

# Pedagogical invention in entrepreneurship education

## Adopting a critical approach in the classroom

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – Following the example of the critical management education tradition, the purpose of this paper is to argue whether we should keep EE vital by disturbing it, in particular by interrogating that which has seemingly become “untouchable” from interrogation.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This paper takes inspiration from Paolo Freire’s work by proposing a pedagogical approach to entrepreneurship education which builds on an iterative and interactive process, oscillating between deconstructing and reconstructing entrepreneurship, creating space for invention in the classroom. The paper provides exemplary contributions in developing suggestions as to ways forward.

**Findings** – The ways forward being proposed in this paper include entrepreneurship educators engaging students as co-learners, and evoking their curiosity to pose new questions about the phenomenon; “grounding” students in their own creativity and supporting them to build the confidence needed to develop alternative understandings of how entrepreneurship can function – for themselves, in their future organizations and for society as a whole; and challenging our own teaching positions, and adopting a pedagogical process of invention, stimulating curiosity, co-creation, thought-provoking questions and entrepreneurial action.

**Originality/value** – This paper provides ways forward in keeping EE “fresh”, by sketching how we need to teach about entrepreneurship, adopting the critical insights emerging in the field. The paper argues how we do not only need other models and approaches to understand entrepreneurship, but also to understand learning and education.

**Keywords** Entrepreneurship education, Critical pedagogy, Dialogue, Creativity, Paolo Freire

**Paper type** Conceptual paper

### Introduction

Entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship education (EE), are literally “everywhere” nowadays (Hornsby *et al.*, 2018). This may be an effect of the growing awareness that entrepreneurship is more than “business making” (cf. Gibb, 2002; Kirby, 2007; Thrane *et al.*, 2016), and the expansion of EE to broaden its focus and encompass more in terms of its objectives (O’Connor, 2013) and pedagogies (Nabi *et al.*, 2017). EE has transgressed from being limited to offering a place for students to learn about the creation of new ventures to inhabiting a space where it sets out to facilitate for (young) people to be able to “cope with uncertainty and ambiguity, make sense out of chaos, initiate, build and achieve, in the

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process not just coping with change but anticipating and initiating it” (Kirby, 2007, p. 23). We see a wider range of approaches being embraced, and witness a call to continue to wonder how EE can remain (or: be made) more entrepreneurial (cf. Kuratko, 2005; Fayolle, 2013; Hjorth and Johannisson, 2007). This is a call we take up in this paper, by taking inspiration from Freire’s work on “critical pedagogy” and proposing a pedagogical approach to EE which takes the shape of an iterative and interactive process, oscillating between deconstructing and reconstructing entrepreneurship, creating space for invention in the classroom. We seek to explore if the Freirean mode of pedagogical invention can be translated to EE and if so, how.

In experimenting with other pedagogical approaches, emphasis is being placed on the creative-relational nature of learning (cf. Hjorth and Johannisson, 2007; Hjorth, 2011), with reflections on not only our roles as educators, and our (hierarchical) positions in teaching, but also the relationality involved in engaging students as active (co-)learners. In thinking about our roles as educators, we feel the need to explore the relationship between education and provocation (Hjorth, 2011), with less emphasis on “reproductive continuity” (i.e. the reproduction of knowledge), but with more room for invention, i.e. creating other concepts, allowing for new ways of understanding, which has been called for to let alternative forms of EE take place (Hytti and O’Gorman, 2004). Notwithstanding such calls, with their emphasis on invention, the pedagogical experimentation that has taken place in relation to EE, and the variety of and in (designing) EE (Pittaway and Cope, 2007), little of these insights seems to have found its way into how EE is currently being taken up. There appears to be a striking perseverance with regard to an assumed consensual aim for EE to ensure that more and more students start up a business (or, broadly: organization) either after or during the education. The idea of promoting entrepreneurship through EE is both omnipresent and pervasive (also see Nabi *et al.*, 2017), to the extent that students are not only educated for entrepreneurship, but also graduated to do it. As Pittaway and Cope (2007) put it, there are “two distinct forms of output: first, to enhance graduate employability and second, to encourage graduate enterprise” (p. 485). When the assumption is “the more, the merrier”, the ambition to broaden EE may falter as it is locked into its narrow box of reproducing conventional entrepreneurship stories which are about business, (monetary) success, fame and glory, as well as predominantly male (cf. Ogbor, 2000). Rather, we suggest the exploring of the “black boxes”, of what EE could become, if we allow it to be interrogated, which has been called for in relation to this special issue. If EE is to remain vital, we need to at least “open up” the narrow box. We will adopt, specifically, Freire’s (1970/1996, 1973, 1998) work on critical pedagogy and discuss how it can help us to understand how criticality can be introduced in EE. We then discuss exemplary contributions for how this is being done, and end by providing further suggestions. Before elaborating on why we deem it timely and necessary to open up the box, we will first clarify how we have selected the exemplary contributions.

### **Selection of exemplary contributions**

We have been looking for exemplars which set out to explore if and how a critical approach of entrepreneurship can be introduced and developed in higher education. Important criteria have been: contributions discussing a “problematic” with entrepreneurship (also see below); contributions offering thoughts and elaborations on how they have dealt with that problematic in a university (classroom) setting; attempts to teach entrepreneurship in new, and even unorthodox, ways; and contributions that illustrate these kinds of pedagogical inventions. We have used “snowballing” techniques by following tips and suggestions from colleagues about exemplars – their own and others’ – and we have searched Google Scholar and Web of Science. The 3E conferences in 2016 and 2017 have been useful fora where we have been able to locate colleagues who have experimented pedagogically. Furthermore, we have also traced citations of identified contributions to see if they led us to not yet recognized examples. So, the material

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collected is by no means the result of a systematic review, nor does it offer a full comprehensive overview of extant contributions, but it is the result of a thorough search. What we offer in the remainder of this article are introductions to these exemplars, as well as elaborations on how we see a critical entrepreneurship education (EE) take shape. But first, now, we dive into the question of why we need to open up the box, followed by an introduction of the particular pedagogical lens we have adopted, based on the work of Paolo Freire.

### **On why we need to open up the “box”**

Our main hesitation with the omnipresent and pervasive idea that we should promote entrepreneurship through EE is that it fails to recognize a particular visible, vast and steady output of critical knowledge production relating to entrepreneurship, the so-called “critical” entrepreneurship studies (CES). CES generally question dominant images and conceptualizations of entrepreneurship, entrepreneuring and the entrepreneur, and create room for alternative understandings and approaches. In this paper, we build on the presumption that it is timely to interrogate if and how CES contributions and insights have entered our classrooms. We need to do so against the backdrop of most students interested in the entrepreneurship phenomenon generally expecting merely the “conventional” approach towards the same, and for us (i.e. entrepreneurship educators) to stipulate the importance of new venture creation with regard to our economy’s health and vitality. Yet, some of us might see the need to point at how entrepreneurship is broader than that, there are multiple “versions” of it, the entrepreneurial identity is a layered one, and not without its repercussions, and understandings of entrepreneurship typically lean on a Western world discourse that is classed, gendered, ethnocentric and, thus, excluding. Many “alternative” versions and understandings of entrepreneurship set out to tackle such issues, while paying attention to troublesome global developments, where contemporary neoliberal displacements become entwined with entrepreneurship and blur boundaries between individuals, organizations and society.

### **A broadened understanding**

Indeed, by shifting responsibility from society to the individual, thus bringing entrepreneurship in new guises, it is no longer (solely) a question of economic and other gains but of taking (social, ecological and cultural) responsibility. When neoliberal pursuits attempt to open up the market society, the economic dimension is not pushed aside but spills over, and influences all other aspects of day-to-day life. The economic dimension here should not be conflated with “acquiring money”, but with a particular rationality which has become immanent to contemporary citizenship (Oksala, 2013). In this rationality, education becomes bundled with making, and with learning to better make, an economic rational assessment. When capitalism penetrates every aspect of life, it tends to subsume other values, dimensions and activities (Oksala, 2013). As entrepreneurship educators we must acknowledge these problematics, and use “other” theories to help students reflect on them, continuing to pose new questions, and inviting our students to do so as well. This provides a challenge and poses questions with regard to how to enact this in our classrooms, and thus offer a CEE.

Indeed, whereas critical management studies (CMS) have by now already witnessed a long tradition in thinking critically about management education (for a recent and elaborate overview, see the *Routledge Companion to Reinventing Management Education*, edited by Steyaert *et al.*, 2016), it is high time that we start doing this in relation to EE.

### **The field of CES**

Having already witnessed two reviews of this field (Spicer, 2012; Fletcher and Selden, 2016), we can say without hesitation that it has expanded considerably since the early days of Nodoushani and Nodoushani (1999), Ogbor (2000) and Armstrong (2005). In line with

Alvesson and Willmott's (1996) definition of CMS, critical entrepreneurship studies have set out "to challenge the legitimacy – and counter the development of – oppressive institutions and practices, seeking to highlight, nurture and promote the potential of human consciousness to reflect critically upon such practices" (p. 13), specifically in connection to entrepreneurship discourse (cf. Armstrong, 2005) and entrepreneurial practices (cf. Beaver and Jennings, 2005). Some milestones that we believe have helped shape the field are the "movement books" (Steyaert and Hjorth, 2003; Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004; Steyaert and Hjorth, 2006; Hjorth and Steyaert, 2009), which together with various special issues (Hjorth *et al.*, 2008; Tedmanson *et al.*, 2012; Rehn *et al.*, 2013; Verduijn *et al.*, 2014), and an edited volume (Essers *et al.*, 2017) have challenged mainstream understandings and discourses of entrepreneurship.

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

This has resulted in a vein of CES contributions that are sceptical about entrepreneurship. Such contributions question dominant assumptions being attributed to the entrepreneurship phenomenon, its grand narratives, and – more generally – the ideological distortions of mainstream entrepreneurship research (including its paradigmatic roots). Indeed, such contributions engage openly with the "dark sides" of and within entrepreneurship (such as the contradictions, ambiguities, tensions and paradoxes inherent in entrepreneurial activities; cf. Armstrong, 2005; Jones and Spicer, 2009; Costa and Saraiva, 2012; Olaison and Sorensen, 2014).

Alongside this sceptical vein we witness a vein of contributions that form explicit hopeful attempts to "open up" our understanding of the entrepreneurship phenomenon to a more affirmative stance. Such contributions rearticulate entrepreneurship in the light of issues of societal production, and emancipation (cf. Steyaert and Hjorth, 2006; Calas *et al.*, 2009; Berglund *et al.*, 2012; Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013).

Together, these veins form the "double-edged sword" that constitutes CES (also see Verduijn *et al.*, 2014), which needs to be taken up when critical entrepreneurship enters the classroom. Presenting entrepreneurship from a sceptical-critical perspective (deconstructing entrepreneurship) thus simultaneously necessitates providing students with a "hopeful" space where it can be reconstructed (re-invented). Next we elaborate on Freire's work, and then we continue to discuss how the two modes – deconstruction and reconstruction – can be played out via CEE.

### **A Freirean mode of pedagogical invention**

The Brazilian pedagogue Paulo Freire is a prominent thinker in critical education (Darder, 2002; Rodriguez and Huemmer, 2018), describing himself and his pedagogical legacy as progressive (Freire, 1997 in Darder, 2002), and often being referred to as the founder of a

radical pedagogy (Fedotova and Nikolaeva, 2015). A key concept in Freire's work is "conscientization" – e.g. to become aware – which emphasises education as a process where students, through reflection and action, can develop critical awareness (Freire, 1970/1996, 1973, 1998). In teaching we should, if we follow Freire, avoid to reproduce dominant assumptions and taken-for-granted ideas, but rather set out to "uncover" social problems, and societal needs, so as to formulate new ways to take action. For Freire (1998) action and reflection cannot be separated because "there is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis" and "to speak a true word is to transform the world" (p. 87). The speaking of "true" words – that is, of words that matter to the one who speaks, and which facilitate for a person to tell about her or his experiences of the world – is at the heart of a Freirean approach to education. For the teacher, this means that it is equally important to listen to students' words, and try to avoid to impose readymade concepts which "correct" the students, but instead to find ways to build a map of words together with students. Such maps can help both teachers and students to not only navigate the world with the words they have access to, but also to find ways to connect words with each other to transform the world. Central to a critical pedagogical stance is to resist the idea of knowledge as an "object" than can be conveyed from the teacher to the student. In such an approach, the teacher turns into an "extension worker", the one who knows the "facts" and who can transfer these facts (to the student):

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat [...] In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. (Freire, 1998, p. 53)

Freire views conscientization as a pedagogical approach of invention where teachers invite students in a dialogue and a co-creation of knowledge instead of "the banking concept of education approach" where knowledge is transferred from teachers to students in an instrumental and hierarchical way. With the conscientization approach, there is an emphasis on participants' practices and to find the words that do their lived experiences justice. When words are used to give "life" to students' experiences, new worlds can be created, to serve as human possibilities to change what is sometimes seen as an already mapped out path (Berglund and Wigren, 2012).

### **From Freire to CEE**

With inspiration from Freire, we translate the banking concept of education to an EE approach in which we seek to move away from reproducing taken-for-granted norms and templates. Rather, we can create a space where there is room for reflection and multivoicedness and invite students to work along with us to create knowledge about entrepreneurship. When we invite students to bring their experiences to the classroom, and to co-create knowledge with us, entrepreneurship can reappear in new ways which makes it possible for students to "own" their reality. Finding and using one's own reality is at the heart of conscientization, such that we can support "invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the worlds, with the world, and with each other" (Freire, 1970/1996, p. 53). Such a pedagogical mode encourages students and teachers to develop a critical awareness and to develop a curiosity for aspects of entrepreneurship which the dominant (predominantly positive) stories prevent us from doing. Likewise, we are inspired by Freire's fascination for hope and how the two dimensions of a word (reflection/action) can prompt us to transform words and worlds. This mode of critical pedagogy is productive since it invites us to enact possibilities for (social and societal) change. This brings us to elaborating on what we mean by deconstruction and reconstruction, in particular in relation to EE.

Deconstructing as we see it is concerned with interrogating dominant constructions of entrepreneurship (Nodoushani and Nodoushani, 1999; Ogbor, 2000). This process of interrogating implies the “laying bare”, or uncovering, of the assumptions that together construct such dominant constructions, as well as “challenging” (critiquing) – with students – particular constructions. As has been argued above, we feel that it is required and timely to do so because of how entrepreneurship as a phenomenon in itself has become taken-for-granted as a positive force for individuals, organizations and societies. One can even argue that entrepreneurship has been transformed into a guiding principle for how we are to conduct our lives in accordance with a “formula for entrepreneurial freedom” (Bröckling, 2015). This may involve starting a new business and taking a product to the market, or becoming self-employed and “living your dream”; at best a “free life”, at worst a life where you struggle to make ends meet, something you would share with many others in similar precarious situations. Or it could imply having to continuously ask yourself how to improve as if you were your own producer, marketer and seller (Berglund, 2013). Entrepreneurial logic as a guiding principle intervenes and turns “traditional” employment into a process of employability (Berglund, 2013). It is this tendency, and the omnipresence of entrepreneurship and EE, which underpins the idea of the contemporary citizen (Dahlstedt and Fejes, 2017), in an era where performativity rules (cf. Dey and Steyaert, 2007). Reconstructing (cf. Welter *et al.*, 2017) then, following Freire’s notion of hope, is concerned with welcoming (social) “creativity”, pointing at the productive sense of critique, but also at creativity in the sense of inventing alternatives (Parker *et al.*, 2014).

### **Deconstructing in EE**

The exemplars we have consulted all pointed to the need to interrogate dominant assumptions of entrepreneurship. The gendered, classed and excluding notion of the entrepreneur is one that appears in many of the exemplars (e.g. Jones, 2014, 2018; Wettermark *et al.*, 2018). This heroic figure is, sometimes subtly, presented as a model that students should mimic, such that students are groomed – via rituals – to become the successful entrepreneur that is asked for, in a “cult”-like fashion (Farny *et al.*, 2016). Calling for a critical pedagogy to counteract that cultification of entrepreneurship, Farny *et al.* (2016) see potential for embedded agents to do so. Adhering to their plea, we now firstly turn to a contribution by Tunstall (2018) that relates of students protesting against the economization of the university as an institution, putting university values “on trial” by laying bare the political conflict of embedding entrepreneurship in higher education, and opening up (see next section) for discerning potentially new constructions of entrepreneurship as social change. With entrepreneurship seemingly having found its way to the very core of the university (by that notion of the entrepreneurial university), Tunstall effectively argues how some see this as the evil of capitalism having crept into the idea of academic freedom as the very purpose of higher education. Skoglund and Berglund (2018) take this further, into the classroom, by challenging the notion of achieving freedom through entrepreneurship. They invite students to bring pictures that relate to entrepreneurship. This facilitates departing from students’ experiences. A sociological approach to entrepreneurship provides an alternative view to entrepreneurship as conditional for economic development, which assists students to see and problematize the entrepreneur as contingent with ways of governing. Via a particular case of social entrepreneurship, where a tech company engages in various social projects, students are invited to create their own cases, i.e. developing their own fictive company. Furthermore, later during the course, they are encouraged to enact a real-life social project, as part of the fictive company’s social engagement. In parallel, the students read literature on governmentality, which furthers their ability to problematize and reflect on “entrepreneurship as social change” and to interrogate the blurring of boundaries between the state and the industry, recognizing how companies have come to nowadays participate via social entrepreneurial

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initiatives to exercise political decisions within the operations of business, and often with encouragement from the state. Barinaga's (2016) is a similar attempt, but she proposes activism (i.e. encouraging students to take action) as a pedagogic approach to raise awareness and nurture humbleness in order to "add nuance to the realities that social entrepreneurs aim to change" (p. 299).

In a comparable vein, Lindbergh and Schwartz (2018) set out to evoke students to acknowledge the function of entrepreneurship to help deal with and solve societal issues, e.g. by introducing their students to sustainable development, and showing them a documentary on working conditions in India. As well, they have their students consider entrepreneurship as a set of paradoxes – e.g. born/made entrepreneur, or discovering/creating opportunities. The overall aim involves deconstructing entrepreneurship to see how it may become aligned to societies in a better way. Verduijn (2018) also picks up on the notion of paradoxes to question predominant and taken-for-granted ideas about entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur with her students (such as the entrepreneur as hero, entrepreneurship as predominantly being about start-ups/business, etc.). Deconstructing in her case is guided by offering students alternative views with the aim being to move students' thinking (i.e. to open up the frames they bring to the classroom, and to start to create new ones). Garmann Johnsen *et al.* (2018) set out to achieve a similar goal, but do so by introducing students to philosophy as a method through which they can begin to deconstruct entrepreneurship. Using Kristeva's concept of "the abject", they invite students to analyse what is silenced in stories of entrepreneurship. Whilst students typically ascribe entrepreneurship to success, "the abject" allows to zoom in on failures as part of the learning experiences that are integral to entrepreneurial processes.

Jones (2018) in particular sets out to challenge the gender stereotype of the male entrepreneur, to create awareness of how our "roles" are gendered by introducing students to feminist literature and approaches, and also to gender dilemmas. She sets out, on the first day of the course, by asking students (anonymously) about their reason to participate in the course. Students' experiences are valued: "As they progress, students are also encouraged to be honest about their responses to the reading, classroom resources and tasks, and also to bring in their own artefacts to share and discuss with the group (this might be a TV programme they have watched or a blog they have read which resonates with them)" (Jones, 2018, p. 144). By doing so, Jones (2018) tries to bring theory to life, and to – with students – reflect on the concept of stereotype threat, sensitizing them to become aware of wider beliefs, assumptions and social positions. Likewise, Farny *et al.* (2016) suggest to move to invert the hierarchy of the glamorizing lonely heroic (male) entrepreneur and provide more agency to teachers and students in the classroom, so as to actively falsify normative ideas, by creating a safe learning environment, encouraging students to find cases that differ from the mainstream, with them being allowed to fail – emphasizing learning as a process rather than ways to reach a specific outcome (e.g. the business plan). In doing so, they bring student lifeworlds to the classroom, and honour the "multiple perspectives and alternate ideologies" (Farny *et al.*, 2016, p. 527).

Resch *et al.* (2018) set out to, via Rehn and De Cock (2009), deconstruct creativity as a celebration of the useful and the new. More generally, they expand the prevailing individualized conception of entrepreneurship and creativity, and also deconstruct the dominant image of the white, heroic male entrepreneur. Wettermark *et al.* (2018) invite students to deconstruct the very "core" of the discourse: the autonomous human being. Entrepreneurship may appear as a way to gain freedom, but also provides a means through which we are governed through freedom. The entrepreneurial logic is problematized from notions of an entrepreneurial self-bound by two relations: the relation to the self and the relation to the other/s. In relation to herself, the entrepreneurial self seeks to improve her potential, and in social entrepreneurial initiatives the entrepreneurial self seeks to inspire others to follow suit through processes of empowerment. These two relations are made

problematic in that this makes it difficult for entrepreneurial selves to engage in mutual relationships. Instead students explore how they externalize their vulnerability to the other, which Wettermark *et al.* (2018) find to ironically sustain the relation of the emotionally superior entrepreneur and the subordinated vulnerable human being s/he seeks to help. According to Wettermark *et al.* (2018), there is no other way of escaping this deadlock than to see it and reflect on how it can be dealt in more mutual ways in our wishes to change some kind of *status quo*.

Changing a status quo is also what Jansson *et al.* (2018) set out to do. In their case, healthcare students are invited to bring to the classroom their experiences of the “small problems” that need to be solved in their everyday work to understand how innovation within the public sector could emerge from the small adjustments of and in work processes. They link entrepreneurship more to healthcare and the patient perspective than with the for-profit life science industry and drug development. Design thinking *vis-a-vis* entrepreneuring (also see Garbuio *et al.*, 2018) is used in the course to put user needs (e.g. patients) in focus. This implies listening to the other – the patient or the one who has a problem – and to gain an understanding of context/everyday life – before suggesting a solution.

Taken together these approaches do not suggest to criticize and “stop” entrepreneurship, but to enact it with more concerns for context – indeed, more concerns for global politics, and civil society – by resisting to adopt a too narrow interpretation, a one-size-fits-all approach and avoiding to position entrepreneurship as “the solution”, denying its dark and grey sides (Hytti, 2018). This not only provides suggestions with regards to how to teach entrepreneurship in the classroom, but also for how we can rethink entrepreneurship curricula, programmes and the idea of the entrepreneurial university (Hytti, 2018, Tunstall, 2018).

### **Reconstructing in EE**

In the case of Verduijn (2018) (see previous section), students are invited to literally play with, and generate their own alternative understandings by producing small film clips, a means through which the emphasis comes to lie on movement, knowledge-in-the-making and not the consolidated, fixed idea of entrepreneurship, or “the” entrepreneur. Jones (2018) reconstructs entrepreneurship through student dialogues – thus reflecting upon how entrepreneuring can be gendered differently, e.g. by analysing gender in the media, and student reports on “aha-moment” in which they participated in “doing” both gender and entrepreneurship. Seanor (2018) invites students to take walks in the city and encourages them to pay attention to all “kinds” of entrepreneurial activity. This is later discussed in the classroom, where mundane aspects of entrepreneuring are acknowledged, thus offering some distance to the accounts of the high-brow successful entrepreneurs that students always already know about, and opening up for alternative versions. Achtenhagen and Johannisson (2018), by reflecting on cognitive capabilities, affective responses and network possibilities, start to offer students new ways of being/coming and envisioning the way entrepreneurship could be enacted in relation to a more sustainable world in particular. This resonates with Lindbergh and Schwartz (2018), who invite students to work on projects in which they are given a space to reconstruct alternative versions of societal entrepreneurship that tackle a sustainability issue and that carefully navigate between the paradoxes (such as the earlier mentioned born/made entrepreneur, discovering/creating opportunities) to find their own interpretation of entrepreneuring. By doing so, Lindbergh and Schwartz (2018) evoke students to pursue entrepreneurship in alternative ways and seek out entrepreneurial approaches that can benefit a sustainable society in the long run. Something similar is proposed by Johansson and Rosell (2012), who anchor their course in students’ life experiences to foster a critical reflexivity with the purpose to shape an understanding of entrepreneurship as a societal force. Jansson *et al.* (2018) invite students to work on projects to transform healthcare by focussing on details of everyday life to solve problems of



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practicing healthcare in a qualitatively better way, rather than developing a new “business opportunity” that could serve to conquer a market.

To reconstruct understandings of entrepreneurship, analytical concepts such as “entrepreneurship”, “governmentality”, “enterprising self”, “enterprising culture”, “subjectivity” and “power” help students to both visualize, give meaning to and enact concepts like “entrepreneurship”, ‘idea’, “business”, “opportunity”, “discovery”, in novel ways (also see Wettermark *et al.*, 2018). The analytical concepts suggested here are also used by critical pedagogues, and can be adopted to inform the student about critical issues that are part of the introduction of enterprise (and entrepreneurship) in higher education. This is connected to conscientization, to becoming critically aware (Freire, 1970/1996), as we have elaborated earlier on. Conscientization can be a result from addressing conflicts and tensions between opposing discourses, making it possible for those involved to take action against the oppressive dimensions of reality (Berglund and Johansson, 2007), and to find new words to tell new stories about entrepreneurship that may disclose new worlds (Berglund and Wigren, 2012). This is in line with what Tunstall (2018) suggests when he discusses the reconstructing of alternatives of entrepreneurship which “create new ways to tackle the interface of teaching, research, society and economy” (p. 29). Skoglund and Berglund (2018) adopt such an approach in the classroom, where students are invited to try out how a social mission can be aligned with a fictive company (see previous section). In this way, they can reconstruct how boundaries can be drawn between the state and the business, with regards to solving a political issue. This should create an awareness of how liberalization (or neo-liberalization) has emerged from pressures both from the right (stating that the state should be more effective) and the left (stating that companies should take greater social responsibility). Whilst neoliberalism typically describes economic imperatives of enhancing privatization and de-regulating markets (Harvey, 2005), social dimensions of this shift should also be acknowledged. Indeed, critical pedagogues are not interested in the economic implications of this shift, but in how an enterprise culture changes learners’ and educators’ relations to themselves as well as to others. Consequently, the pedagogical interventions being developed, more broadly under the influence of enterprise culture, and more specifically within the framework of EE, can be understood as a particular kind of governmentality which runs the risk of connecting students and teachers to a capitalist logic and to the rationality of the market (e.g. Dahlstedt and Hertzberg, 2014). Resch *et al.* (2018) form a particular example of adopting an “interventionist pedagogy”, integrating series of sociomaterial and affective enactments to disconnect creativity from performativity and reconstruct it such that it can be appreciated by students to denote something else (something that is not measurable) e.g. by bringing elements from theatre in their classroom, but also by taking them out of the classroom. In a similar vein, Bureau and Komporozos-Athanasiou (2017) offer their experiences with a course format in which they “unpick” the potentiality of art practices in the learning and experiencing of, in particular, the subversive dimension of entrepreneurship, adopting a dialogical pedagogy (based on Bakhtin’s work). Students in the course participate in a number of events taking place in a variety of locations, both in and outside the business school.

Wettermark *et al.* (2018) is another example of untangling neoliberal idea(l)s in relation to the entrepreneurship phenomenon. In their course, a particular case is introduced to spur students to think anew about entrepreneurial activity, and to see that, although entrepreneurship appears in alternative forms, this may not be “the solution”, but can just as well be seen as a mechanism sustaining the superiority of a more moral entrepreneurial self *vis-a-vis* the one who needs help (to become entrepreneurial and take responsibility). Thus, reconstruction here focusses on finding new ways to relate to oneself (not striving for “potentiality”) and to find new ways to relate to the other (without subordinating him/her). Dialogue in Wettermark *et al.* (2018) defines the relation between teacher and student as a

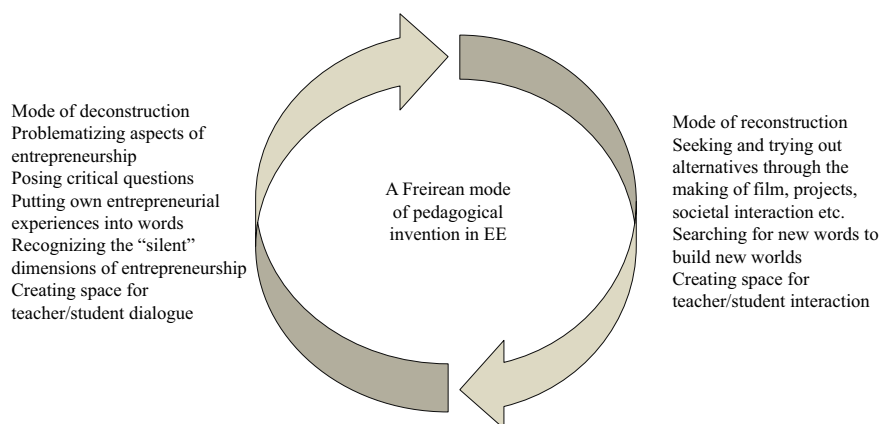
process of trial and error that can be initiated in a secure environment where teachers and students support each other. For another example of co-creating and relating to one another, see Butcher (2018), who proposes that it is necessary to co-construct a sense of community to become entrepreneurially proficient in an increasingly uncertain world.

The different exemplars show us various ways to go about evoking students to reconsider entrepreneurship. Students are invited to bring their own experiences and ideas to the classroom (also see Bolinger and Brown, 2015), watch a documentary, interview an entrepreneur, take a walk in the city to experience and recognize new forms of entrepreneurship, play with philosophical ideas to scrutinize their own perceptions of entrepreneurship, write blogs about their experiences, etc. This at the very least testifies to the imagination among entrepreneurship educators to evoke their curiosity to pose new questions about the phenomenon. The point is not that we do not know anything about this phenomenon – we already know a lot. But there are still blind spots, and there are dominating tendencies in our understanding, which are highlighted through critical perspectives to facilitate other kinds of learning experiences than taking the position of a teacher who tells students what they should know. The latter would be to reproduce “the banking concept of education”, taking the dominant position as “the one who knows” instead of taking the opportunity to challenge our own teaching positions and evoke a pedagogical process of invention where curiosity, co-creation, thought-provoking questions and entrepreneurial action can follow. Reconstructing does not have a premade recipe (which we recognize from philosophical discussions about entrepreneurship). Rather, this part of the iterative process builds on grounding the students in their own creativity and to support them to build the confidence needed to develop an alternative to how entrepreneur/ship could function – for themselves, in their future organizations and for society as a whole.

### **Wrapping up: contours of CEE**

In this paper, we argue for the need to keep EE vital, and to not let dominant connotations of entrepreneurship (and EE) stand in the way of addressing provocative questions. Doing so invites all of us, as entrepreneurship educators, along with our students, to re-invent EE. Through practices of pedagogical re-invention contours for CEE emerge, resulting in educational practices that allow for considering whether there are other ways to live the present (other than the standard entrepreneurial way), and thus allowing for alternatives to be formed and experimented with.

To facilitate such pedagogical invention, we have suggested to adopt an iterative process, oscillating between deconstruction and reconstruction, integrating the sceptical view of entrepreneurship with the hopeful approach of “remodelled” entrepreneurship (see Figure 1). This entails acknowledging that although the enterprising self operates through a productive power which may be difficult to resist, there is always room for reflection, distance and resistance (cf. Ball and Olmedo, 2013; Ball, 2016; Berglund, Lindgren and Packendorff, 2017). This, however, requires to learn “the rules of the game”. From the perspective of critical entrepreneurship pedagogy, this game does not refer to “business making”, but to the game of “governing through entrepreneurial freedom”. As teachers, we can introduce students to the literature of critical entrepreneurship studies, providing them with a new perspective of how entrepreneurship may work. At first, it may be enough to show them novel aspects of entrepreneurship, and to help them digest the fact that there are also “dark sides” to it. In furthering our efforts, we can acquaint students with the analytical concepts of, for example, neoliberalism, governmentality, and the enterprising self. Equipped with these analytical concepts they can, themselves, begin to analyse (and develop) cases of their own interest and train their ability at critical reflection. In shaping their futures, this will help them, and us as pedagogues, to find more thought-out, aware solutions – for ourselves, for organizations and for society.



**Figure 1.**  
Pedagogical  
invention in EE

In doing so, creativity and experimentation should be prioritized over productivity and performativity, allowing for co-creating critical awareness, and de-/reconstructing rather than constructing taken-for-granted assumptions.

This may require involving students in play and “becoming”, and offering them a space for creative work that will not be assessed according to the “business scale”, but that opens up for them to explore new perspectives, stories, connections and responsibilities. Creativity could pave the way for curiosity, for motivation to learn for the sake of learning (rather than to be(come) employable) and for growing mutual relations with peer students from different societal backgrounds.

This thus may entail, in addition to problematizing aspects of entrepreneurship, and posing critical questions, the putting words to one’s own entrepreneurial experiences, and recognizing the “silent”/unspoken dimensions of entrepreneurship, fostered by a dialogic teacher/student relationship. The two modes of reconstruction and deconstruction can prompt such processes of educational invention (see Figure 1). And, it may entail – for entrepreneurship educators – the raising of such questions as which aspects of entrepreneurship need to be problematized, what critical questions can be posed, how we can help ourselves and students give voice to entrepreneurial experiences (without falling into the trap of using “standard” entrepreneurial jargon), and how we may need to intervene in common education practices. Indeed, attempts at CEE will not come unchallenged. Common educational institutional practices may come in the way of the kind of pedagogical invention we propose here, depending on the particular institutional context, the prevailing view on academia, and whether it does or does not allow for degrees of autonomy in developing (new) educational practices. This can be a challenge in developing novel, other approaches to EE.

Yet, as entrepreneurship educators we can learn about what it means to resist the neoliberal educational practices foisted upon us. By recognizing how we are exposed to the productive power to perform (and how we are measured to do so), we can start to see a way to turn this into other directions. In this paper, EE has been opened up from a narrow “business approach” to embrace a wider approach with the ambition to teach (young) people how they can manage life itself. This involves a move from understanding “the entrepreneur of the self” to understanding entrepreneurship as a collective effort, and as having social and societal consequences. Entrepreneurship changes from the idea of “building one’s kingdom” to an understanding of engaging in entrepreneurial initiatives with the other (cf. Jones and Spicer, 2009). This implies a need to move from understanding the doing of entrepreneurship through particular events where successful entrepreneurs are elevated and celebrated (e.g. Dragons Den, entrepreneurship awards etc.) in a “peacock kind of way”

(Bill *et al.*, 2010) to understanding the mundane practices of entrepreneuring where “worker ants” blend pleasure with struggles (Bill *et al.*, 2010) and where dialogue outclasses pitch and monologue on some stage (also see Fletcher, 2018).

EE taking up the critical insights that are spreading in the field points to a need to look more closely at the practices, not only of entrepreneuring, but also of learning, and the educational practices being carried out in specific classroom situations, and course contexts. It also points to a need to consider how certain educational practices come into being, and come to endure, and how we can bring about change through pedagogical invention. A Freirean approach to learning has a propensity to provoke, and to work through difficult conceptual issues, deflating “grandiose” theoretical concepts, and placing emphasis on the local, specific and contingent (Woolgar *et al.*, 2009).

All in all, we feel that CEE should take the form of resisting the tendencies towards a “McEducation” (Hytti, 2018), a tendency in which students are seen as consumers, with the “right” to have an EE, in order to effectively shape their enterprising selves. In this paper, we have not only argued for the need to keep EE vital by adopting critical approaches, but also offered exemplars of how this is currently already being done, in various ways, and in various contexts. We have offered our thoughts on a way forward, and have pointed to the need to adopt “other” models and approaches, not only to understanding entrepreneurship, but also to adopt “other” models and approaches to understanding learning and education. Building on the works of Paolo Freire, we can not only start to see entrepreneurship, but also education (and EE in particular) as a political project, attuning students (more) to knowing how to reconfigure problematic practices and understandings and emerging ideas and action possibilities so as to prepare them to appreciate the “unknown radical future possibilities that are available at every encounter” (Fenwick, 2014, p. 51).

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