrepreneurship at the Department of Learning, Informatics, Management and Ethics, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden.

Oskar Lif is a master’s student in management studies at the Stockholm Business School, Sweden.

Jessica Lindeberg is Assistant Professor in Business Administration at the Management and Organization section at Stockholm Business School, Stockholm University, Sweden.

Cormac McGrath is Lecturer and Researcher at the Department of Learning, Informatics, Management and Ethics at Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden.

Lena Olaison is Assistant Professor at Copenhagen Business School, Denmark, and Postdoc at the Life at Home and Sustainable Production research initiative at Linnaeus University, Sweden.

Bernhard Resch is a PhD candidate at the Research Institute for Organizational Psychology, University of St Gallen, Switzerland.

Birgitta Schwartz is a Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor in Business Administration at the Management and Organization section at Stockholm Business School, Stockholm University, Sweden.

Pam Seantor is a Senior Lecturer at Bristol Business School, University of the West of England. Her teaching focuses on everyday practices in enterprise. And, much like the European approach, which reflects the “entre”, the movement in-between, in entrepreneurship, she is currently relocating to the Organisation Studies Department.

Annika Skoglund is Associate Professor at Uppsala University, Sweden, and Honorary Associate Professor at the University of Exeter Business School, United Kingdom.

Bent Meier Sorensen is Professor in Organizational Philosophy at Copenhagen Business School.

Chris Steyaert is Professor of Organizational Psychology at the Research Institute for Organizational Psychology, School of Management, University of St Gallen, Switzerland.
Contributors

Malin Tillmar is a Professor at the Department of Organisation and Entrepreneurship at the School of Business in Linnaeus University, Sweden.

Richard Tunstall is Associate Professor of Enterprise at the Centre for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Studies, Leeds University Business School, University of Leeds, UK.

Anna Wettermark is Assistant Professor of Management and Organization at Stockholm Business School, Stockholm University, Sweden.

Alice Wickström is a master’s student in management studies at the Stockholm Business School.

Sofie Wiessner is a master’s Student in management studies at the Stockholm Business School, Sweden.
Foreword

Malin Tillmar

As entrepreneurship researchers and university teachers, we are walking a tightrope that is at the core of the contemporary social and economic dynamics. On the one hand, many of us who are interested in entrepreneurship want to believe in the possibility of social change (Calas, Smircich & Bourne, 2009), and are interested in what entrepreneurs do (Gartner, 1988) and in which contexts entrepreneurship in a broad sense is possible. We may want to further this knowledge and understanding of the “productive” (Baumol, 1990), in the broadest sense, sides of entrepreneurship to our students. As academics with emancipatory knowledge interests (cf. Rindova, Barry & Ketchen, 2009) or with interactive research ambitions (Svensson, Ellström & Brulin, 2007), we may even wish to do that through engaged scholarship (Van de Ven, 2007) with an impact on the surrounding society.

Since “entrepreneurship” is a concept with strong positive connotations in the common and political debate, we do, however, need to be wary. If we are academics with a strong basis in the academic values of reflexivity and criticality (Humboldtian values), it is vital to safeguard these values – so also when we talk about entrepreneurship. As researchers and teachers in entrepreneurship today, 2017, we risk unintentionally, or even unreflectively, becoming tools in a top-down implementation of a neo-liberal agenda which includes entrepreneurialism and individualism. Against our better judgement, we are at risk of standing in classroom after classroom worldwide and conveying the message that everyone can turn their life around and is fully responsible for their own destiny and success – as if structures and context didn’t matter. Yet we also know from entrepreneurship research that they do (Welter, 2011; Diaz, Brush, Gatewood & Welter, 2017).

It is, of course, possible to take the stance that entrepreneurship, including in the form of business ownership, is inherently good. It is also possible to take the stance that entrepreneurship – as a practice and as a concept – is inherently bad. As I see it, both of these stances compromise academic values. Personally, I am striving to understand and sometimes stimulate processes of social change, without enthusiastically encouraging people to start businesses if they may be better off not doing so. To take two examples, employees working in healthcare are not always less constrained when they start up a business than they are as
employees (Sundin & Tillmar, 2010), and the issues faced by women entrepreneurs, for example in developing countries, are not necessarily resolved by starting businesses (Tillmar, 2016). These groups are nonetheless among those urged to start businesses by a multitude of entrepreneurship programmes. Immigrants are another of those groups that today receive “entrepreneurship training”. This may lead to success. It may not (cf. Blackburn & Ram, 2006). Within academia, a nuanced and theoretically informed approach to what entrepreneurship is, and can imply, is of vital importance.

In other words, we really need to walk the tightrope without falling off on either side. But how? And how can we as academics support each other to find this balance? That is where this book comes in. It problematizes the entrepreneurialism discourse, without throwing the baby out with the bathwater. The contributions in the book provide inspiration and examples to help us make our entrepreneurship education more critical, avoiding what Hytti (this volume) calls the “McDonaldization” of education.

References


Critique, as Rosa (2009) reminds us, is a constitutive element of human practice. Whenever everyday life demands a decision, evaluation or justification, human practice is exposed to critique. This is no different for entrepreneurship, since where different ways of doing entrepreneurship exist there is always the possibility that entrepreneurship is done wrong (Harris, Sapienza & Bowie, 2009), i.e. in ways that are incommensurate with the advancement of the common good (Horkheimer, 1982). This book, Revitalizing Entrepreneurship Education, makes critique the central motto of entrepreneurship education. While the individual chapters, each in their own unique way, express a disenchantment with the “free enterprise model”, which conceives of entrepreneurship exclusively in terms of economic finalities (Cállas, Smircich & Bourne, 2009), they are worn by a general desire to move critique away from “gestures of pure negation” and towards changing entrepreneurship in the direction of greater justice, civic participation and societal emancipation (Horn, 2013). In this way, critique as it is employed in this book is never solely concerned with the nature and justification of good/bad or right/wrong entrepreneurial practice but with using education to liberate entrepreneurial practice from its ideological, political and economic enslavement. What is hence critically at stake is an understanding of critique as emancipation which uses education to intervene into common ways in which entrepreneurship is practised. Importantly, the book aims to challenge and transform not “only” the practice of entrepreneurship but also the very institution in which entrepreneurship is (mostly) taught: the contemporary business school. While business schools have variously been described as the place where knowledge and education is commodified, it appears legitimate to ask whether entrepreneurship education can amount to anything other than shallow “infotainment” associated with a (pro forma) qualification for the job market (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). However, even if many business schools tend to subordinate knowledge and education to the principles of the market, this book by Karin Berglund and Karen Verduijn provides a perceptive analysis that alternative ways of teaching entrepreneurship do exist. Obviously enough, applying alternative approaches to entrepreneurship education might challenge, willingly or otherwise, business schools’ institutional habits and imperatives. Crucial to teaching entrepreneurship critically is thus a willingness to take risks and an intimidation against
negative ramification that might ensue. In a truly entrepreneurial fashion, teaching entrepreneurship differently and with a critical prospect presupposes the ability to turn the self into “a work of art”. Such an aesthetic mode of self-formation is less about the cultivation of a new form of dandyism (Hadot, 1991) than about learning to live virtuously (Foucault, 1980), not by obeying to universal moral criteria but by destabilizing and creatively transgressing the way the business school wants us to act, thus redefining the realm of educational practice by our own rules.

References


Prologue

Looking to the future: how can we further develop critical pedagogies in entrepreneurship education?

Denise Fletcher

In this foreword, I contribute to discussions on the nature, purpose, meaning and form of revitalizing entrepreneurship education and I do this by thinking about the future and trying to envisage the societal changes that are likely to occur in the next five to eight years. At the same time, I have in mind two other issues which are important for shaping how entrepreneurship pedagogy might look like in the coming years. The first issue stems out of what I see as the increasing homogeneity of entrepreneurship programmes in business school curricula. The second relates to the co-created and “flourishing” visions of the 50+20 agenda (positive social impact, disruptive innovation, social inclusion, scalability, flourishing, consciousness of connectedness) – visions which are both indispensable and inspiring for revitalizing entrepreneurship education.

In the coming decade, society will experience huge changes, which will have major consequences for the way we live, consume, interact and organize ourselves socially, economically and politically. The changes relate to, for example: (i) digitalization and our evolution towards a technology-immersed world; (ii) the use of robots (bots) as assistants and companions in households and workplaces; (iii) post-truth styles of communication enabled by social media; (iv) the craving for authenticity, meaning and purpose in human connections, jobs, occupations and careers but also in products, services that we consume and the social structures we live in; (v) flexible forms of working centred on projects that emphasize creativity; (vi) the shared or “maker” economy, which blurs (national/global, personal/work and producer/consumer) boundaries.

These societal, cultural and technological changes will have a significant impact on the form and organization of work activities. They will also impact entrepreneurial activities and more specifically the way these activities are expressed, performed and enacted. This means that business education in general, and entrepreneurship education in particular, should evolve to take account of (and also to anticipate) these changes and the new “demands” they will create.

For example, creative capabilities will be much in demand by employers as routine work tasks become automated. There is likely to be an increased demand for technologically competent and ICT-literate students with some skills in data analytics. A range of transferable professional skills and knowledge that enhance
employability will be highly sought-after (i.e. social media management, pitching, public speaking, negotiation skills and emotional intelligence as well as participatory styles of management, leadership and diversity management). There is also likely to be a growing demand from organizations for students who are socially aware and who can analyse, synthesize, lead, envision and participate in (internationally) diverse teams to bring about social, business and organizational transformations. Above all, there will be a pressure for business education to be relevant, accessible, transparent and accountable to organizations, the general public and society at large (Donaldson, 2002; Pfeffer, 2009; Starkey & Tempest, 2009; Kieser, Nicolai & Seidl, 2015; Nicolai & Seidl, 2010; Fotaki & Prasad, 2015; Baden & Higgs, 2015; Alajoutsijarvi, Juusola & Siltaoja, 2015).

It is clear that entrepreneurship curriculum has a particular role to play in leading (critical) curriculum innovation. This is because, quite naturally, the cultivation of forms of innovation and enterprising skills or competencies is our core business. Also, entrepreneurship pedagogies are often premised on the practices of creativity, experimentation, exploration and discovery – all of which necessitate relevant and multimodal teaching methods, approaches, learning styles, tools and models. Programme directors, course tutors and business school leaders will not only be expected to respond to the needs of different stakeholders vis-à-vis global trends but also (and more challengingly) to anticipate and foresee what the demands/expectations might be. At the same time, we will need to translate these future needs into educational programmes that are socially/economically relevant and which prepare students appropriately for these new societal and technological challenges.

This takes me to my next observation, which is that the entrepreneurship curriculum is becoming increasingly homogenized in the sense that beyond different institutional contexts there is perhaps little difference between the content of an entrepreneurship course in Sweden, the UK, the Netherlands or Luxembourg. As the topic of entrepreneurship has become more popular, recognized and legitimized, so too have the “stock in trade” tools and concepts we use in the field (i.e. principles of effectuation, business canvas model, the business plan, elevator pitches, pivoting, the notion of opportunity, prototyping, etc.). This suggests that entrepreneurship programmes are facilitating generic skill sets which, although relevant for employers, are not necessarily oriented to the future needs/challenges of society. This also means that it is harder to set apart entrepreneurship programmes in different countries and ultimately suggests that the value of entrepreneurship education is less about content and more about the country-level ecosystem for entrepreneurship/start-ups and the opportunities for jobs, placements and network opportunities that this brings.

These observations have implications for the purpose, role and shape of entrepreneurship education in the future. What new fresh/innovative (and critical) learning experiences could be added to our curricula that stretch students to bring about market/product transformations in the media-savvy, technologically immersed society outlined earlier? Do the “stock in trade” tools of our teaching practice (the business canvas model, the business plan, the elevator pitch) have a
future in entrepreneurship learning and teaching? How can we ensure that our
teaching practices are well placed for anticipating societal and technological
changes, especially when most of our research is retrospective and the explana-
tory modes post hoc? In short, what will help business schools and programmes
differentiate their entrepreneurship education in the future and what role will
critical thinking, theories and pedagogies play in this? I turn to a couple of
refreshing examples from other fields of the management sciences where col-
leagues have presented alternative ways of thinking about business education.

At the level of leadership education, Collinson and Tourish (2015) present
some new directions for “teaching leadership critically”. In this essay, the
authors are critical of the over-reliance on transformational models that stress
the role of (usually white, male) charismatic people – models which overlook or
downplay the dynamics of power, the influence of context and the significance
of follower dissent and resistance. Their answer – to consider the pedagogical
potential of an emergent, alternative paradigm questioning deep-seated assump-
tions that power and agency should be vested in the hands of a few leaders. They
also offer a number of guiding principles from their experiences with students.
These centre on: encouraging student participation and dialogue in courses;
highlighting the importance of power in leadership practices as well as the mul-
tiple contexts and cultures through which leadership dynamics are produced; the
paradoxes and unintended effects of leaders’ practices; the damaging effects of
over-conformity to destructive behavioural norms (i.e. the promotion of mono
cultures that stifle critical feedback and the negative consequences of certain
leadership dynamics (p. 590)).

Malcolm Parket (2016) also poses a refreshing set of questions concerning
what a different sort of business school research and teaching agenda might look
like (p. 150). He adopts a reformist agenda to demand a new way of thinking
about organizing: “how can the discipline of management in both research and
teaching stop being mere advocacy and become a proper field of enquiry?”
(p. 150). His answer – a School of Organizing – which, rather than reducing
everything to management or business, would take account of the different forms
of organizing that exist in the world. The need to focus on organizing, he argues,
is important because the problem of organization is not taken seriously enough
and yet organizing features are very prevalent in all life and society, in cooper-
aves, markets, kinship groups, partnerships social movements, hierarchies, net-
works etc. He goes on to argue that we need multidisciplinary approaches to
study these complex forms of organizing, which would be an “invitation to learn
about organizing, all of it, not just management or entrepreneurship” and not as
“sites for the production of global managerialism” or for showing inequality but
“as a school for people who want to learn from other places, other times, other
politics and to consider this for their own attempts to create organisations”
(p. 154).

These are both passionate and convincing pleas and something for us to think
about in the field of entrepreneurship where we have our own history of criti-
cally inspired viewpoints. Critical perspectives have been moderately influential
in transforming our conceptions of entrepreneurship into ideological critiques that challenge received wisdom and knowledge about society, the economy and the various organizational, institutional and managerial practices. Such work usually involves a “questioning [of] established social orders, dominating practices, ideologies, discourses and institutions” (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000, p. 1) and it usually embodies an ideological and/or political-moral purpose. At a personal level, I recall being “blown away” by the early commentaries critiquing the concept of entrepreneurship in the late 1990s/early 2000s in the form of Nodoushani and Nodoushani (1999), Ogbor (2000) and Armstrong (2005). In these works, the authors deconstructed the ideological roots of entrepreneurship with its purported avant-garde and “anti-management lyricism” (p. 48). Ogbor (2000) was also concerned with “deconstruction in order to denaturalize or call into question the knowledge claims of the entrepreneurial texts/discourses, and to reveal how they present as inherently neutral the ways things are always done” (p. 607). Adding to these, Armstrong’s critique (2005) also provoked a sceptical view of entrepreneurship by revealing the dysfunctional and ideologically controlling effects of the concept of entrepreneurship. Since then, many other studies have invoked critical modes or stances in entrepreneurship research (Jones & Spicer, 2005, 2009; Weiskopf & Steyaert, 2009; Steyaert & Dey, 2010; Spicer, 2012; Tedmanson, Verduijn, Essers & Gartner, 2012; Verduijn, Dey, Tedmanson & Essers, 2014).

These viewpoints offer something new and different – or, to use the words of Steyaert and Dey (2010), they enable entrepreneurship scholarship to stay fresh, pluralistic, reflexive and perhaps even dangerous. They are indicative of the post-positivist expansion of entrepreneurship research and “party on” calls for a richer, more multicontextual, multilevel, pro-social and compassionate approaches that advance comprehensive (inter)activity-based understanding(s) of the entrepreneurial phenomena (Shepherd, 2015). Such perspectives reflect a wish for transformational research and teaching that not only retains the vitality that engendered this domain of research in the first place but which also takes account of the grand challenges we face in the global world such as poverty and environmental issues (Shepherd, 2015). At the level of learning and teaching, however, critical perspectives are sometimes perceived by students as overly theoretical or too remote from their daily preoccupations. In addition, with the increasing instrumentality of students, they often find it difficult to see the need for critical perspectives as they can appear to counter their (hero) expectations of what it is to start a new venture.

To help overcome some of these challenges, I now sketch some preliminary ideas for a teaching and learning agenda for critical entrepreneurship. In outlining these ideas, I acknowledge our own home-grown “entrepreneuring” verb – a verb that can not only act as a conceptual attractor for research purposes (Steyaert, 2007) but also an attractor for a future critical learning and teaching agenda. I also have in mind Weiskopf and Steyaert’s (2009, p. 15) conception of entrepreneurship as “critical engagement in the world” and also a set of motivations, themes and interests that facilitate this in an increasingly visual and digitalized
learning and teaching context. The forthcoming list is not conclusive but offers some ideas for optimizing existing critical teaching practices and extending them further.

The potential for transformative (critical) entrepreneurship education

A starting point for facilitating critical modes of learning and teaching are the use of creative modes of curriculum design and assessment methods that develop engagement in entrepreneuring (i.e. negotiation, pitching, networking, stakeholder management, testing assumptions, bricolaging, pivoting, prototyping, etc.). These creative modes of engagement centre on learning oriented towards action, designing and problem-setting that opens up new pathways for bringing future-oriented visions, concepts and ideas into realization through interaction, stretching, staging and legitimizing. These modes of learning encourage students to cope with uncertainty, asymmetric information and to adapt and plan according to the changing and contingent environment.

Such engagement modes include any situation where students need to relate, engage, and interact in order to test assumptions, challenge expectations and validate hypotheses about potential future markets. This could be during: (i) interventions into entrepreneurial settings (i.e. incubators, social enterprises, start-ups, agencies, support organizations); (ii) interviews with local entrepreneurs, actors – by critiquing their discourses, policies, practices; (iii) placements in start-up companies, or work projects for start-up companies emphasizing problem-solving, process flow and designing solutions; and (iv) pitching exercises in incubator contexts, involving incubator managers, local entrepreneurs and investors. For tutors, creative engagement can be facilitated through the use of “real time” cases and/or video cases that take account of how “modern students are immersed in a visual society” (Tejeda, 2008, p. 434) and enable students to “elaborate[concept] concepts/topic content” (Clemmes & Hamakawa, 2010, p. 562) or “tie … together” complex organizational processes (Proserpio & Gioia, 2007, p. 79). Other examples of visual learning modes are video pitches; video business plans; slide decks, role play and improvisations; the use of video diaries or visual mind maps; and narratives. Such modes encourage multimodal engagement (involving the emotions, listening and observation skills) and they also draw attention to the importance of body language, facial expressions and the nuances of “human interaction that can help to bring behavioural phenomenon into sharp focus” (Tejeda, 2008, p. 434), attuning us to be socially aware.

The benefit of these modes of engagement and interaction is that students are directly implicated in real-life organizing and entrepreneuring – making decisions, evaluations and judgements about what works or what needs adaptation, managing relations with diverse team members and stakeholders to realize future goals and tasks and, more importantly, taking responsibility for these actions. Through attention to process, practice, contingency, complexity theory, bricolage and design thinking, students can experience how entrepreneuring is a
process that is non-linear and always contextualized and usually unfolding over
time in incremental steps as one outcome provides the context for the next
outcome or decision. Using such approaches, students can be challenged to not
think of entrepreneurial outcomes and events as "properties" of alert individuals
in the way of "possessive individualism" and instead they can conceive of them
as the outcome of interactions, fragments of conversations and other contextual-
ized experiences. They would then be able to understand embodiment (and the
constraints or enabling aspects of embodiment) and also appreciate materialities
(artefacts, prototypes, physical objects, narratives) – rather than just the personali-
\[...\]
perhaps there is scope to further develop and extend such practices. In so doing, this might help to normalize critical entrepreneurship learning (rather than seeing it as something radical or alternative). Engaging in these kinds of educational practices will enable us to differentiate our courses and exploit to the full the unique contextualized and situated experiences that our education programmes have to offer. At the same time, in true entrepreneurial spirit, we should have an eye to the future and be alert to the societal and technological trends that are coming. A more optimized critical entrepreneurship teaching agenda then could contribute to the flourishing principles of the 50+20 agenda – visions which target bringing out the best individual, organizational and systemic possibilities for the world. Embracing such visions and principles will help entrepreneurship programmes to ensure that they are producing locally anchored entrepreneurship programmes that are relevant for and anticipatory of societal needs. In addition, they will help to ensure that students have creative, flexible, diversity-sensitive, emotionally intelligent, authentic skill sets that foster social awareness and proactivity and which might engender positive social and organizational transformations.

Note
1 The 50+20 Agenda describes a vision for the transformation of management education in which the common tenet of being the best in the world is revised in favour of creating businesses that are designed and led to achieve the best for the world. See http://50plus20.org/5020-agenda.

References


The idea of this book took off from a symposium with invited participants who, like us, had voiced their interest and concerns regarding how to educate entrepreneurship education, experiencing a gap between the entrepreneurship practices we studied and found in textbooks and what we felt was asked for in the classroom. During the process of the book a community of scholars united around the idea of revitalizing entrepreneurship education. This actually happened at different conferences, not least the 3E conferences we went to (in 2016 and 2017). All of these meetings have been of great value. We would like to thank all the participants who devoted their time, energy and knowledge, and in particular those who have contributed to the current book; a big and warm thank you. As well, we would like to thank the following reviewers, who have significantly contributed to the book by their constructive and detailed suggestions to the chapter’s authors: Huriye Aygören, Dorota Marsh, Deirdre Tedmanson, Thorkild Thanem, Juliette Koning, Johann Packendorff and Eeva Houtbeckers.

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Part I

Setting the scene
Introduction

Challenges for entrepreneurship education

Karin Berglund and Karen Verduijn

Introduction

The last decade or so has witnessed the rise of “critical” entrepreneurship studies (CES). CES questions dominant images and conceptualizations of entrepreneurship, entrepreneuring and the entrepreneur, and create room for other understandings and approaches. Generally, critical entrepreneurship scholars feel a need to connect entrepreneurship (more) to society (and not only to the economy), and to make students aware of this.

In this book we build on the presumption that it is timely to interrogate if and how CES contributions and insights have entered our classrooms. With students interested in the entrepreneurship phenomenon generally expecting merely the “conventional” (instrumental) approach towards the same, and for us to stipulate the importance of new venture creation with regard to our economy’s health and vitality, some of us (i.e. entrepreneurship educators) might see the need to point at how entrepreneurship is broader than that, that there are multiple “versions” of it, that the entrepreneurial identity is a layered one, and not without its repercussions, and that entrepreneurship provides us with a Western world discourse that is classed, gendered, ethnocentric and thus excluding. Yet many new versions wish to tackle such issues, while paying attention to troublesome global developments, where contemporary neo-liberal displacements become entwined with entrepreneurship and blur boundaries between individuals, organizations and society. By shifting responsibility from society to the individual, thus bringing entrepreneurship in in new guises, it is no longer (solely) a question of economic and other gains but of taking (social, ecological and cultural) responsibility. However, when neo-liberal pursuits attempt to open up market society, the economic dimension is not pushed aside but spills over into and influences all the other aspects of life today. This provides a challenge and poses questions as to how to enact this in our classrooms and thus offer a critical entrepreneurship education.

We situate critical entrepreneurship education at the crossroads of “lower education” (preschool, compulsory school, upper secondary school) and higher education. While lower education has witnessed a striving to broaden the understanding of entrepreneurship by, for example, linking it to social and...
environmental issues, creativity and also democracy and politics (cf. Leffler, 2009; Holmgren, 2012), this broader view is rarely reported on in literature on entrepreneurship pedagogy used in higher education (for an exception see e.g. Hjorth, 2011; Barinaga, 2016). At the same time, in preparing this volume, we have come across many initiatives positing entrepreneurship as a broader phenomenon, and problematizing its different faces in our teaching. In experimenting with pedagogical purposes, approaches and content, the authors in this volume work with such issues as reflexivity, gender, the entrepreneurial self, responsibility, awareness, creativity and vulnerability. To further spur this kind of development, this book aims to make it clear why critical questions need to be formulated, and how they can be enacted to evoke students’ understandings of the plurality of entrepreneuring (cf. Chapter 4 in this volume). Evoking students (and ourselves) to new entrepreneurial realities aligns well with a need to also challenge ourselves and our students to engage in a dialogue of what entrepreneurship (education) might become.

In this introduction we provide the reader with a short reminder of how entrepreneurship education is generally categorized in teaching “in”, “for”, “through” and “about” entrepreneurship. We also discuss some of the contemporary concerns of the field of entrepreneurship education. This is followed by an introduction to critical entrepreneurship studies and the questions that guide such efforts. Third, we discuss concerns expressed in critical pedagogy literature, especially in relation to the entering self, as well as some of those offered by the critical management education literature. Fourth, we sketch what this may entail for (critical) entrepreneurship education. We conclude by introducing the individual chapters in the book.

The field of entrepreneurship education

Entrepreneurship education (EE) has gained increasing attention and no longer interests only scholars in higher education but also teachers in elementary school, along with politicians, policymakers and education stakeholders. In a literature review, Alain Fayolle (2013) concludes that the field of EE is fragmented. There is little consensus on what unites EE, how the field (or area) should be defined, and what it contains in terms of theories, issues and teaching philosophy and pedagogies (also see Nabi, Linan, Fayolle, Krueger & Walmsley, 2017). Rather, at best diversity, and at worst fragmentation, seem to prevail. This may be an effect of the expansion of EE to broaden its focus and encompass more in terms of its objectives (O’Connor, 2013) and pedagogies (Nabi et al., 2017). Kirby (2007) points to the need for entrepreneurship educators to “develop graduates who can be innovative and take responsibility for their own destinies not just in a business or even a market economy context” (p. 21). Thus, EE has transgressed from being limited to offering a place for students to learn about the creation of new ventures to inhabiting a space where it sets out to facilitate for (young) people to be able to “cope with uncertainty and ambiguity, make sense out of chaos, initiate, build and achieve, in the process not just
coping with change but anticipating and initiating it” (Kirby, 2007, p. 23). It appears that EE is used for many different things, in different contexts, with different groups and for different reasons.

A division of EE into the categories “about”, “for” and “in” was made by Jamieson in 1984. This division has spurred scholars to develop ideas relating to the diversity of and within entrepreneurship education. With reference to Henry, Hill and Leitch (2003), Taatila (2010) defines “for” as a preparation for self-employment/venture creation, and “in” as a form of management training for established entrepreneurs. To Kirby (2007), “for” is about developing the attributes of entrepreneurship in students, “through” is when the business start-up process is used to enable students to acquire both business understandings and entrepreneurial competences, and “about” refers to the traditional pedagogical process of teaching students by providing them with academic knowledge about entrepreneurship. We adopt these four angles (in, for, through, about: IFTA) to shed some light on the diversity with regard to how entrepreneurship is thought of, shaped and practised in an educational context.

Within the scope of our introduction to entrepreneurship education, we want to highlight a few concerns voiced by entrepreneurship educators. First and foremost, there is a growing awareness that entrepreneurship is more than “business making” (cf. Gibb, 2002; Kirby, 2007; Thrane, Blenker, Korsgaard & Neergaard, 2016). With entrepreneurship education initially focusing on new business creation, and doing so by adopting predominantly economic and business perspectives and models, we see a wider range of approaches being embraced, and a growing number of entrepreneurship courses and programmes adopting a “broader” definition of entrepreneurship (i.e. as more than business making). With this broadening of previously set boundaries, we also witness a call to continue to wonder how entrepreneurship education can remain (or be made) entrepreneurial (cf. Kuratko, 2005; Fayolle, 2013; Hjorth & Johannisson, 2007). Experimenting with both ways to bring the various understandings of entrepreneurship to the fore and in particular “where” to teach our courses seems to be a relevant theme. In experimenting with pedagogical approaches, emphasis is being placed on the creative-relational nature of learning (cf. Hjorth & Johannisson, 2007; Hjorth, 2011), with reflections on not only our roles as educators and our (hierarchical) positions in teaching but also the relationality involved in engaging students as active (co)learners. In thinking about our roles as educators, we may feel the need to explore the relationship between education and provocation (Hjorth, 2011), with less emphasis on “reproductive continuity” (i.e. the reproduction of knowledge) but with more room for invention, i.e. creating other concepts, allowing for new ways of understanding (ibid.).

Notwithstanding these developments and the variety of and in (designing) entrepreneurship education, there appears to be a striking consistency with regard to an assumed consensual aim for more and more students to start up a business (or, broadly, organization) either after or during the education. The idea of promoting entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education is both omnipresent and pervasive (also see Nabi et al., 2017), to the extent that students are not
only educated for entrepreneurship but also graduated to do it. Pittaway and Cope (2007) write that there are “two distinct forms of output: first, to enhance graduate employability and second, to encourage graduate enterprise” (p. 485). When the assumption is “the more, the merrier”, the ambition to broaden entrepreneurship education may falter as it is locked into its own narrow box where performativity rules (cf. Dey & Steyaert, 2007). The knowledge that counts is the knowledge that can be acted upon and measured in terms of success or failure, whereby learning for the sake of learning is by definition ruled out. It is this tendency to shift the “why” of education, or at least make it more one-sided, that is of concern to critical thinkers (Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Dahlstedt & Fejes, 2017). Entrepreneurship is transformed into a guiding principle for how we are to conduct our lives in accordance with the formula for “entrepreneurial freedom”. This may involve starting a new business of the conventional type and taking a product to the market, or becoming self-employed and “living your dream”: at best a “free life”, at worst a life where you struggle to make ends meet, something you share with many others in a similar precarious situation. Or it could imply having to continuously ask yourself how to improve as if you were your own producer, marketer and seller (Berglund, 2013). Or it may involve engaging with others to come to grips with such societal concerns as inequality, social exclusion or environmental pollution, with entrepreneurship becoming the process of joint efforts to turn this problem into an opportunity where the two logics of solving a problem and thriving on the market may turn into a conflict. Entrepreneurial logic intervenes and turns stable employment into a process of employability; it compels us to engage in our personal development rather than to enjoy it; it moves political and voluntary action into the background as ideas for our collective good are offered through entrepreneurial paths. Thus, entrepreneurship (and the education that follows) is not simply one course among others to choose from, but has paved the way for how we can live the present. It is exactly this tendency, and the omnipresence of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education, from which there is no escape, not as students, teachers, children, adults or simply humans. This is of concern when entrepreneurial values underpin the idea of the contemporary citizen (Dahlstedt & Fejes, 2017). If entrepreneurship education is to remain vital, we cannot deny these problematics since entrepreneurship (and entrepreneurship education) are everywhere. As entrepreneurship educators we must embrace these problematics, ponder over them, use “other” theories to reflect on them, continue to pose new questions and invite our students to do so as well. So, to keep EE “fresh” we should remind ourselves of the dangerous side of it, in particular that which has seemingly become “untouchable” from interrogation. We can therefore no longer avoid the provocative questions (cf. Hjorth, 2011) but should instead use them to ask ourselves, and our students, whether there are other ways to live the present than the “conventional” entrepreneurial way.

We will return to IFTA in the fourth section to shed light on what a critical reflection of entrepreneurship can bring about in proposing “other” forms of in/for/through and about. But first we invite the reader to “enter” the field of critical
entrepreneurship studies, for it is usually from the concerns raised in that field
that educators start to think of raising critical awareness in relation to their entre-
preneurship courses and/or programmes.

Concerns of critical entrepreneurship studies

This section offers an in-depth elaboration on critical entrepreneurship studies
(CES), which builds on Denise Fletcher’s short introduction to the subject.
Having already witnessed two reviews of this field (Spicer, 2012; Fletcher &
Selden, 2015), we can say without hesitation that it has expanded considerably
since the early days of Nodoushani and Nodoushani (1999), Ogbor (2000) and
Armstrong (2005). In line with Alvesson and Willmott’s (1996) definition of
critical management studies, critical entrepreneurship studies has set out “to
challenge the legitimacy – and counter the development of – oppressive institu-
tions and practices, seeking to highlight, nurture and promote the potential of
human consciousness to reflect critically upon such practices” (p. 13), specifi-
cally in connection to entrepreneurship discourse (cf. Armstrong, 2005) and
entrepreneurial practices (cf. Beaver & Jennings, 2005). Some milestones that
we believe have shaped the field are the “movements books” by Daniel Hjorth
and Chris Steyaert (2003, 2006, 2010), which together with special issues
(Hjorth, Jones & Gartner, 2008; Tedmanson, Verduijn, Essers & Gartner, 2012;
Rehn, Brännback, Carsrud & Lindahl, 2013; Verduijn, Dey, Tedmanson &
Essers, 2014; Essers, Dey, Tedmanson & Verduijn, 2017) have challenged main-
stream understandings and discourses of entrepreneurship.

CES offer insight into how entrepreneurial discourses have multiplied by
expanding into new contexts (such as social entrepreneurship; see Ziegler, 2011),
where entrepreneurship benefits values over and above economic values, where
an understanding of entrepreneurship as socially constituted is shaped (Fletcher,
2006; Jack et al., 2008; Korsgaard, 2011) and where entrepreneurs “other” than
the stereotypical Western world self-made middle-aged man are given a voice
(Banerjee & Tedmanson, 2010; Achtenhagen & Welter, 2011; Essers & Ted-
manson, 2014; Ozkazanc-Pan, 2014). Critical scholars continuously testify to
how entrepreneurship continues to pervade many areas of not only economic life
but also social life, including the world of school (Berglund, Lindgren & Pack-
endorff, 2017). Altogether, this expansion of entrepreneurship discourses is
aligned with solutions for coming to grips with the shortcomings of conventional
entrepreneurship such as its economic roots and excluding tendencies. Despite
efforts to alter entrepreneurial discourses, it is recognized that they are entangled
with a capitalist ideology and surely do not offer “solutions” to its crises (Costa
& Saraiva, 2012; Marsh & Thomas, 2017), but may rather work as “prophylactic
action” (Vrasti, 2009).

All in all, CES adopt and span a wide variety of theoretical approaches and
disciplines. These are not limited to theories of political economy as influenced
by post-Marxism or the Frankfurt School type of critical theory but include
postcolonial views (Essers & Benschop, 2009; Essers & Tedmanson, 2014),
non-entitative, processual stances (Nayak & Chia, 2011; Hjorth, 2013; Verduijn, 2015) and feminist theoretical perspectives (Calas et al., 2009; Pettersson et al., 2017), as well as political-philosophical perspectives addressing the enterprising subject (du Gay, 2004; Hjorth & Steyaert, 2010; Jones & Spicer, 2005; Berglund & Skoglund, 2016).

This has resulted in a vein of CES contributions that are sceptical about entrepreneurship studies, some of whom issue a firm “warning”. Such contributions question dominant assumptions being attributed to the entrepreneurship phenomenon, its grand narratives and – more generally – the ideological distortions of mainstream entrepreneurship research (including its paradigmatic roots). Indeed, such contributions engage openly with the “dark sides” of and within entrepreneurship (such as the contradictions, ambiguities, tensions and paradoxes inherent in entrepreneurial activities; cf. Armstrong, 2005; Jones & Spicer, 2009; Costa & Saraiva, 2012; Olaison & Sorensen, 2014). Alongside this sceptical vein we witness a vein of contributions that form explicit hopeful attempts to “open up” our understanding of the entrepreneurship phenomenon to a more affirmative stance. Such contributions rearticulate entrepreneurship in the light of issues of societal production and emancipation (cf. Steyaert & Hjorth, 2006; Calas et al., 2009; Berglund Johannisson & Schwartz, 2012; Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013). Together, these veins form the “double-edged sword” that constitutes CES (also see Verduijn et al., 2014), which needs to be reflected upon when critical entrepreneurship enters the classroom. Presenting entrepreneurship from a critical perspective simultaneously necessitates providing students with a space where it can be reconstructed. We will come back to how we can move from deconstructing entrepreneurship to reconstructing the same, but before doing so we will consult our “older” neighbours – critical management education and critical pedagogy – to see what lessons we can integrate in the emerging field of critical entrepreneurship education.

Learning from our neighbours: critical management education and critical pedagogy

Against the backdrop of the need to bring critical concerns to entrepreneurship education, we have turned to critical management education contributions as well as to critical pedagogy’s writings on entrepreneurship and literature on the entreprising self to see if we can “borrow” some lessons for critical entrepreneurship education from them. To be sure, the critical pedagogy focus is not aligned with mainstream entrepreneurship education’s concern of how to better train people in business making, or to become “entrepreneurs of the self”, and stimulate (more) students to do so. Our attempt is by no means an attempt to arrive at a comprehensive overview of either critical management education or critical pedagogy literature. As stated, it is, rather, an attempt to learn from others who have already struggled with similar concerns for a longer period of time and have experience in bringing these concerns into their classrooms.
The concerns expressed in critical management studies typically translate into critical management education by means of a set of principles in relation to curriculum development (Choo, 2007a):

- The curriculum is expected to embrace humanistic and liberal studies and subsume cultural, social and political cognitive perspectives.
- It should not encapsulate only performance-related financial values or interests that are trapped in what Weber (1978) (in Choo, 2007a) called “instrumental rationality”.
- The modalities of teaching and learning are expected to include an element of critical reflection to encourage students to question both hidden pedagogical assumptions and those that are taken for granted as received wisdom in both knowledge and practice.
- The critical reflection must provide students with opportunities to question what Argyris (1996) (in Choo, 2007a) called the “undiscussable”; that is, questioning coherent sets of values, beliefs and practices which are constructed and disseminated by lecturers to sustain their legitimate role as teacher, and the assumptions that are taken for granted and usually concealed during teaching.
- The methods of assessment are expected to be emancipatory, i.e. to support student empowerment and promote equal treatment and opportunity.
- The emancipatory process should also provide students with opportunities to identify and contest sources of inequality and treatment of minorities, and question the assumptions implicit in tutors’ assessment methods.
- The learning environment is expected to be democratic and participative and have a collective focus.

Many CME contributions mention the particular problematic found in the context in which management education typically takes place, namely the business school/MBA programme (cf. Currie, Knights & Starkey, 2010). With a fair number of contributions signalling this and other significant barriers to introducing critical management education (such as – more generally, and not only pertaining to the business school context – institutionalized assessment rules and regulations, marketization of higher education, learning styles and cultural diversity of students; see Choo, 2007b), we also see attempts at rethinking management education (Beyes & Michels, 2011), with an emphasis on opening up and connecting to the “problematics of society” (Beyes & Michels, 2011), and to how institutions of management education can enact “other spaces”, as productive forces.

In a similar vein, the ambition in critical pedagogy literature is to inform the reader about the power relations in play in the shaping of entrepreneurial students and teachers (Peters, 2001). The articles are descriptive (in contrast to normative) and take an analytical interest in how enterprise culture has come to govern education. Key concepts are not “idea”, “business”, “opportunity” and “discovery” but rather “governmentality”, “enterprising self”, “enterprising
culture”, “subjectivity” and “power”. These are used by critical pedagogues and can be adopted to inform the student about critical issues that are part of the introduction of enterprise (and entrepreneurship) in schools. So let us start by introducing these analytical key concepts.

Neo-liberalism typically describes economic imperatives of enhancing privatization and de-regulating markets (Harvey, 2005). Critical pedagogy is not interested in the economic implications of this shift but in how an enterprise culture changes learners’ and educators’ relations to themselves as well as to others. Consequently, the pedagogical interventions developed, more broadly under the influence of enterprise culture, and more specifically within the framework of entrepreneurship education, are understood as a particular kind of governmentality which connects students and teachers to a capitalist logic and to the rationality of the market (e.g. Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2014). Governmentality refers to the productive power to govern through mentalité, e.g. “mind” (Foucault, 1978/1991). This mode of governing is not directed towards setting limits and boundaries but works through the individual by producing subjects, forming subjectivities and behaviour and enhancing the emergence of an organization of the social, which, assessed from an economic rationale, is seen to be more effective (Brown, 2003).

Neo-liberalism is inextricably linked to a need to foster enterprising selves. The enterprising self can, broadly, be described as a life form constituted by the autonomous, self-regulating, responsible and economically rational individual (Barry & Osborne, 1996). The enterprising self forms a subjectivity from which both the entrepreneur and the entrepreneurial student/teacher are given their contours. De Lauretis 1986 (in Ball, 2003, p. 227) defines subjectivity as “patterns by which experimental and emotional contexts, feelings, images and memories are organized to form one’s self image, one’s sense of self and others, and our possibilities of existence”. In neo-liberal societies the enterprising self is further promoted by turning education into a personal and ethical investment of the individual (Peters, 2001, p. 60). The enterprising self informs us of the need to be(come) an ambitious person who takes responsibility by giving her or his life a specific entrepreneurial form (cf. Lemke, 2001). Thus, the enterprising self can be understood as a “template” from which various kinds of entrepreneurial identities are configured. Analytically, it informs us of the myriad of entrepreneurial becomings that can be constructed by combining, say, “education + enterprise + responsibility + creativity + freedom + opportunity + future”. In this vein, entrepreneurship, as part of a broader culture of enterprise and neo-liberalism, will trickle down to schools, where enterprising selves can be fostered, shaped, affirmed and applauded (as we have described above).

The connection with a need for a more critical outlook on entrepreneurship education is easily made. Broadly, criticism is directed at what neo-liberal logic does to us, through an emphasis on entrepreneurship in policy (e.g. Connell, 2013; Dahlstedt & Tesfahuney, 2011) and curriculum (Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2014) and how it intervenes through enterprise culture (e.g. Peters, 2001; Down, 2009) and also through particular educational or training programmes.
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(e.g. Bragg, 2007; Bendix Petersen & O’Flynn, 2007). The criticism expressed is that students and teachers alike are connected to the rationality of the market, with the activity and productivity of individuals being linked to global competitiveness and employability. With critical pedagogy insights, entrepreneurship in education not only signals the hopes for (more) new businesses and innovations, but also the seeking to prepare students for a society where they need to take responsibility to a greater extent than before. Bragg (2007), for example, has investigated how personal goals and aspirations are voiced in efforts to make students create opportunities for their futures and take responsibility for turning their ideas into action. This, as Bragg (2007) asserts, requires work on the self, involving both inspection of the self and self-criticism as these young people learn to strive for “endless potentiality” (cf. Costea, Amiridis & Crump, 2012). A similar story unfolds in Bendix Petersen and O’Flynn’s (2007) study of how an award scheme is taken up by students in a prestigious Australian private girls’ school. The award scheme is extra-institutional, but the school participates in organizing it with the aim of providing students with an opportunity to “accept a challenge” and “set a personal goal and achieve it”. Along the way, students learn about themselves and “about qualities like responsibility, trust and the ability to plan and organize themselves” (p. 202). Placing this award scheme in the analytical frame of how neo-liberal governmentality fosters a particular enterprising self, Bendix Petersen and O’Flynn (2007) show how this programme actually constitutes a powerful technology of the self as it invites young girls “to desire and assess worthwhileness along entrepreneurial lines: to gaze upon themselves as malleable, flexible, always-improvable portfolios and learn to assess themselves as successful or failing accordingly” (p. 209).

In addition, responsibility is rolled down not only from global and national institutions onto the individual, but also from adults to children. The citizen, in many Western democracies, is still entitled to particular rights, but she is increasingly being processed to ask herself what she can do for herself, for her community, her organization (cf. Scharff, 2016). And children are invited to think about what they will be able to do for themselves in the future (Berglund et al., 2017). If we made EE in higher education more critical, could we stimulate students to be creative in rethinking how responsibility could be “rolled back” without making the individual passive or expecting institutions to “solve matters”?

While most of the literature is interested in what neo-liberalism “does” to education, pupils and students, there are a few exceptions that discuss in what way the position of the teacher in particular has changed. Ball (2003) demonstrates how technologies of enterprise reform in the world of school produce new kinds of teacher subjects that are governed through performativity. In line with the principles of performativity, the teacher takes on the role of a performative worker who is expected to have a passion for excellence and performance competition. Education is then seen as a neo-liberal technology where “results are prioritised over processes, numbers over experiences, procedures over ideas, productivity over creativity” (Ball, 2003, p. 91). The teacher is no longer
someone who first and foremost cares about knowledge dissemination and the student, but someone who highlights “front impressions” as presentations (Ball, 2003, p. 224). Effectiveness takes precedence, second-ordering honesty and ethical practices, and replacing authenticity with “plasticity” (Ball, 2003, p. 225).

This may desocialize knowledge and knowledge relations, turning knowledge into an “object” instead of an embodied experience. Thus, the educational project is left hollow, challenging the very notion of academic work and education. Ten years later, Ball and Olmedo (2013) follow up on this study, in discussing teachers’ possibilities to resist these practices of performativity.

In the critical pedagogy literature, entrepreneurship as the route towards freedom and creativity is problematized. Instead, we are invited to make a U-turn, whereby we discern how we are governed through entrepreneurial freedom. Desire turns into a technology that operates through the enterprising self and those governed are not so much obedient workers as they are to become reflexive knowledge workers. There is freedom to be gained. But using this freedom may also serve those in power and sustain dominant power structures.

We should take this into consideration in the making of a more critical entrepreneurship education.

**Contours for critical entrepreneurship education**

In this chapter we offer our sketch of the contours for a field of a critical entrepreneurship education (CEE). What we have addressed so far is how we learn from EE how entrepreneurship has in fact opened up to embrace “more” in the sense of inviting students to take responsibility for themselves and others through learning how to solve problems (also see Dahlstedt & Fejes, 2017) but, more importantly, not to let all the positive connotations that build up entrepreneurship (education) to stand in the way of posing provocative questions (as with critical management education and critical pedagogy). Engaging in CEE could spur ourselves, as entrepreneurship educators, along with our students, to ponder whether there are other ways to live the present than the standard entrepreneurial way. As a next step we have consulted CES, to become aware of the need to integrate the sceptical view of entrepreneurship with the hopeful approach of “remodelled” entrepreneurship. In our interpretation, this implies an interplay between deconstruction and reconstruction. The following three principles may guide us to bring the interplay between deconstruction and reconstruction into our educational approaches, purposes and content:

1. **First,** we should assert that although the enterprising self operates through a productive power, which may be difficult to resist, there is always room for distance and resistance (cf. Ball & Olmedo, 2013). Resistance, however, requires us to learn “the rules of the game”. From the perspective of critical entrepreneurship pedagogy, the game does not refer to “business making” but to the game of “governing through entrepreneurial freedom”. As teachers, we could introduce students to the literature of critical entrepreneurship
studies, as well as to the concepts of critical pedagogy, helping them to understand the principles and providing them with a new perspective of how entrepreneurship may work. At first it may be enough to show them novel aspects of entrepreneurship and to help them digest the fact that there are also “dark sides” to it. In the next step they could become acquainted with the analytical concepts of, for example, neo-liberalism, governmentality and the enterprising self. Equipped with these analytical concepts they could, themselves, begin to analyse cases of their own interest and train their ability for critical reflection. In shaping their futures, this should help them to find more thought-out, aware solutions – for themselves, for organisations and for society.

2 **Second**, creativity should be prioritized over productivity and performativity. This may require involving students in play and becoming, and offering students a space for creative work that will not be assessed according to the “business scale”, but that opens up for them to explore new perspectives, stories, connections and responsibility. Creativity could pave the way for curiosity, for motivation to learn (for the sake of learning) and for growing mutual relations with peer students from different societal collectives. If creativity is disconnected from the productivity expectancies, solving problems could be turned around to become a method for teaching and learning rather than the “productivity goal” of a student with such skills.

3 **Third**, resisting EE to propel neo-liberalism is different from past struggles as we then need to resist our own practices and confront ourselves at the centre of our discomforts (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). As EE educators we can learn about what it means to resist the neo-liberal educational practices foisted upon us. By recognizing how we are exposed to the productive power to perform we can slowly start to see a way to turn this into other directions (again, reconstruction). This can be done by enacting entrepreneurship education in line with the first and second recommendations (above) but we should not forget the importance of also discussing the matter with colleagues, of sharing ideas, of finding common strategies and of supporting each other in setting boundaries that may open up for another scene where we (teachers and students) can be engulfed by knowledge for the sake of knowledge, and aware that “the future” is not inevitable but part of our creations.

Based on these principles we can see the shape of a “field” in which EE and CEE are connected. Entrepreneurship education has been opened up from a narrow “business approach” to embrace a wider approach with the ambition to teach (young) people how they can manage life itself. This has involved a move from understanding the entrepreneur of the self to understanding entrepreneurship as a collective effort and as having social and societal consequences. Entrepreneurship changes from the idea of building one’s kingdom to an understanding of engaging in an entrepreneurship for the other (cf. Jones & Spicer, 2009). This shows a need to move from understanding the doing of
entrepreneurship from particular events where successful entrepreneurs are elevated and celebrated (e.g. *Dragons’ Den*, entrepreneurship awards, etc.) in a “peacock kind of way” (Bill, Jansson & Olaison, 2010) to understanding the mundane practices of entrepreneuring where “worker ants” blend pleasure with struggles (Bill *et al.*, 2010) and where dialogue outclasses pitch and monologue at the scene (also see Denise Fletcher’s prologue). These shifts require a move from “playing the rules of the business game” to understanding how the rules can be played with (Berglund & Gaddefors, 2010). Altogether this takes us towards new understandings of IFTA. We will now return to IFTA and see how it might incorporate a critical take on EE.

Taking named displacements into account we can sketch a shift with regard to IFTA. The “for” of EE changes from learning about starting up a business to nurturing students towards becoming aware decision makers. The “in” of entrepreneurship education changes from making business and business making to enacting entrepreneurship in some form (e.g. through projects, through NGOs, setting up an artistic performance, enacting flash mobs, social engagement and interventions, making films, etc.). The “about” of entrepreneurship education changes from adhering to the grand narrative to problematizing the same, perhaps with using the knowledge provided by critical entrepreneurship pedagogy. The “through” of entrepreneurship education changes from instructions and (business) tools to engaging with students in dialogue and critical reflection. Together this builds an “IFTA 2.0” (see Figure 1.1).

**Introducing the book chapters**

This section introduces the individual chapters in the book, and relates them to the contours that we have sketched. We can assure the reader that the various contributions offer a rich diversity of approaches, pedagogies and ways of raising questions that testifies to how homogeneity (see Denise Fletcher’s prologue) becomes a matter of the past. Experimentation with criticality in the classroom is happening “out there”, and many fresh and innovative learning experiences are offered by the contributors, including their honest accounts of the resistance and struggles they encounter in doing so.

First, from Richard Tunstall we learn more about how entrepreneurship has actually and effectively found its way into the very core of the university. In Chapter 1, *Education or Exploitation? Reflecting on the Entrepreneurial University and the Role of the Entrepreneurship Educator*, Richard sets the scene in an outstanding way by showing that entrepreneurship is no longer a marginal issue of providing students with a particular kind of education, but has turned into an issue of managing the university through university–business collaborations. One point he makes is that this sets the very idea of the university in motion. He begins by bringing us to a conference, held at a 300-year-old university, which has gathered prominent guests, including academic delegates, small business owners, university spin-off officers, innovation managers of major multinational corporations and a government minister. But uninvited, and less welcome guests,
such as protesting students, have also gathered. Through rich empirical vignettes, Richard testifies to how this conflict unfolds over time and involves university staff, media exposure, and even a trial. With the legacy of the university being to enable students to develop their own reasoning skills in a milieu of academic freedom, entrepreneurship did not in this case pass by unnoticed. While some saw it as the redemption of a future for the (entrepreneurial) university, others saw it as the “evil” of capitalism and as the end of the university as it has always been regarded. Richard elaborates further on this dividing line and illustrates alternative ways of framing the purpose of education practice and the role of those involved. By taking the students’ protests seriously he provides insight into how their expectations go beyond that of making a personal career, and are linked more to concerns about the very purpose of higher education. If we accept that entrepreneurship comes as part and parcel of our (entrepreneurial) society we cannot circumvent this topic in education, nor can we take it for granted. Rather, we need to think anew, for how it can be introduced without prohibiting criticism, protests and concerns, and without juxtaposing “academic freedom” with “the entrepreneurial university”?

*Figure 1.1 Towards a critical IFTA.*
In Chapter 2, *Entrepreneurship in Societal Change: Students as Reflecting Entrepreneurs?*, Jessica Lindberg and Birgitta Schwartz invite us to attend a course in which entrepreneurship is connected to various societal issues. Introducing global issues through film, lectures and guest lecturers encourages critical questions among students. These questions are reflected upon from both “new” and “conventional” entrepreneurship literature. At the same time, students engage in solving a particular issue, and through an interplay between the literature and the local context they develop practices for societal entrepreneuring. For Jessica and Birgitta, the entrepreneurial learning process is, in addition to being experience-based (the students’ projects), also and importantly a future-oriented thinking process.

Chapter 3, *The Reflexivity Grid: Exploring Conscientization in Entrepreneurship Education*, by Leona Achtenhagen and Bengt Johannisson, shares Jessica and Birgitta’s concern for “the world at large”. Leona and Bengt argue that reflexivity plays an important role in entrepreneurship education, whether it is in supporting students to become responsible entrepreneurs, or something “broader”, that is to say training them to develop the intuitive insight they will eventually need to determine what is right and wrong both practically and ethically, and in various types of “concrete situations”. They make a plea for a conscious pedagogical approach to advancing reflexivity, allowing students to conscientiously enact not only their own learning but to also contribute to the (local) world in which their learning occurs. They propose three different modes for enacting reflexivity, namely cognitive/emotional, hierarchy/network and being/becoming, and discuss these modes by offering two concrete learning situations as illustrative of how these modes for enacting reflexivity play out.

In Chapter 4, *From Entrepreneurship to Entrepreneuring: Transforming Healthcare Education*, Hanna Jansson, Madelen Lek and Cormac McGrath offer an intriguing insight into the world of healthcare and healthcare education. The chapter provides the reader with rich reflections on the struggles involved in introducing entrepreneurship education to that particular world, where the view of entrepreneurship as something *bad* is particularly pervasive among healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses, physical therapists, etc.). Interestingly, they connect education to what is perhaps a more general ability to learn and make sense of acquiring the ability to adjust certain practices, something they deem relevant, vital even, for the Swedish healthcare sector. This idea has invoked a particular take on entrepreneurship education, as they have proceeded to develop an EE course for their institution. Using Bourdieu’s *habitus* to define, deconstruct and redefine what is meant by EE, they offer rich reflections on how they enact a pluralistic and nuanced conceptualization of EE in healthcare.

Taken together, these three chapters offer examples of how we can evoke students (and colleagues, as with Chapter 4). These chapters pointedly aim to generate responses, which for us would be a first move towards the kind of awareness that we see in our contours for a critical entrepreneurship education.

In Chapter 5, *A Space on the Side of the Road: Creating a Space for a Critical Approach to Entrepreneurship*, Pam Seanor offers a very personal story of
how she struggles to bring criticality into her classroom. Her view on criticality is that of building awareness; there is never just one reality of entrepreneurship and of creating sensitivity for the differences in entrepreneurship. Pam meets considerable (varieties of) resistance, not only from students but also from colleagues. Her tactic has been – literally – to try to create space for her critical approach to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education. This chapter may be a good starting point if you are new to the life-world of the (critical) entrepreneur educator. Pam raises interesting and relevant questions relating not only to the classroom but also to how to open up conversations with colleagues in allowing for “other” interpretations and conceptualizations of entrepreneurship, engaging them in a dialogue that might spur them on to realizing that they too can resist their own practices.

In Chapter 6, Conceptual Activism: Entrepreneurship Education as a Philosophical Project, Christian Garmann Johnsen, Lena Olaison and Bent Meier Sorensen provide us with insightful thoughts on how philosophy can challenge and invite students to rethink and re-enact entrepreneurship. The question they ask is how philosophy can become a productive force in the teaching of entrepreneurship in business schools. Through exploring their own practices and guiding the reader through two didactic approaches they have developed and experimented with, they provide us with a didactic approach tool which they call “conceptual activism”. This approach implies deploying philosophical concepts in such a way that it sensitizes students to their own experiences and discourses on entrepreneurship. Christian, Lena and Bent take us on a tour to their classroom experiences where the two approaches are enacted. In one they use art and a mode of juxtaposition to evoke new “images” of entrepreneurship, and in the other the success/failure dialectics are problematized using Kristeva’s concept of the abject. From these examples we learn how the teachers’ own reflections on philosophy are translated to their interactions with students, who are challenged to unlock alternative viewpoints with regard to key features of entrepreneurship discourses, such as agency, creation, success and failure.

Chapters 5 and 6 together explicitly set out to move (understandings of) entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship education. They do so by experimenting and offering new “thinking tools”.

In Part IV we find three chapters that also set out to move students, but with explicit considerations with regard to how students can be challenged and moved out of their “comfort zones”, so as to create room for distance and resistance.

In Chapter 7, Bringing Gender In: The Promise of Critical Feminist Pedagogy, Sally Jones gives an informed, insightful and detailed illustration of how she challenges, and sometimes provokes, students to reflect upon the gendered entrepreneurship discourse. By introducing entrepreneurship from a feminist theoretical perspective she involves students in making their own (gendered and other) presumptions visible, both to themselves and others. With the two concepts of “stereotype threat” and “stereotype lift” she invites the reader to reflect upon how teachers may reproduce a gendered, ethnocentric, racist and ageist entrepreneurship discourse. Yet, through employing different didactic
approaches, she invites herself, together with the students, to not only reflect upon current gendered practices but also to reconsider how to alter those that they have come to find problematic. From Sally we learn that gendered entrepreneurship discourse requires reflection, and that that very reflection is underpinned by a critical awareness that can be used to analyse and become aware of not only gender but also other dysfunctions that entrepreneurship discourse may propel. “Bringing gender in” forced her to experiment with didactic approaches, which helped her and her students to challenge mainstream accounts and practices of entrepreneurship, and “beyond”.

In Chapter 8, *Entrepreneurship and the Entrepreneurial Self: Creating Alternatives Through Entrepreneurship Education?*, Annika Skoglund and Karin Berglund discuss a critical entrepreneurship course entitled “Entrepreneurship and the Entrepreneurial Self” (designed for master’s students). Entrepreneurship is brought into the course in relation to Foucault’s notion of “productive power”, and to how “freedom” has become linked to a creation of “the social” and “the economic”, to (seemingly) open up possibilities for self-creation. Annika and Karin engage their students in critical reflections on political dimensions, human limits, alternative ideals and the collective efforts that are part of entrepreneurial endeavours. They provide the readers with a detailed description of how the course is set up, including the various assignments they have designed to engage the students in critical learning. The course addresses not only the emphasis being placed on the economic sphere in neo-liberal societies but also how this gives rise to “alternative entrepreneurial selves” in a way that witnesses how an abundance of entrepreneurial selves unfolds. Annika and Karin assert the need to interrogate this emergence of “rejuvenated and upgraded entrepreneurial selves” in a way that unsettles the spread of these alternative forms.

In Chapter 9, *Between Critique and Affirmation: An Interventionist Approach to Entrepreneurship Education*, Patrizia Hoyer, Bernhard Resch and Chris Steyaert also argue that it is not enough to “simply” question the optimistic politics of entrepreneurship education. Rather, this is an interplay between critique and affirmation, enabled by “an interventionist approach”. Their interventions aim at disentangling and reassociating time and space, bodies and motions, people and materials, and we constantly add new elements to the equation in what they call “sometimes curious ways” to open up for unusual learning formats which push towards critical reflection as well as experimenting with aesthetic, material, spatial and embodied ways of learning. They offer a description and reflection of a course in which they set out to challenge some of the university’s stabilized preconditions, take “critical walks”, engage students in creative group performances, and invite them to move and dance. Patrizia, Bernhard and Chris illustrate how their interventionist pedagogy generates affectual flows that “may even result in a fumbling reinvention of teaching itself”.

The chapters in Part V once again testify to how encouraging students to get out of their comfort zones and start to see and experience things differently takes time, and comes with discomfort, disruption and resistance — on the part of the
students as well as the educators. It invites teachers to rethink their practices, and
invent new ones. And it invokes the need to have dialogues.

In Chapter 10, *Moving Entrepreneurship*, Karen Verduijn engages students in
dialogues on the fluid, ephemeral and indeterminate nature of entrepreneuring.
The aim is to stimulate students’ curiosity and to move them towards new under-
standings of what it means to enact entrepreneuring. This is accomplished –
based upon process ontology – by introducing students to a film project where
their assignment is to produce a film which questions dominant assumptions of
the entrepreneur (as a particular person), of entrepreneurship (as a planned and
manageable process) and of the result (as a predetermined goal). The approach
challenges students’ understandings of entrepreneurship and may at times, and
with regard to students’ previous educational experiences, appear uncomfortable
and sometimes even incomprehensible. The approach thus moves students out of
their comfort zones and introduces them to a new setting where educational con-
cepts of examination, goals and results need to be reinterpreted. Apart from bring-
ing the reader to the classroom to show in detail how this approach can enrich
entrepreneurship education, Karen also addresses the struggles and turmoil it may
bring about for the educators, and elaborates on how they form valuable learning
experiences that can be brought back into the dialogue with students.

In Chapter 11, *On Vulnerability in Critical Entrepreneurship Education*,
Anna Wettermark, André Kårforss, Oskar Lif, Alice Wickström, Sofie Wiessner
and Karin Berglund emphasize the need to have mutual learning taking place in
our classrooms. The chapter develops thoughts on vulnerabilities and possibil-
ities in teaching entrepreneurship, and includes reflections of students who have
taken the course, on which deliberate space is created for the “outing” of vulner-
abilities, both the teacher’s and the students’. The chapter continues with discus-
sions on the self, as explained in Chapter 9. It offers an opportunity to witness
how students take up critical notions about the self, in relation to other(s), and in
doing so offers an inspiring example of how dialogue can be enacted, and
student awareness fostered.

The epilogue, by Ulla Hytti, connects to the various chapters in the book by
discussing how critical entrepreneurship education could take the form of resist-
ing the tendencies towards a “McEducation”, a tendency in which students are
seen as consumers, with the right to have an entrepreneurship education. Ulla’s
contribution, as well as others in the volume, questions this tendency, and argues
that bringing in the “why” may prove a way forward.

Together, the contributions provide us with a platform from which we can
start to meet the challenges that entrepreneurship education faces in con-
temporary society, and a basis from which to continue to bring criticality in the
classroom, whether through evoking and/or through moving and/or through chal-
lenging and/or through having dialogues with students. With this volume we
would like to affirm to other entrepreneurship educators that we no longer have
to experiment in isolation but that in sharing our thoughts, concerns and ideas of
a critical entrepreneurship education we have a community to learn from and
with, which serves to break up our sense of isolation.
References


1 Education or exploitation?

Reflecting on the entrepreneurial university and the role of the entrepreneurship educator

Richard Tunstall

Act 1, Scene 1: The university disrupted

It is a bright summer morning on campus. Semester has ended and conference season has begun. This conference is no different to any other. There is a registration list, name badges are handed out, old relationships are rekindled over questionable coffee and delegate lists are scanned for new people to meet.

We sit comfortably, dressed in suits in an air-conditioned lecture theatre in a glinting new glass and steel campus building, dedicated to a historical local luminary who 300 years ago inspired a national social movement. The topic today is entrepreneurship and innovation, and I attend as a researcher, but academic delegates are few in number and we sit alongside small business owners, university spin-off officers and innovation managers of major multinational corporations. We are listening to a keynote from a government minister, who explains the importance of the conference to the national agenda for university–business collaboration. So far, so normal, yet not a traditional university event by any means.

Suddenly, there is an ear-piercing shriek as the lecture theatre doors burst open. The minister stops mid-speech and backs away from the podium as six students walk across the stage and unfurl a large banner which poses one question to us:

Education or exploitation?

At first delegates seem shocked by the stage invasion and air horns, but they become relaxed and good humoured as all the signs of a student protest in progress become clear.

STUDENT PROTESTOR (Shouting from the lectern): We are here today to protest against companies involved in some of the most horrendous human rights abuses! Exploitation of the planet and animals! And government ministers who are colluding with big business! This is not what elected representatives are supposed to do! There are some of the most horrible companies around today! There was a terrorist attack yesterday! Nine people killed!