THE AGE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION RESEARCH

ADVANCES IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP, FIRM EMERGENCE AND GROWTH

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ADVANCES IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP, FIRM EMERGENCE AND GROWTH VOLUME 23

THE AGE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION RESEARCH: EVOLUTION AND FUTURE

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Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2023

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83753-057-1 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-83753-056-4 (Online)
ISBN: 978-1-83753-058-8 (Epub)

ISSN: 1074-7540 (Series)

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CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION: THE AGE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION RESEARCH

Andrew C. Corbett, Louis D. Marino and Gry A.Alsos

It has been clear for about 50 years that we are living in an entrepreneurial age (Reagan, 1985) that took root with the recognition that entrepreneurs and small businesses create most jobs and drive most economies (Birch, 1987). Since that realization, decades of research at the nexus of economics, management, and public policy has confirmed that entrepreneurship spurs innovation (Acs & Audretsch, 1988; Baumol, 2002), creates jobs (Davidsson & Delmar, 2006), and drives economic growth (Malecki, 2018). Relatedly, it has been 75 years since the first entrepreneurship course was taught (*1947, Management of New Enterprises, first MBA entrepreneurship course offered at Harvard by Myles Mace*). Currently, all around the world, governments, non-governmental organizations, and global organizations of all types are turning to entrepreneurship as a way to create jobs and improve economies.

Until recently, research on what and how we teach entrepreneurship was in its infancy. Today, research suggests that inquiry into the field of entrepreneurship education is in a growth stage. Yet, the literature continues to struggle to overcome fragmentation, isolation, and a lack of focus and coherence (Landström et al., 2022). Additionally, Pittaway et al. (2018) note that while there has been significant progress in the past 30 years, there continues to be a divide between entrepreneurial learning research and how we teach in the classroom. Indeed, the entrepreneurship education research canon provides scant evidence linking what we do in the classroom to real-world, practical entrepreneurship outcomes (Edelman et al., 2008). In short, the practice of entrepreneurship has outpaced the academy's understanding of the content, process, outcomes, and assessment of entrepreneurship education (Morris & Liguori, 2016).

All of that said, we see that the tide has turned concerning researching entrepreneurship education. In fact, similar to Reagan's proclamation from decades

The Age of Entrepreneurship Education Research: Evolution and Future
Advances in Entrepreneurship, Firm Emergence and Growth, Volume 23, 1–8

ISSN: 1074-7540/doi:10.1108/S1074-754020230000023001

past, we submit that we are now most definitively in the age of entrepreneurship education! Empirical evidence backs up our assertion as the demand for entrepreneurship education by students, firms, public policy advocates, and government agencies has increased exponentially in the past decades since Katz (2003) first began tracking its uptick. Currently, estimates suggest more than 5,000 courses are offered worldwide, with hundreds of universities offering majors and minors, along with affiliated centers, institutes, and co-curricular programming focused on entrepreneurship (Gabrielsson et al., 2020). In fact, many universities now position their courses and co-curricular programming as the critical lynchpin (Brush, 2014; Fetter et al., 2010) that drives their local entrepreneurship ecosystem (Stam & Spigel, 2018).

All of this activity and engagement provides much fodder for us to go beyond what we know about entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship and improve how we teach entrepreneurship with that knowledge. For some time, we have known the foundations of what it takes to be an entrepreneur. Research is clear as to what activities are required to start a firm (Carter et al., 1996) and that certain cognitive factors and ways of thinking contribute to developing a new venture (Gatewood et al., 1995). In addition to these ways of thinking, we also know that nascent entrepreneurs must be able to regulate their emotions to deal with the inevitable challenges of starting a new business (Shepherd, 2004). Unfortunately, the coursework and materials used in teaching entrepreneurship and new venture creation rarely fit the reality of what nascent entrepreneurs report as being required to be successful (Edelman et al., 2008). And while we now have a better understanding of some of the short-term subjective outcomes of entrepreneurship education – entrepreneurial attitudes and intentions – we are still unclear about the effectiveness of most pedagogical approaches (Nabi et al., 2017). Overall, researchers still note that there continues to be a paucity of evidence supporting the link between entrepreneurship pedagogy and essential entrepreneurial outcomes (Pittaway & Cope, 2007). Indeed, there is still no consensus regarding what the outcomes of entrepreneurship education should be (Bhatia & Levina, 2020).

This pedagogical gap comes at a time when in many countries, higher education in general, and business schools in particular, are being disrupted (Mintz, 2020) as stakeholders of all forms (students, parents, employers, accrediting bodies, etc.) are looking for clarity, transparency, and stronger learning outcomes. Unfortunately, entrepreneurship education has not been spared from this disruption as what we know about entrepreneurship is far ahead of what we know about how to teach it (Morris & Liguori, 2016).

Questions still abound around the practicality of the intentions and behaviors we instill in our students. For instance, there continues to be little research that bridges the transition from entrepreneurial intention to behavior and the actions that result in actual start-up activities (Nabi et al., 2015). We also seem to overemphasize entrepreneurship students while neglecting the educator's role in entrepreneurship education (Neck & Corbett, 2018). Perhaps, most critically, as a field, we are still unclear about the foundational concepts we claim to teach. For example, experts tell us that entrepreneurship education needs to include developing the "skillset" and "mindset" to engage in various entrepreneurial contexts. However,

these same experts are unclear about exactly what this skill set or mindset is (Neck & Corbett, 2018). Given that we as a field cannot agree on the definition of, or provide empirical evidence for, these crucial constructs and issues, there is no surprise that there is a lack of clarity on how we teach and little consensus on what students should be learning.

However, in our efforts to strengthen generalizable knowledge on teaching entrepreneurship, we are in danger of neglecting the role of context in deciding why, how, and what to teach. In our endeavors to obtain research-based knowledge on the effectiveness of various pedagogical methods in obtaining specific outcomes (e.g., Nabi et al., 2017), we might overlook that such relations may vary depending on cultural context (Wu & Wu, 2017), resource richness (Santos et al., 2019), study program (Kleine et al., 2019), the age or maturity of students (Neck & Corbett, 2018; Hägg & Kurczewska, 2019), and students' prior experience (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015) to mention some. Hence, caution is needed when seeking to implement results between contexts. Similar to the efforts to contextualize entrepreneurship research (Welter, 2011), we should also strive to account for the potential impact of context in entrepreneurship education.

The good news is that concerns about context and continuing ambiguity on what and how we should teach can be seen as an opportunity as both open numerous avenues for research and engagement centered on practical questions for entrepreneurship education researchers. This opportunity drove the idea and design for the volume you now hold in your hand. *The Age of Entrepreneurship Education Research: Evolution and Future*, the 23rd volume of the Advances in Entrepreneurship, Firm Emergence and Growth (AEFEG) series, focuses on answering some of the most pressing issues within entrepreneurship education and provides a springboard for our continued understanding of what we teach, how we teach, and how we can measure our educational impact and outcomes. As you will see, the first few chapters focus on broad issues surrounding entrepreneurship education research before we take a turn in the middle of the volume to focus on teaching particular techniques or to specific audiences. We then conclude with one chapter that looks at co-curricular issues and our final chapter that looks toward the future. This design is purposeful in that the majority of the volume examines current issues, while being bookended with an opening chapter that traces the history of entrepreneurship education research and a closing one that has an eye on the future. Below, we provide a snapshot of the contributions of each chapter of this latest volume of AEFEG.

In the first chapter, Gabrielsson, Landström, Politis, and Sørheim outline the historical evolution of entrepreneurship education as a scholarly field. By elaborating on the development of entrepreneurship education as a practice field, a social field, and as a research field over the three latest decades, they show that entrepreneurship education started out as a part of the scholarly field of entrepreneurship, with a practical focus on what and how to teach. In the 2000s, the entrepreneurship education literature sought to establish a unique domain by publishing in outlets closer to the fields of vocational training and lifelong learning. In the 2010s, the field strengthened its position as a unique teaching and research field with a growing number of scholars. Entrepreneurship as a teaching method

gained ground among educators, and the entrepreneurial mindset emerged as a desired learning outcome and was seen as relevant for various contexts. In "Historical Evolution of Entrepreneurial Education as a Scholarly Field," the authors argue that during the field's evolution, two separate schools emerged, one European and one North-American, but that as the field has matured during the last decade, a more homogenous research base has developed.

In Chapter 2, Ellborg discusses the didactical foundations for entrepreneurship education. Adding to Gabrielsson et al.'s observations, she argues that through its evolution to a more homogenous field, entrepreneurship education has become dominated by the Anglo-American perspective on didactics, and that the European/German tradition of didactics has been lost. While the Anglo-American understanding equals didactics with teaching method, in the German educational tradition, didactics is seen as a pedagogical sub-discipline that focuses on the relationship between the subject, the teacher, and the students. In "Scientifically Based or Policy Driven? Using a Didaktik Approach to Encompass Transformative and Critical Entrepreneurship Education," Ellborg seeks to reintroduce the perspective from the German educational tradition, which she terms *Didaktik*, as an approach to further develop entrepreneurship education research and practice. She presents Didaktik as a perspective that comprises planning, implementing, and evaluating teaching in a way that includes an awareness of the learners' relationship to the subject without excluding the teacher's key role in education. She further argues that Didaktik can help the field emphasize learning rather than outcomes as the essential goal in entrepreneurship education.

Markowska, Ahl, and Naldi take a critical approach to entrepreneurship education in Chapter 3, discussing its role in achieving gender equality. In "Fix the Structures, Not the Women: The Case for Norm Critical Entrepreneurship Education," these authors assert that entrepreneurship education tends to advocate an individualistic understanding of entrepreneurship, over-emphasizing the development of an action-oriented, competitive entrepreneurial self, and neglecting the structures influencing entrepreneurial activities in society. Consequently, gender imbalance in entrepreneurship is understood as a women's problem rather than a structural problem. Thereby, entrepreneurship education tends to reinforce gender inequality and the masculine norm of the entrepreneur. The authors call for norm critical entrepreneurship education. In this education, the existing norms of entrepreneurship are questioned and challenged, thereby paving the way for policy and legislation directed toward more gender equal structures. These authors argue that achieving equal opportunities for men and women in entrepreneurship requires a reshaping of gendered structures and norms that define what is acceptable and expected from both men and women.

In "Entrepreneurship Theory and Ideation Teaching Techniques," Chapter 4, Pittaway examines the role theory plays in advancing ideation techniques for classroom teaching. Pittaway begins by considering how metatheories impact theory construction in entrepreneurship research, discussing the role of ontology, epistemology, axiology, and assumptions about human nature and social change. Next, he presents four different paradigms of thought that apply different philosophies and illustrates how these different paradigms conceptualize entrepreneurship and

entrepreneurial opportunity differently. Within each paradigm, the nature of entrepreneurial opportunity is discussed, and the chapter offers examples to show how different ideation techniques can be generated from these different conceptualizations. Each ideation technique is presented and explained, showing how they relate to each paradigm. The chapter also sets a course for the future as Pittaway provides fodder for researchers to continue investigating ideation research while also giving educators options for teaching ideation in the classroom.

Chapter 5 moves us toward an increasingly popular subject for research and teaching: expertise. In "An Expertise Approach to Entrepreneurship Education," Teague and Gartner do a deep dive into the expertise literature to consider ways that entrepreneurship education might be enhanced through the deliberate practice of specific entrepreneurial behaviors and cognitive skills. This chapter shows how expertise methods and theory can provide a pathway to help educators address the perplexing question of what behaviors and actions will lead to effective entrepreneurship performance. The authors provide an excellent foundation for this exploration by porting the insights from the broader expertise literature to improve entrepreneurship teaching, explicitly focusing on entrepreneurial outcomes. Throughout their chapter, Teague and Gartner suggest that an expertise approach challenges entrepreneurship educators to identify what aspects of the entrepreneurial process might be "deliberately practiced" and to consider modifying aspects of training entrepreneurs to better develop their entrepreneurial capabilities.

In Chapter 6, Beugre and Calvin present an integrated model of entrepreneurship education that emphasizes the importance of integrating localized and indigenous knowledge with Western knowledge in developing and delivering blended entrepreneurship education. The authors present a case study of the pedagogy of Seeka University in the Ivory Coast of Africa to demonstrate how the contextualization of blended entrepreneurship education can promote agency and autonomy in learners and enhance the development of their entrepreneurial identity aspirations. "Blended Entrepreneurship Education: An Integrated Model" highlights critical differences in the institutional environments between the Western context in which much of the current blended learning pedagogy has developed and that in developing and emerging economies. The authors provide examples from the Seeka pedagogy that offer valuable insight into how educators can leverage a learner-centric heutagogical approach to empower students while adapting the Western blended learning model to account for the institutional environment in emerging and developing economies. This chapter presents an exciting and important foundation for entrepreneurship education in the global context in general and in developing and emerging economies in specific.

Entrepreneurship education researchers have acknowledged the importance of contextualizing entrepreneurship education to institutional factors, and the field has started to address this important issue. However, while entrepreneurship research has recently started to address the impact of neurodiversity on entrepreneurship (e.g., Wiklund et al., 2016, 2017), the entrepreneurship education domain has remained largely silent on this topic. Chapter 7 by Stenn and Osterholt takes a crucial first step in initiating this conversation. In "Activating

Entrepreneurial Mindsets in Neurodivergent Students through the UDL Engagement–Regulation–Persistence Framework," the authors provide a comprehensive discussion of the challenges faced by neurally diverse learners in entrepreneurship education and present a UDL engagement–regulation–persistence framework that helps students understand and benefit from their differences. The framework leverages the tenants of heutagogy, active self-guided learning, and andragogy, self-directed problem solving, wherein students take responsibility for outcomes. In addition, the authors provide examples from the pedagogy employed at Landmark College to demonstrate how entrepreneurship pedagogies can be adapted to better serve students with conditions such as dyslexia, ADHD, Autism, and Executive Function Challenges. The techniques highlighted in the chapter provide critical guidance not just for educators in specialty schools such as Landmark, but for all entrepreneurship educators who have neurally diverse students in their classes and programs.

In Chapter 8, we take a turn from content specific research, as Lyu, Shepherd, and Lee broaden our approach by examining the interaction that course work has with various co-curricular undertakings. In "The Effectiveness of University Entrepreneurship Activities on Student Start-up Behavior," these authors demonstrate that just about any type of university entrepreneurship activity will positively affect student start-up activities. However, these positive effects only hold when students have prior start-up experience or when the university has a very strong entrepreneurial climate. These findings are interesting particularly for those researchers who investigate university entrepreneurial ecosystems and how various entrepreneurship activities within these ecosystems impact student venture creation.

In our final chapter, we bookend our opening chapter on the history of entrepreneurship education research with a chapter that looks to the future. Chapter 9, "Future Vision: Trends in US Entrepreneurship Education Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic," Cochran and Kuratko trace some historical signposts in entrepreneurship education and current issues beyond the classroom to envision the future of entrepreneurship education for the next few decades. Specifically, the authors explore research trends in the entrepreneurial mindset, alleviation of poverty through entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, portfolio venture types, racial diversity, and women entrepreneurship in an attempt to set an agenda for the future of entrepreneurship education. Cochran and Kuratko also look at COVID-19's disparate impact on smaller ventures and Black entrepreneurs while highlighting its impact on spurring entrepreneurial innovations and causing an entrepreneurial explosion. The authors also include tools and tips that can be integrated into classes to fit with the changing nature of university programs and the need for more dynamic entrepreneurship courses in the future.

While the foundation for entrepreneurship education pedagogies is better developed than ever, much work remains for its promise to be fulfilled. Just as the nature of entrepreneurship is ever evolving, so too must the way we teach it continues to evolve. The chapters assembled in this volume provide a detailed snapshot of the history of entrepreneurship education research and provocative

work that identifies topics we need to consider as we move the field forward. We hope you enjoy the volume as much as we did crafting it!

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