

GUEST EDITORS

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Expanding arenas and dynamics of entrepreneurship education

Entrepreneurship education in the international landscape

During the last three decades entrepreneurship has globally strengthened its position in higher education and research. In a European-wide survey experts from different universities still estimate that the supply of entrepreneurship education will continue to grow substantially during the period 2005–2010. (Fayolle and Kyrö 2008, Katz 2003, Kuratko 2005, Menzies 2005, Vesper and Gartner 1999, Wilson and Twaalfhoven 2005, Solomon, Duffy and Tarabishy 2002). This intensified interest reflects more fundamental changes in society. As Allan Gibb (2005) argues, a lot of changes have contributed effectively to making a world of much greater uncertainty and complexity, one demanding entrepreneurial and enterprising behaviour at all levels: global, societal, organizational and individual. This need to enhance entrepreneur-

ship is also recognized by politicians, academics and educators in the European Union and beyond. The European Union has taken entrepreneurship development as one of the key factors for its competitiveness and well being. Its strategy highlights the importance of advancing entrepreneurial culture by fostering the right mindset, entrepreneurship skills and awareness of its career opportunity. These definitions underline individuals' readiness and originations' capabilities to recognize and create opportunities as well as to turn these ideas into action.

The education system has been harnessed to implement these ideas; the adoption of entrepreneurship education has been recommended throughout the educational system (Commission of the European Communities 2002, 2003, 2006). The fact that the EU's competitors such as US and China have also taken similar actions reflects the shared belief that entrepreneurship

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has a crucial role in competitiveness and well being. (Smelstor 2007, Wang Xingsun 2007.)

Given these policy recommendations, research on entrepreneurship education has also expanded from a start-up phase and content questions towards the pre-intention and intention processes as well as to the dynamics of different organizational and institutional contexts (Gorman, Hanlon and King 1997, Kuratko 2005, Luethje and Franken 2003, Scott, Rosa and Klandt 1998). As Menzies and Paradi (2002) argue, regardless of career path, key entrepreneurial principles and theories are useful for cultivating enterprising attitudes and behaviour. This broad conception of entrepreneurship seeks to enhance our understanding of the dynamics of human behavioural processes, of renewing the culture of institutions and organizations and of developing process-oriented methodological solutions for studying these dynamics. (Davidsson 2001, Fayolle, Kyrö and Uljin 2005, Grant and Perren 2002, Stevenson and Harmeling 1990). How to learn and teach entrepreneurial and enterprising behaviour, has become one of the core questions in recent research (for example Acs and Audretsch 2003, Fayolle and Klandt 2006, Kyrö and Carrier 2005). These issues also profile the European approach to entrepreneurship education research that has identified its thematically and conceptual specifics and their historical roots (Fayolle and Kyrö 2008).

The Finnish profile in the international context

The Government of Finland follows EU strategy and subscribes to the notion of the broad scope and impact of entrepreneurship on Finland's future prosperity. It has defined its aims and means to advance entrepreneurship through a

special policy programme for entrepreneurship and employment and by incorporating entrepreneurship education into the recent curriculum reform as one of the mainstreaming themes at all levels of education. The Education and Research Development Plan for 2007–2012 also includes goals and actions for advancing entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education (Opetusministeriö 2007). In the European landscape these activities represent pioneering work in entrepreneurship education. The report from 2002 indicated that ten out of sixteen European Union Member States had recognized a considerable national policy commitment to promote entrepreneurship in education. Yet at that time only Finland had extensively included it all levels of education. (European Commission 2002). The 2007 assessment of the current situation on compliance with the entrepreneurship education objective indicated that entrepreneurship is a recognised objective of the education systems and is embedded explicitly in the national framework curricula of six countries; Cyprus, Finland, Ireland, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom. Additionally six countries planned or had partially implemented it (Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Slovenia and Sweden. (European Commission 2007).

Finland is among those countries where entrepreneurship education has attracted multidisciplinary researchers in different institutions, which is still quite rare in the international arena. This research has adopted the broad concept of entrepreneurship. It is characterized by an interest in the dynamics between individual, organisation, economy and society as well as in the learning and teaching processes of different levels of education. According to Landström (2008, xi) this is fairly exceptional in the current entrepreneurship research that has distanced

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itself from the strong societal orientation. It is typical of research settings to make an effort to understand theoretically and empirically the nature, impact and dynamics of educational interventions as well as the cultural processes and the competitiveness of startups, institutions and organizations. Finnish dissertations in this field are good examples of this. (Backström-Widjeskog 2008, Havusela 1999, Heikkilä 2006, Heinonen 2004, Koski 2002, Kyrö 1997, Leskinen 1998, Melin 2001, Nevanperä 2003, Paajanen 2001, Pihkala 2001, Pihkala 2008, Puhakka 2002, Remes 2003, Ristimäki 2004, Westerholm 2007).

Today these settings are increasingly shared in research groups and in national and international networks. In Finland each of these groups has their own profiles, but they have this national profile in common. Initiatives to establish new groups have intensified and it is hard to find any science institution that is not involved in some way in entrepreneurship education projects and research. Entrepreneurship researchers and actors have also formed a national network YKTT (Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen tutkija- ja toimijatapaaminen www.pyk.hkkk.fi) and started to meet on a yearly basis in order to reflect and disseminate new developments in this field. This year this event was organized by the Helsinki School of Economics and its Small Business Center. This special issue is a part of the publishing and dissemination activities of this network. The first double blind review publication containing 18 articles was edited for the network event at the University of Vaasa in 2007. This was followed by three special issues; two of them in the field of education (Ammattikasvatus 3/2007, Aikuiskasvatus 3/2008) and this one in the business economics. An essential aim of these publications is to provide research-

based teaching and learning material for the various courses and programmes in this field. The articles for this special issue have been chosen with this aim in mind and originally it was thought that Finnish would be the working language, as it is in these other publications. However, it emerged that the authors prefer to write in English to be able to share their research findings also with international research communities. Thus only the first article is in Finnish, inviting those less proficient in English to become acquainted with the ideas of entrepreneurial and enterprising learning.

Structure and content of this special issue

The content of this special issue offers a cross section of the recent Finnish research on entrepreneurship education in an international landscape. The first two articles focus on enterprising and entrepreneurial learning processes; the first from the students' and the second from the teachers' perspectives. Both use explorative research settings and an inductive, Straussian grounded approach. They set the stage for the third article, which addresses the entrepreneurial university and its challenges to change organizational culture, pedagogy and methodology. This is followed by an article teaching us how to plan pre-incubator activities as a novel learning environment. This article takes a focus group approach to understand how human beings experience and perceive their own behaviour. The last article moves to the interplay between entrepreneurial firm performance and learning.

Together these articles represent different levels and contexts of entrepreneurship education; individual, team, firm and organization. Several perspectives could have been consid-

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ered in arranging their order. However, we hope, that the order chosen affords a means to understand the complexity and variety of the dynamic processes involved in entrepreneurship education.

Together these five articles question traditional knowledge and planning-dominated learning, teaching and development processes whatever context they take place in. They also demonstrate and give ideas for changing our pedagogy and development activities. To stimulate the reader's appetite in this respect, we now briefly highlight these aspects of the articles.

In the first article "*Kognitiiviset, affektiiviset ja konatiiviset ulottuvuudet ja niihin liittyvät metavalmiudet yrittäjämäisessä oppimisessa*" a cross-disciplinary research team consisting of Kyrö, Mylläri ja Seikkula-Leino argues that the bases of pedagogy should preferably underline affective and conative aspects rather than cognitive aspects of learning. The results of their study indicate indeed that the stimulator of learning to learn processes seems to be in affective aspects of learning. This questions university pedagogy and raises the question of how to renew pedagogy in such a way as to incorporate affective impulses in our teaching.

In the second article "*Can learning in teams help teachers to become more entrepreneurial? The interplay between efficacy perceptions and team support*" Kati Peltonen claims that to enhance entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial learning among students, it is vital for teachers also to become more entrepreneurial. This research focuses on exploring the interplay between team support and efficacy beliefs in a two-year teacher team experiment. The findings indicate a positive connection between entrepreneurial team learning, team support and the formation of efficacy beliefs, which

in turn lead to the acquisition of entrepreneurial competencies. This article, however, questions the traditional teacher education approach and offers an idea for improving teachers' competences in self-supported teams.

Ulla Hytti and Jarna Heinonen's article "*Enterprising individuals from an entrepreneurial university: entrepreneurship programmes in non-business and business schools*" argue that developing an entrepreneurship programme at university level may necessitate a complete restructuring of the whole university – the organisational structures, the processes, the assessment methods, the direction and the resource-allocation mechanisms. This change calls for the creation of an entrepreneurial university. The article provides some ideas about the aspects of organizing entrepreneurship programmes in the change process all Finnish universities are facing today.

The article by Tarja Römer-Paakkanen and Auli Pekkala "*Generating entrepreneurship and new learning environments from students' free-time activities and hobbies*" explores pre-incubator students' growth to entrepreneurship. Through the triangulation process of life experiences such as free-time activities and hobbies, entrepreneurship education and socialisation within one's family, students create their own learning environment and teaching practices. This provides an example of how to cross the borders of the classroom and let the process be guided by learners' inspiration and innovativeness.

Arto Lahti's article "*From modern microeconomics to entrepreneurial theory of evolution and learning – the substantive performance approach*" argues that there is a need to find a way to develop theories that better accommodate entrepreneurial, innovative behaviour

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typical of small firms and entrepreneur-driven businesses. He introduces the substantive performance approach as an example of this kind of dynamics. It turns out that learning and networking processes combining individual human action with the collective learning processes of the firms serve as a promising solution to the processes of developing competitive advantage, which is at the core of the substantive performance approach.

Finally the literature part of this special issue presents the two latest doctoral dissertations in this field. Jussi Pihkala's dissertation "Ammattikorkeakoulujen aikaiset yrittäjyysintentioiden muutokset" describes the impact of entrepreneurship programmes in universities of applied sciences (polytechnics). It demonstrates how hard it is to influence students' intentions and willingness to start a business. As Carrier (2005) notes, the question of whether entrepreneurship can be taught has become obsolete, and the more relevant question is 'what should be taught and how should it be taught?' This real challenge to advance pedagogy is focused on in the other dissertation. Bettina Backström-Widjeskog's dissertation "*Du kan om du vill – lärares tankar om fostran till företagsamhet*" offers ideas on how teachers are gatekeepers in this process and how their understanding of entrepreneurship emerges in their pedagogical practices.

We hope that these contributions by researchers in nine higher education institutions – the universities of Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Tampere and Turku, the Schools of Economics in Helsinki and Turku, Åbo Akademi, the universities of applied sciences in Helsinki, HAAGA-HELIA and Vaasa with 17 reviewers from Estonia, Spain, Sweden, and Finland will offer researchers and educators an interesting and

stimulating learning experience. We want to express our cordial thanks to all concerned for their commitment and willingness to present and advance research in this field. We hope that this special issue is a fitting tribute to their efforts. ■

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