Behind the scenes: spotlight on the entrepreneurship educator

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"Behind the scenes: spotlight on the entrepreneurship educator"

Abstract

Purpose - Explores the role of the entrepreneurship educator and their place in the entrepreneurship education landscape.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper uses an adapted version of Jones and Matlay's (2011) conceptual framework that describes the context of entrepreneurship education to explore the entrepreneurship educator's role. In-depth interviews were conducted with eleven entrepreneurship educators from five universities/university colleges in Denmark.

Findings Illustrates the situated nature of entrepreneurship education. The entrepreneurship educator is embedded in a system of dialogic relationships with a range of stakeholders. This paper provides insights into how the entrepreneurship educator navigates these relationships and the influence these relationships have in determining the scope and nature of the entrepreneurship educator's role.

Research implications Provides a framework and findings upon which further studies can build in an area that has hitherto received limited attention. Findings could be compared with those in other geographical contexts, for example. The dialogic relationships themselves could be explored either holistically or individually with other stakeholders (e.g. students, institutions, communities).

Originality/value Research on the role of the entrepreneurship educator is extremely limited in an area that has otherwise seen a proliferation of research. The adaptation and application of Jones and Matlay's (2011) framework provides a novel way of understanding how this role is shaped. Where most studies focus either on course content or the students, this study proposes another way to gain insight into the complex world of delivering entrepreneurship education.

Keywords Entrepreneurship education, educator, educational philosophy, entrepreneurship pedagogy, higher education institutions

Paper type Research

Introduction:

It is generally acknowledged that entrepreneurship education (EE) can be viewed from different perspectives: "about", "for", "through" and "embedded" (Jamieson, 1984; Pittaway and Edwards, 2012; Robinson and Blenker, 2014). The focus of EE itself is usually oriented towards new venture creation, although it is also acknowledged that EE extends beyond this and can be regarded as a means to develop in students an entrepreneurial mindset (Neck & Corbett, 2018). Indeed, some such as Gibb (2011) have called for the broadening of the concept of entrepreneurship beyond the narrow start-up focus, and others such as Wiklund et al. (2011, p. 12) go so far as to suggest entrepreneurship should be redefined as "a method of human problem solving." Irrespective of how precisely the aims of entrepreneurship education are defined, its promotion and growth continue

apace, indeed have been described as exponential (Winkel, 2013) or even breath-taking (Morris and Liguori, 2016).

However, despite its growing importance in higher education provision (Quality Assurance Agency, 2018), with the UK Government-commissioned Young Report suggesting it be included across all levels and areas of education (Young, 2014), the majority of studies have focussed on impact or outcomes with little emphasis on underpinning pedagogy (Nabi et al., 2016). In this regard, Morris and Liguori (2016, p. xvi) note that while the expansion of EE has occurred swiftly ''our understanding of what should be taught by entrepreneurship educators, how it should be taught, and how outcomes should be assessed'' has not kept pace. Consequently, what distinguishes entrepreneurship and the learning of entrepreneurship from other disciplines will remain a matter of debate, although there does appear to be at least some agreement around content (e.g. business start-up functions, ideation, design thinking) if not methods. It has also been argued that EE is about action (Neck and Corbett, 2018; Rideout and Gray, 2013) and that methods of teaching should themselves be entrepreneurial (Winkel, 2013). More recent developments (Santos et al. 2019) even regard EE as emancipatory and empowering, something very much aligned with more liberal tradition of HE (Lyotard, 1984). What we are offering here is a focus on one aspect of the 'how' of entrepreneurship education, namely the role of the educator which, we argue, cannot be separated from the question of pedagogy as educators bring their personal values and beliefs with them into the classroom (Peters, 1959; see also Zappe et al. 2013 within an entrepreneurship education context specifically).

Thus, a focus on pedagogy should include a focus on the entrepreneurship educator, although this has remained almost entirely absent within the literature on entrepreneurship education (Neck and Corbett, 2018). An exception here is Zappe et al.'s (2013) paper on the beliefs of instructors who teach entrepreneurship to engineering students. We suggest therefore that it is precisely because very little literature exists in this area that studies such as this one are needed. Consequently, it is not possible at this stage to claim with any degree of certainty that entrepreneurship educators constitute a homogenous group in terms of personality traits. What we can say though is that as a collective, offering education in a burgeoning area, entrepreneurship educators represent a distinct group of individuals worthy of further investigation. This could be in relation to their motivation for teaching, their backgrounds and experience, their pedagogical preferences (e.g. Zappe et al. 2013), but also in terms of the influence of the educational system (entrepreneurship education landscape) they are part of as occurs here.

Thus, taking the lack of literature on the role of the entrepreneurship educator as a starting point, this paper seeks to address our overarching research question which is: "How does the entrepreneurship educator perceive their role in entrepreneurship education and how is this role shaped by their immediate educational context". In seeking to answer this question we locate the educator in the entrepreneurial landscape in higher education adapting Jones and Matlay's (2011) conceptual framework which they used to help make sense of the heterogeneity of entrepreneurship education, and which itself draws on Gartner's (1985) conceptual framework for describing the phenomenon of new venture creation.

Not only does this framework point to the important role of the educator in EE, it also suggests that all elements of the framework, and in our case specifically the role of the educator, are subject to a number of dialogic relationships. More specifically, the dialogic relationships indicate that the

educator's actions, including their adopted pedagogical approach, are dependent upon these relationships, indeed are constituted by them. We acknowledge that Jones and Matlay's (2011) framework could be applied to other educational settings, i.e. outside entrepreneurship, but given that the framework was developed within the EE literature we believe it can serve as a useful tool to make sense of the role of the entrepreneurship educator. Following a description of our methodology we discuss our findings based around four proposed dialogic relationships. We offer recommendations for further study of the role of the entrepreneurship educator, as well as for practice.

Entrepreneurship Education

An interest in entrepreneurship education (EE), broadly understood, is certainly not new with initiatives that sought to develop an enterprise culture in youth in the UK going back to the late 1970s (Greene, 2002), and the first entrepreneurship course being taught earlier still at Harvard University in the 1940s (Kirby and Ibrahim, 2011). Alberti et al (2004) even suggest that the origins of EE are found earlier than this in Japan. However, until recently entrepreneurship has been viewed as a relatively new academic discipline (Brazeal and Herbert, 1999; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000) with the same level of novelty applying to the scholarship of EE. Nonetheless, studies that focus on EE have proliferated in recent years as demonstrated in recent reviews (Nabi et al., 2016; Rideout and Gray, 2013). With a growing interest in entrepreneurship as a means of economic development (Baumol, 2004) a simultaneous growth in EE is being witnessed.

EE serves different purposes whether that be giving students an understanding of the subject, preparing students to start-up their own business or practical training in relation to their own business (Balan and Metcalfe, 2012; Blenker et al., 2008). Despite a strong focus on supporting new venture creation (Neck & Corbett, 2018), the scope of entrepreneurship education is commonly regarded as broader than this, just as entrepreneurship is not solely about business start-up (Covin and Slevin, 1991). At a broad level therefore, EE is about developing enterprising behaviours (Gibb, 1993) which result from the development of an entrepreneurial mindset (Neck & Corbett, 2018) or entrepreneurial capability (Quality Assurance Agency, 2018). For Gibb (2011, p. 151) everyone should essentially develop an entrepreneurial mindset because there is a "necessity for individuals to have the capacity to innovate, create, cope with and enjoy uncertainty and complexity in a globalized world as workers, entrepreneurs, consumers and members of a family and community". There appears to be a 'mainstreaming' of entrepreneurship education in the sense that it is no longer solely about preparing would-be entrepreneurs for venture creation, but for developing all students with the skills, knowledge and capabilities to demonstrate entrepreneurial flair for the demands of a knowledge-based economy.

The entrepreneurship educator

Hannon describes the role of the entrepreneurship educator as "conceptually and pedagogically challenging" (2006, p. 305) which may relate in part at least to the complexity of what entrepreneurship education is, as identified above. One of the challenges for entrepreneurship educators is its action-focus, that is about how to put gained knowledge into a practice, helping students to develop an ability to put knowledge into use (Anderson and Jack, 2008). Indeed, according to Achtenhagen et al. (2010) the development of entrepreneurship as an academic field has relied on proximity to practitioners, and debates surrounding the relationship between academia

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and practice in entrepreneurship are neither new (e.g. Fried, 2003) nor have they abated (Neck and Corbett, 2018).

Few studies on entrepreneurship education focus explicitly on the role of the entrepreneurship educator however; Alberti et al. (2004) in an otherwise comprehensive review of EE omit it entirely. Zappe et al. (2013) provide an exception to the rule though, interestingly, their paper focuses on engineering students, as opposed to the traditional focus on students on business programmes. There does appear to be some exploration of the issue relating to entrepreneurship educators within a Nordic context in particular (Deveci and Seikkula-Leino, 2016; Gustafsson-Pesonen and Remes, 2012; Lepistö and Rönkkö, 2013; Peltonen, 2015; Rönkkö and Lepistö, 2015; Ruskovaara et al., 2016, 2015; Ruskovaara and Pihkala, 2013; Seikkula-Leino et al., 2010). Within this literature there is much emphasis on teacher training and students wanting to become educators, especially at upper secondary and vocational levels (Deveci and Seikkula-Leino, 2016; Gustafsson-Pesonen and Remes, 2012; Lepistö and Rönkkö, 2013; Peltonen, 2015; Rönkkö and Lepistö, 2015; Ruskovaara et al., 2016, 2015; Ruskovaara and Pihkala, 2013; Seikkula-Leino et al., 2010). Exceptions here include Teerijoki and Murcock (2014) who focused on higher education and also Penaluna et al. (2015) whose study extended across educational levels.

There is no common focus or approach in these studies of the entrepreneurship educator. Thus, while some such as Ruskovaara et al. (2016) looked at the relevance of the background of the educator in relation to entrepreneurship, Penaluna et al.'s (2015) paper focuses on how creativity-based pedagogies motivate educators. In the same area two studies focus on training programs or coaching and its impact on the entrepreneurial mindset of the educators (Gustafsson-Pesonen and Remes, 2012; Teerijoki and Murdock, 2014) while a further study explores how collaborative learning can contribute to the development of entrepreneurial competencies (Peltonen, 2015). A further paper looks at the role classroom activities play in assisting the educator (Deveci and Seikkula-Leino, 2016). Finally, Zappe et al. (2013) were able to establish that educators advocated experiential learning within an EE context.

Within the studies that look at the training of entrepreneurship educators, one study investigates perceptions educators have of their future role as well as their perception of entrepreneurship (Lepistö and Rönkkö, 2013). Other studies suggest entrepreneurship educators value entrepreneurship as a subject that enhances among other things initiative, responsibility for own learning, developing passion and understanding the value of freedom (Jones, 2011; Jones and McGee, 2011).

Acknowledging Brush's (2014) notion that entrepreneurship education exists within a broader ecosystem, we adapt Jones and Matlay's (2011) conceptual framework, which originally draws on Gartner (1985), for helping us make sense of the perceptions of entrepreneurship educators of their role within the entrepreneurship education landscape (Figure 1). Rather than viewing educators as independent agents, the position here is that what the educator perceives, and what they do, will in large part relate to the educational environment they are part of. As Lewin (1951) famously suggested, behaviour is a function of the individual and their environment and so Jones and Matlay's (2011) conceptual framework for understanding EE, without directly acknowledging this axiom, adopts it and therefore lends itself to our study.

Jones and Matlay's (2011) elements, although not the revised framework, have been previously used in a study concerning the heterogeneity of educators (Jones and McGee, 2011). Jones and Matlay's (2011) original framework placed the student in the centre, surrounded by four elements: the educator, the community, the institution and educational processes. A number of 'dialogic relationships' were then said to exist between the student and these elements (see Figure 1 below). Dialogic relationships as used here accord with their use by Bruyat and Julien (2001) who explain these indicate a complex combination between individual elements, stressing that it is not possible to divide the system of which they form part, but that it is sometimes necessary to focus on individual components to better understand the system. Thus, in our study this aligns with our focus on the entrepreneurship educator, whilst recognising that what she/he does cannot be explained independently of the other elements of the system (or in Jones and Matlay's, 2011, words, the entrepreneurial landscape) we nonetheless for the purposes of exploring the role of the entrepreneurship educator place the educator in the centre of our study.

Figure 1: Framework for understanding the role of the Entrepreneurship Educator

Insert figure 1 here

Source: Authors' adaptation of Jones and Matlay (2011, p. 694)

As depicted in Figure 1, four dialogic relationships exist:
- Educator – student
- Educator – educational processes
- Educator – institution
- Educator – community

Just how the educator is influenced by these dialogic relationships, and how the educators perceive their role as entrepreneurship educators, is what we turn to now in the empirical part of our study.

Methodology

This study has taken an interpretive approach in the sense that it seeks to understand the role of the entrepreneurship educator through the perspective of the entrepreneurship educator based around Weber's interpretive *Verstehen* tradition (Weber, 1949). It acknowledges that the social world is constructed by individuals who imbue the events around them with meaning (Burr, 2003), and thus we wanted to understand the meanings entrepreneurship educators hold of their role and their place within the EE landscape.

To answer the overall research question "How does the entrepreneurship educator perceive their role in entrepreneurship education and how is this role shaped by their immediate educational context?" eleven interviews with entrepreneurship educators teaching entrepreneurship at five universities of applied sciences in Denmark were conducted. The focus here on Denmark is largely

incidental as the lead author was based there, but it is also acknowledged that Denmark's entrepreneurial ecosystem is considered the fifth best in the world ("Global Entrepreneurship Development Institute," 2019) and so provides an interesting setting in which to explore issues surrounding the provision of entrepreneurship education. The sample consists of eleven educators, five of whom did not have a business-studies related background (referred to as NB) but whose studies were closely linked to the public sector, for instance social worker, public administration, and teacher education. The remaining six educators all teach the study of innovation and entrepreneurship at business academies and are hence business educators (referred to here as B). All participants taught entrepreneurship (at least one module/course) at either introductory and /or advanced classes. In total, the eleven full time faculty educators represent five different educational institutions and seven different programmes at undergraduate level in different geographical locations in Denmark. We chose to investigate both the business and non-business pathways partly to explore potential contrasts between the two domains and partly because most studies of entrepreneurship education focus on business programmes or business schools where the majority of entrepreneurship courses are housed; there is less research in relation to the educational non-business sector and we wanted to contribute with new insights into this area as well.

In terms of sample characteristics, our sample comprises six females and five males, all full-time entrepreneurship educators. The six business educators are represented by three females and six males while the non-business educators are represented by three females and two males. The business educators were younger than the non-business educators where three of them were younger than 35 years old; only one non-business educator was under 35 years. Most (4 out of 5) non-business educators have more than five years teaching experience while that is only the case for half of the business educators. Five out of six business educators have or still own a business, while this kind of business experience extends only to one of the non-business educators. Finally, the business educators all teach students at a bachelor programme in innovation and entrepreneurship located across three different places in Denmark, as such the modules taken in entrepreneurship are compulsory. The non-business educators in contrast teach either innovation and/or entrepreneurship in elective courses or courses where these elements are contained as part of a 'traditional' bachelor study programme (also located across three different places in Denmark).

Overall then, the sample represents different teaching experiences, and different levels of practical as well as entrepreneurial experience. Because of the small sample size, the exploratory, non-statistically generalisable nature of the study, we have not tried to identify possible associations between demographic variables or individual backgrounds and views of entrepreneurship education. What we have tried to do is document a diversity of views, aligning these with environmental factors to start to develop a model upon which future studies may usefully build. The study is therefore less about the personal backgrounds of the educators and how these might have shaped their view of their role but focuses on the EE landscape and how they perceive their role within it based on the four dialogic relationships.

With regard to identifying individuals we adopted a "network sampling" approach (Neergaard, 2007) as the educators were chosen from the network of the lead author. It should be recognised that in Denmark, there are not many educators who teach entrepreneurship at this educational level, so it is something of a close "community." The number of participants changed during the research process. The original plan was to interview six educators in total. However, after conducting those six interviews responses were more aligned than we had anticipated and thus the study was extended

to include five more educators. Moreover, the comparison between two groups of educators, here across five different institutions, can be seen as a form of triangulation in this context (Flick, 2008; Johnson, 1997). The interviews lasted between 35-60 minutes.

Interviews were semi-structured around the dialogic relations presented in Figure 1. Further themes were provided by Alberti el al.'s five main issues in EE: Audiences, Pedagogies, Contents, Assessments and Goals (2004, 2005). We also drew to some extent on other studies related to entrepreneurial learning (Jones and McGee, 2011; Mueller and Anderson, 2014; Seikkula-Leino et al., 2010) or learning in general (Shulman and Shulman, 2004) with the underlying context being to help understand the role of the entrepreneurship educator.

Each interview began by asking the educator about how they perceived each of the five elements from the framework presented in figure 1. The questions then focused on the role of the entrepreneurship educator and the dialogic relationship between said educator and the other four elements from figure 1. Example questions to each of the four dialogic relationships are as follows: Educator-Student relationship: "What is the role of the students?" Educator - Educational Process relationship: "How do you put EE into practice?" Educator-Institution relationship: "How is EE manifested in the strategies of your institution?" Educator-Community relationship: "In which way are the aims you have for EE related to the surrounding community?" Furthermore, each educator was asked a comparative question: "How is this different from being an educator in other subjects, do you think?"

Because of the lack of research on entrepreneurship educators we also sought to draw out in the interviews any distinctions between the role of the entrepreneurship educator in contrast to a non-entrepreneurship educator. With participants' permission, all the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed and the answers categorized in accordance with the above relationships. That is, the transcripts were coded using an a-priori coding scheme (Patton, 2011) according to the dialogic relationships identified in Jones and Matlay (2011). The content of the codes was then discussed by the researchers and referred to during the interpretation phase whereby further themes emerged (as laid out below). Any information that could potentially reveal the identity of respondents has been removed.

Findings
The findings and discussion are laid out as follows: Initially we review the key themes in relation to the role of the entrepreneurship educator and his/her place within the entrepreneurship education landscape as per Jones and Matlay's (2011) framework. Quotations are provided to give a 'flavour' of participants' views and meanings according to the *Verstehen* tradition (Weber, 1949). The quotations were thus selected to represent a general point rather than as primarily evidence to support our claims. It is important to note that our framework has been used to help us structure our thinking, but the reader will recognise overlaps and inter-relationships. While the relationships are thus distinct 'on paper', in reality they are intertwined; this aligns therefore with the dialogic relationships (systems) approach (Bruyat and Julien, 2001) adopted in the study.

Educator – student relationship

When asked about how they saw their role vis-à-vis the student, entrepreneurship educators expressed general agreement that this was multifaceted, from being a supervisor, coach and mentor to an overall view of facilitator of learning. Interestingly, there was also the recognition for some that it is precisely the ill-defined, multifaceted nature of teaching entrepreneurship that holds much appeal:

" So, I think there are really many roles you have as an educator, and many facets you have to act within, but which I think is fun" (NB1).

There was some distance between what we may regard then as the 'traditional' approach of top down conveying of information (filling a pail, not lighting a fire as the aphorism attributed to W.B. Yeats goes), or the 'sage on the stage' view of the educator (Winkel, 2013, p. 313) in contrast to the role of the entrepreneurship educator. This was furthermore demonstrated in an action orientation, that is entrepreneurship contains a behavioural component as clearly identified in Shane and Venkataraman's (2000) widely-cited definition of entrepreneurship as comprising opportunity identification, evaluation and *exploitation,* also supported by Neck and Corbett (2018). Thus, educators expressed a desire to stimulate action – this is aligned with the 'for entrepreneurship' perspective of EE. That said, the relationship is bi-directional (dialogic) in that students must want to take action, and action itself facilitates learning:

" I cannot teach if there are no active students…If students do not participate in teaching and take it as an opportunity that they can gain power over teaching, there is no teaching….then it becomes boring " (NB4).

With reference to the relationship between educator and student specifically, educators are very aware of the importance of 'connecting' with students. Again, this contrasts with (stereotypical and admittedly now possibly antiquated) views of lecturers and lectures being somewhat didactic (Miller et al., 2013). Thus, several participants mentioned, that to teach entrepreneurship you must create a relationship with the students and get to know them. This was justified on the basis that teaching entrepreneurship is about 'pushing' the students out of their comfort zones, getting them to be open to new ideas and to reflect on opportunities. Supporting students in their entrepreneurial endeavours may arguably be more achievable where a level of trust and empathy exists between educator and student. That said, as the following quotation demonstrates, some students need more pushing than others, and so the relationship between educator and student will vary also:

" … I have three groups (of students): I have someone who can swim by themselves and they are allowed to do so, then I have someone who needs bathing wings and I have someone who needs artificial respiration, and I need to figure out who they are to start with" (B1).

This quote also relates to how the educators view the aims of EE. Besides the official learning goals, the educators want to assist their students on a personal development journey. In the eyes of the educators EE is very clearly not the same as simply conveying subject knowledge, there is the desire to see change in students in the sense that they want to create entrepreneurial thinking and the development of an entrepreneurial mindset, what Alberti et al. (2004, p. 9) refer to as the 'affective socialisation element'. One of the educators expressed that the biggest aim was nothing less than seeing students change the world.

Educator – educational processes relationship

As Jones and Matlay (2011) point out in their description of educational processes, these largely centre around legitimacy considerations. We cannot take for granted that all pedagogic approaches the entrepreneurship educator might like to employ are regarded as legitimate. Thus, although they acknowledge that entrepreneurship education tends to be experiential, there still exists a vast array of teaching/learning methods each vying for legitimacy (legitimacy here can be understood at a variety of levels, societal, at the level of the institution or one's immediate colleagues, for example). The extent to which legitimacy will be provided depends on similar socio-political outlook of those granting legitimacy and those seeking it (see for example Aldrich, 1999). For the entrepreneurship educator these are his/her immediate colleagues and line managers. Here educators did not voice any legitimacy concerns. In fact, educators are very aware of their network when planning teaching and network with close colleagues or colleagues from other higher education institutions who also teach entrepreneurship. Inspiration from other external networks is also gained with some educators involving students in decision-making. Legitimacy extends to students' concerns so there is some overlap with the educator-student relationship – this again provides an example of the complex interplay of 'dimensions' within the entrepreneurship education landscape and the educator's role within it.

The practical and therefore experiential element of teaching entrepreneurship was apparent in the interviews with educators stressing that students must work with their entrepreneurial ideas in practice. Thus, whether working on their own idea or developing new ideas for either business or the public sector there is a very practical element educators regarded as being part of entrepreneurship education. Educators agreed that entrepreneurship education should happen outside as well as inside the classroom, albeit also recognising the challenges this could present:

"The biggest challenge is to stimulate the learning processes that happen when the teacher is not present, that is, the learning I'm trying to get started and facilitate that not only happens in the classroom but that happens just as much in between the courses. That is a major challenge to ensure study activity and learning outside the classroom" (NB5).

Besides the obvious aim of reaching stipulated learning goals, personal development and empowerment of the students are a common goal for all the interviewed educators. As perhaps to be expected, passing exams with good results is mentioned as well as students winning prizes, but they rate watching students' self-development and their personal successes even more.

"It's the reflective thinking which develops when we prepare them well from the beginning, so they achieve the right foundation." (B2)

Finally, in comparison to traditional teaching most of the educators point towards the tempo, the energy, and the possibility of adopting less traditional approaches to teaching. Interestingly, and in contrast to what may be assumed, business educators do not see themselves as solely facilitators for student start-ups which aligns with the broad and more recent approach to the goals of entrepreneurship education in the literature (see for example Alberti et al. 2004, or Neck and Corbett, 2018). For all educators then, the general goal is to prepare students with an entrepreneurial mindset which they can, in the first instance apply in an organisation, and who then at some point in life might start up their own business.

Educator – institution relation

All entrepreneurship educators expressed clarity in relation to what they perceived their respective institution's stance towards entrepreneurship was. However, not everyone agreed with their institution's vision or strategic intent; this was especially apparent for two of the non-business educators. Thus some, while acknowledging their institution's strategy looked good 'on paper' were sceptical about the extent to which it made any significant impact on the ground. In fact, there was an element of frustration in evidence for some in our sample surrounding the lack of institutional support in implementing institutional strategies when it came to entrepreneurship and innovation. Lack of institutional support led some to seek inspiration and collaboration with others outside the institution, i.e. in the wider community.

Nonetheless, educators acknowledged a growing interest in entrepreneurship and innovation at an institutional level. There was general agreement that this increased focus 'opened doors' and permitted educators to experiment more with their programmes. The non-business educators in particular acknowledged that teaching in either innovation or entrepreneurship differs from teaching in other disciplines because the subject is directly mentioned in the institutional strategies. Thus, educators overall felt supported and able to make changes to their teaching practice without too many institutional constraints, whether by default or by design, i.e. as the following quotation illustrates:

"... in that way, I think that they neither support me nor do they hinder me" (NB5)

On the other hand, the educators seem to be the sole drivers of entrepreneurial teaching:

"But they (the institution) do not even come up with any suggestions for what it should be, it's us who drive entrepreneurship" (B6)

While the non-business educators find that the overall institutional teaching and learning strategies indirectly influence teaching, matters become a little unclear in relation to the business educators. In fact, the use and application of institutional strategies varies considerably. Thus, one participant uses institutional strategy as a guideline for planning teaching, while another cannot see much use for it. There was general agreement however that the institutions support each educator via the offer of personal development activities such as courses, conferences and theme days. Overall, the data point to a generally supportive institutional environment for EE whereby support ranges from the explicit to the tacit.

Educator – community relation

Jones and Matlay (2011) view community in geographic terms (as opposed to, for example an online community) as comprising the municipality in which the institution is based, but arguably this could also extend to a regional level, i.e. the geographic domain in which both the institution and the student can act entrepreneurially and contribute to development of said community. In terms of their own place within the community, most of the educators viewed their own role as falling somewhere in-between the public and private spheres, as a quasi-liaison person, or ambassador, between higher education and the community. For the educators this manifested itself mainly in finding projects for collaboration, or to connect students with people in the community. Only one individual (NB) did not see themselves as assuming any particular role as an entrepreneurship educator in the community.

On being asked about the aims of EE in relation to the community (e.g. developing enterprising students and by implication fostering economic gains and development), a majority felt that that there was not always a great deal of overlap, but this did not cause much concern. The main thing was interaction with the community, the alignment with the goals of EE was of secondary importance. The business educators seemed clearer on creating a connection to the community. "It is just something you do", as one educator expressed it. Furthermore, there is a belief that this connection has the potential to create job opportunities for students. Finally, it seemed important to develop competencies in those areas the community required (and demanded). There is then in participants' explanations very much a focus on the student and the benefits to students from engaging with the wider community.

The fact that entrepreneurship educators who taught on business programmes were more interested or committed to liaising with the community should perhaps not come as a surprise given the more vocational nature of such programmes. That said, one of the business educators explained that entrepreneurship students needed to take on more responsibility for establishing contacts/networks than would be the case in more traditional subjects. It was also felt by some participants that the relative novelty of entrepreneurship as a subject could present a barrier in liaising with the community who are more attuned to, or at least understand what is meant by more traditional subjects (e.g. physics, engineering, sociology etc.). To some in the community it seems that entrepreneurship as a subject taught in higher education is still an unknown phenomenon.

Discussion

Having reviewed each dialogic relationship separately we now bring together several key findings while bearing in mind that what we are looking at here is a dynamic system and specifically the place and role of the entrepreneurship educator within it. We have also summarised the results in a revised framework (Figure 2).

Figure 2: An expanded framework for understanding the role of the Entrepreneurship Educator

Insert Figure 2 here

Source: Authors' adaptation of Jones and Matlay (2011, p. 694)

Perhaps the most important thing to note then is the embeddedness of the entrepreneur in the EE landscape, while we also acknowledge that the educator can shape this landscape to a degree. Just as the entrepreneur is viewed as a disruptor or agent of change (e.g. Carlsson et al., 2013; Giacomin et al., 2011), so might the entrepreneurship educator assume this role within an educational institution. Thus, the theoretical contribution made by Jones and Matlay (2011) has found some empirical validation here, whereby we also extend their work by adding further insights into the nature of the dialogic relationships albeit with emphasis on the educator.

Starting with the role of the entrepreneurship educator as perceived by the educators, there was widespread agreement in the sample that EE needs to be tied to practice. The idea of 'learning by doing' was strongly prevalent and supports other literature in this regard (Blenker and Christensen, 2010; Neck and Corbett, 2018), as well as aligning with more general definitions of entrepreneurship with their focus on action (e.g. Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Additionally, the educators felt they

should support students' personal development beyond 'simply' teaching them subject knowledge. We acknowledge that educators in other subjects might equally be concerned with their students' personal development, but there was a notion of not just preparing students for business start-up, but by inculcating an entrepreneurial mindset students will be more prepared for life in general, what Neck and Corbett (2018, p. 10) identify as "life skills...to support productive lives".

The relationship between educator and student is clearly key whereby its dialogic nature is demonstrated in educators' comments that students also have an obligation to engage, and that too much support might be counterproductive to the achievement of learning goals. Here the educator-institution relationship is also critical given that what counts as legitimate, even expected, support will largely be determined at an institutional level. Entrepreneurship education understood as comprising an element of pushing the students out of their comfort zones to create longer lasting learning has been recognised by others (Robinson et al., 2016; Svensson et al., 2017). One of the challenges identified here is that not all students embrace the independence that entrepreneurship education is trying to instil, not initially in any case according to our participants, and so the entrepreneurship educator assumes the position of mediator between institutional demands and students' wants (Gibb, 2011).

Broader acceptance of entrepreneurship evidenced also in the expansion of EE (Winkel, 2013; Morris and Liguori, 2016), means the dialogic relationships between educator and educational processes, institutions and the community are embedded within a sphere of legitimacy. This is important in terms of pedagogy because it supports experimentation with teaching approaches. That said, while support at community level exists generally, we identified some confusion surrounding the notion of entrepreneurship. Here the role of the entrepreneurship educator may be seen as not only bringing entrepreneurship closer to students, but similarly bringing the concept closer to the community. Again, the entrepreneurship educator plays the role of mediator between students' needs and the needs of the local community.

Conclusion

In this paper we set out to explore entrepreneurship educators' perceptions of their own roles as entrepreneurship educators and their place within the landscape of entrepreneurship education as conceptualised by Jones and Matlay (2011). Thus, adapting Jones and Matlay's (2011) framework of the entrepreneurship education landscape, we explored four dialogic relationships between the educator and educational processes, students, the institution and the community. We have therefore focussed more on the context of EE (the educational ecosystem, Brush, 2014) than on the background of the educators, though the latter would remain an equally valid area of study.

Our main contribution is that our understanding of "what should be taught by entrepreneurship educators, how it should be taught, and how outcomes should be assessed'' (Morris and Liguori (2016, p.xvi) cannot be divorced from the entrepreneurship education landscape as characterised by the dialogic relationships offered by Jones and Matlay (2011). While we agree with Neck and Corbett (2018) that much scholarship of entrepreneurship education has ignored what goes on in the classroom, we demonstrate that the role of the entrepreneurship educator and what they do in the classroom is shaped by the dialogic relationships which constitute the EE landscape; the situatedness of the classroom cannot be ignored if we are to understand what goes on in the classroom, and equally importantly 'why'. Our findings align with Hannon (2006) who emphasizes that the context within which we teach is in perpetual change, driven for example by broader societal values,

attitudes towards entrepreneurship, developments in technology and not least expectations of higher education, and also more recently Brush's (2014) work on entrepreneurship education ecosystems. It is clear from Figure 2 that the notion of legitimacy plays an important role in all dialogic relationships and what this might mean could be explored in more detail in future studies. We also acknowledge that although developed within the context of EE, Jones and Matlay's (2011) framework might equally be applied to other educational settings, this study's results might then be compared in the future to analyses of different educational scenarios.

Finally, we recognise the limitations of the study which is small scale and exploratory in nature. While making no aspersions to statistical generalisability, we believe that the identification of how the entrepreneurship educator operates within the EE landscape offers, along with its challenges and conduits, a steppingstone for further application in different contexts. Thus, educational settings aside (see previous paragraph), it would, for example, be of value to see how the educator's role is perceived in countries where attitudes to entrepreneurship differ to that of our Danish context, and likewise, where ability to experiment with different pedagogical approaches is not a given. We believe both more interpretive research that grapples with the meaning of entrepreneurship in an educational setting, as well as larger-scale cross-sectional studies that seek comparisons across scenarios hold much promise in this regard. Future studies might also usefully apply the framework to explore the dialogic relationships but also taking into account the views of students, the institution and community representatives, as well as offering explanations which focus in greater depth on the personal backgrounds of the educator. Further work in this area is timely.
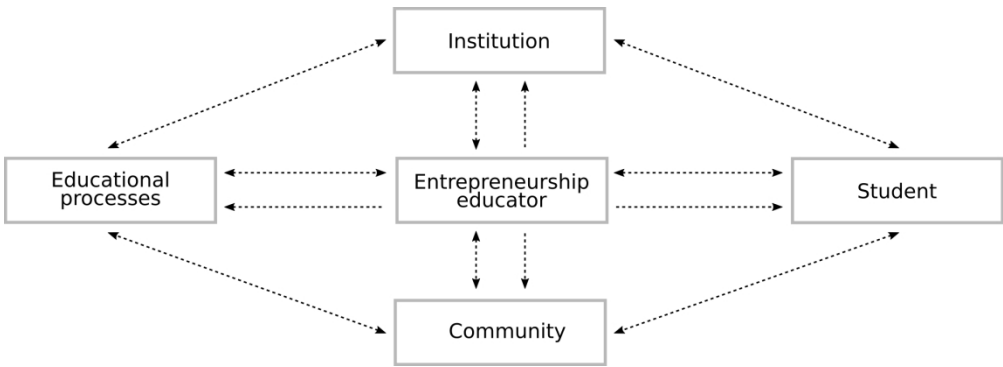
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Thus, in our study this aligns with our focus on the entrepreneurship educator, whilst recognising that what she/he does cannot be explained independently of the other elements of the system (or in Jones and Matlay's, 2011, words, the entrepreneurial landscape) we nonetheless for the purposes of exploring the role of the entrepreneurship educator place the educator in the centre of our study.

Figure 1: Framework for understanding the role of the Entrepreneurship Educator
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Educational processes

- Rigid or flexible (e.g. in relation to learning outcomes/objectives)
- Legitimacy
- Reflection and action

Student

- Diversity in the student body
- Willingness to be challenged
- Legitimacy

Educator

- Multifaceted nature of EE
- Supporting action
- Building trust
- Driving the EE agenda
- Liaison between community and institution

Institution

- Strategic intent to include enterprise/ entrepreneurship (legitimacy)
- Level of intervention into everyday educational activities

Community

- Awareness of entrepreneurship as a discipline
- Provider of experience
- Playing to the needs of the community while not losing sight of benefits to the student