Editorial

Unsettling Entrepreneurship Education

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Entering the Scene: A Short Story about a Workshop

We, the three editors of this special issue, organized a workshop on unsettling entrepreneurship education (EE) in June 2019 in Turku, Finland. In its brochure, we advertised the workshop as an occasion to "nurture and provide space for alternative and inventive pedagogies to emerge." We suggested the workshop as "a source of inspiration for new teaching and pedagogical practices that will contribute to unsettling EE and offering teachers and educators space to be reflexive of their teaching and pedagogical practices."

We were happy with approximately 25 participants attending the workshop. Karen and Karin had prepared a presentation from the work on their then newly released

*book (*Berglund & Verduijn*, 2018). Ulla took the position of moderator to process the dialogue and learning processes.*

Some participants had taken the effort to travel a few hours to the workshop, one even from abroad. The participants seemed enthusiastic about the topic. Even before we began, some thanked us for the opportunity to attend. We could feel the energy in the room: this was a theme everyone cared about!

As an introduction, Karin gave a short talk about our intentions with the "unsettling" and provided the audience both practical examples of courses at Stockholm University and more theoretical elaborations from some of the chapter authors of the Revitalizing *book. Somewhere during this introduction, a question was voiced from the audience: "What are your favorite teaching methods?"*

In a workshop about (EE), this question about "favorite methods" is perhaps not surprising given that much of the focus in EE research has been on pedagogical tools (see, e.g., Nabi et al., 2017). As a field, EE has witnessed an abundance of widely adopted models and practices, such as venture creation programs, pitching competitions, lean start-up and venture creation models, and drafting business model canvases. The real lives of entrepreneurs are infused into teaching by using entrepreneurs as guest speakers, if not as main teachers, and by training and learning periods spent in small businesses and shadowing entrepreneurs.

But actually, we found it to be somewhat troubling and slightly disheartening to receive this question. It suggests that despite the apparent enthusiasm to move forward and discuss new innovative ideas for how EE could be revitalized in contemporary higher education, the idea of "just give me the appropriate methods/tools" is firmly set and may be difficult to relinquish.

With the workshop then and with this special issue now, we wish to highlight the important questions that in our view need to be raised and that are different from and possibly more challenging than introducing new methods, as in a recipe book.

This issue aims to be a source for inspiration for (new) teaching approaches and pedagogical practices that will contribute to unsettling EE. The contributions in this issue—four Research Articles and one Learning Innovation—offer thoughts on creating space for reflection and opening up possibilities for new EE teaching and research approaches. Next, we give a short introduction to the five articles in this issue.

Komulainen et al. problematize how the cherishing of an entrepreneurial approach to life welcomes entrepreneurs to guest-lecture at universities. These guest lectures, they argue, while providing students a narrative and performance of how entrepreneurial life could look, are identity-constraining in the sense that they provide students with particular identity models that require negotiation in terms of gender, class, and education. Instead of inviting all students, entrepreneurs' narratives create divisions among them, constructing some as more entrepreneurial and others as less. To avoid this polarization, Komulainen et al. suggest that we continue to research the kind of entrepreneurial narratives that are offered in university settings and how. In addition, they suggest that, as scholars, we should provide students more inclusive narratives and identity models for academic entrepreneurship and also identity models that may negotiate the key features of entrepreneurship and create a resistance toward some of its idea(l)s.

Gaggiotti et al. employ a distinction between "liminal" and "liminoid" to explore what they call the texture of the learning space and argue how this has implications for program design, with special considerations for staff roles. Here as well, the "student" is not a neutral category (which automatically also makes the teacher, and teaching, problematic). The authors relate this to an experiential learning program they are involved in ("Program M-entrep"). Students during this program took on various, different roles. *Transitioning* is central to Gaggiotti et al.'s approach. In discerning between liminal and liminoid experiences, the authors argue how such experiences oscillated between "safer," more stable, formal, and conditioned transitioning (of the liminal kind) and more "extreme," ambiguous, and uncertain transitioning (liminoid). The program itself prompted students to be(come) active: to become "betwixt, and between roles" so as to reimagine their future (selves). The program deliberately invoked students to dwell in liminal-liminoid experiences and in ambiguity and uncertainty, but under the conditions of the program's relative safety. This gave rise to Gaggiotti et al.'s conceptualizing about the program's required textures, where one pays attention to these liminal-liminoid experiences without "rescuing" the students from ambiguity and uncertainty (for, as the authors argue, that would diminish their learning).

Zawadzki et al. unfold an educational approach to EE using action research as a method to unsettle management education and move the entrepreneurial self to gain distance from neoliberal logic. They introduced this approach in a master's program in a Polish management school in which they have been involved as teachers. The educational setting was that of a seminar in which master's students prepared and presented their thesis ideas and developments. This seminar was based on a collaborative approach, involving not only students and academic

teachers, but also employers from public and non-governmental sectors. This setting, together with the Action Research (AR) approach, facilitated students to understand the complexities of organizational life and the requirements of themselves (and others) to act as entrepreneurial selves and analyze these neoliberal conditions from an emancipatory perspective.

Wettermark analyzes student reactions to a course that explicitly and deliberately addressed critical themes in relation to understanding entrepreneurship (such as the ideologies underlying the entrepreneurship phenomenon and their own positions vis-à-vis these ideologies). The student reactions, she argues, alternated between resistance (and rejection) and curiosity, and even attraction. The students were curious at the start of the course, but then seemed to become unsettled. There was a sense of discomfort and perhaps of disbelief, where the "norm" would be that students should experience a course as meaningful, joyful, and helpful. However, discarding the criticality of the course is not the answer, Wettermark argues: dealing with these students' reactions is. In arguing how, she builds on insights from critical pedagogy and Tara Fenwick's (2005) thoughts on ethics and critical management education. She concludes that the how is actually in a safe and trustworthy learning space.

Talmage et al., via a classroom exercise they have developed, illustrate the need to problematize the notion of "the social" in relation to entrepreneurship, a word that is often seen in an unproblematic positive light, but that can be problematized from the perspective of what Talmage et al. call "dark side theories." One example is how they invited students to discuss and reflect upon the pornography industry, a discussion where students' opinions varied wildly. While some took a moral standpoint, stressing legal and ethical issues, others reflected how the

act could itself be seen as an expression of freedom, involving degrees of empowerment. The exercise thus provided space for students to twist the issue of what social could be, as well as its effects. By looking upon social entrepreneurship from different angles, the practice of reflexivity was enhanced and a better understanding emerged with regards to what it can mean to take responsibility when enacting "social opportunities" with ethical awareness.

As editors of this special issue, we wish to leave the scene with some considerations for future reflection. Over the past decades, researchers have investigated attitudes toward entrepreneurship and/or entrepreneurial intentions as main EE outcomes (Bae et al., 2014; Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). More recent research has focused on *new* outcomes, such as the development of entrepreneurial competences (see, e.g., Lackéus & Sävetun, 2019). However, as unsettling EE calls for rethinking our approaches in our educational programs and courses, it simultaneously invites the rethinking of these approaches in relation to EE-derived learning outcomes. Alternatively, rethinking learning outcomes may contribute to redesigning our approaches. For example, if we wish to empower and emancipate students from pressures to 'behave entrepreneurially', clearly this goal has implications both for EE practices and the expected outcomes. Furthermore, when we ask our students to critically assess different forms, consequences, and diverse effects of entrepreneurship on a broad range of various actors, this too requires adapting our practices and discussions about learning outcomes. Given that critical thinking is one of the main learning outcomes in university education, it might be interesting to explore it as a specific learning outcome in EE (Grauerholz & Bouma-Holtrop, 2003). Although "critique" may appear an unpleasant concept for some colleagues, we firmly believe that critically engaging with EE helps students become aware of the decisions they can make—

perhaps decisions that were not even accessible to them at first. As educators, we remain hopeful that students will make wiser decisions that contribute to making the world a bit safer, more sustainable, and fun.

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