BOOK AND MEDIA REVIEWS

The Entrepreneurial Learning Journey and Back Again. Conversations with Entrepreneurship Educators from around the World

by Wraae Birgitte
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"The sky is no limit" is the motto being taught in the entrepreneurship classroom, as portrayed by Birgitte Wraae. Everything is possible for the students in their entrepreneurial journey. Entrepreneurship education fosters the reflection process of students. Therefore, they learn more about who they are and what they can do in the classroom. The author writes with enthusiasm and passion for teaching entrepreneurship. She interviewed 19 experienced entrepreneurship educators and included their views and experience in her reflections on how entrepreneurship education could be taught. She also provides reflection reports of some of her students. In short, the book is a transformational tool to inspire entrepreneurship educators to change the lives and outlooks of students through entrepreneurship.

Why are entrepreneurship educators teaching entrepreneurship? Wraae (2021) calls for giving the students the possibility to develop themselves and cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset. Thus, students become change agents of their personal lives. The entrepreneurial classroom differs from other settings as high levels of uncertainty characterize entrepreneurship. This difference is challenging because students need to feel safe enough to fail and learn continuously.

How do we, as entrepreneurship educators, want to spend our first minutes with our class? The first 25–30 s of a lesson are critical for the student's decision to stay in the classroom or not. Building a connection with students can be achieved, for example, by greeting them by name, shaking their hands or actively engaging them in an exercise during the first hour. Furthermore, each student carries a backpack with different experiences and motives. Being aware of these differences allows educators to support the students on their journey.

The author points out that many entrepreneurs failed at school, but they responded well to action learning. In contrast, academically successful university students learn how to conform. However, they might have lost the ability to take the initiative. That is why it is vital to empower our students to become active learners and self-responsible. The students shall be put as individuals in the center of the classroom.

Birgitte Wraae recommends transformative learning, referring to Sagar (2015). Students make meaning of their learning and decide how to learn and act. Entrepreneurial learning

differs from conventional learning as it is about the practical relevance of theory, learning from mistakes and is student-focused (Sagar, 2015). Entrepreneurship educators let go of some of the control in the classroom. However, it is essential to create a safe environment for students and focus on supporting them to reach their learning goals. This increases their entrepreneurial self-efficacy and the probability of becoming entrepreneurs in their own lives.

Such a form of learning demands a specific mindset from the educator. We as educators should experiment, create meaning, adapt and deviate from the plan, involve the students by listening and including their interests and make room for reflection. Wraae (2021) calls it an effectuation style of practising as an educator.

Entrepreneurship is unique as it deals with an unknown world. The entrepreneurial process will be messy and chaotic because of this uncertainty. The students are not yet aware of the depths of the journey ahead and the challenges they may face. The educator supports them through honest and professional feedback and a network outside the organization. The students learn by making a case and recognizing and exploiting a business idea. As a result, the students leave the classroom with entrepreneurial skills they can use in various situations.

Wraae (2021) suggests an open-minded attitude of educators: We might disagree with the students; however, we should support them by giving the students the possibility of making their own decisions. The students also need to fail, so they get out of their comfort zones and learn. As a consequence, the students become better problem solvers and solution builders.

Teaching involves theories and models such as the business model canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010), lean startup (Ries, 2011) and concepts about the venture creation process. Teaching also requires that students are engaged in activities and reflect on the reasons for their decisions and activities (Kakouris & Liargovas, 2021). Learning takes place through action.

Wraae (2021) recommends reflecting on the concept of a growth mindset which might be more relevant in the entrepreneurship classroom than a fixed mindset. In the entrepreneurial process (Vogel, 2017), the results are rarely known initially. They can change tremendously during the entrepreneurial process. If the students are open to such change and uncertainty, they have a growth mindset. This mindset can be developed.

Students can work on a business idea which is meaningful to them. Often the students want our opinion. As educators rarely are in the target groups of the business ideas, the students should talk to potential customers and do market research about their target groups. The role of entrepreneurship educators is not to validate these ideas. Thus, the students should go outside the building and talk to potential customers. This process is often an emotional roller coaster with ups and downs and changing plans. The entrepreneurship educator must be available to the students in these situations. Hence, it is controlled chaos and cocreated learning space. It is about presenting and sharing their idea with others to get more insights or even valuable partnerships. This process can be complicated; however, it drives learning and is part of the entrepreneurial experience.

Wraae (2021) reflects on the educator–student relationship. The students in her class can meet her once a week for a mentor conversation about the idea, the progress and potential drawbacks. They use the first 5 min to show how it goes in their entrepreneurial process. We, as educators, can motivate and encourage the students in this process. The lack of knowledge and experience poses a challenge for students. Handling this and the emotion in this process requires much expertise and experience for educators. Some students' reactions are not predictable, so we must prepare for the complicated. We must tackle whatever we are confronted with within the classroom. Meeting with other entrepreneurship educators

can help to share experiences. The needed expertise is broad. Furthermore, it is essential to be honest if the educator does not know the answer or disagrees.

A culture of allowing failure is productive. Failure is part of entrepreneurship, and there needs to be honest conversations about failing. The students must be used to failure, how to reflect, what to learn and how to deal with failure. Learning from failure is very important in entrepreneurship education.

And some challenges of the students are not related to the classroom. Some students have easy access to money and others do not. Students may have part-time jobs, a great business network (social capital), an entrepreneurial family background or exams which can affect the entrepreneurial journey. We must understand the learning preconditions of students.

Typically, these entrepreneurship courses are outside of what they are used to. We encourage them to be active. The entrepreneurship classroom is a perfect place for the transformation of students' personal development, and we, as entrepreneurship educators, need to challenge our students in their perceived traditional roles. We are coaches to keep the students optimistic, ask questions and build trust. Students can be given the possibility to learn from each other. Our role is to help them along their way because it is their entrepreneurial project.

Sometimes the students feel frustrated. They might not be able to cope with the freedom they experience, and sometimes, these frustrations turn into feelings of success because they achieve essential goals. For a lot of students, the entrepreneurial project is a life-changing experience. However, some of them do not pursue an entrepreneurial career afterward and do not exploit their business idea any longer. However, they leave feeling empowered. And some of the students postpone their entrepreneurial careers (Sieger, Fueglistaller, Zellweger, & Braun, 2019), where this experience in the entrepreneurship classroom will help.

Measuring the impact of teaching is challenging. For example, a business plan or reflective dialogues or assignments in class can be assessed. Additionally, industry experts from the alumni network or students' peer feedback can be asked to evaluate the progress and value of the business idea. However, we lack an underlying model for what to achieve in our classroom. We see that we affect the development of skills, resilience and identity development. The author gives ideas for such measurements, such as students' reflections. For example, they write reflective journals to be handed in every second week or create a video lasting maximum 3 min with the headline "myself as an entrepreneur or intrapreneur." Additionally, educators can evaluate their teaching practices as well. Entrepreneurship education seems the only discipline to say that the best way to learn entrepreneurship "is not come to class."

Wraae (2021) also points to the dark sides of entrepreneurship education, such as working long hours, the image of a heroic entrepreneur or students being paranoid about their idea getting stolen. However, the initial business idea and the minimal viable product (MVP) of a successful startup have often little to do with each other. According to what the entrepreneur has learned in this journey, the MVP unfolds (Ries, 2011).

Furthermore, it is about developing entrepreneurs and that students develop skills and competencies that are relevant to becoming more employable. They are willing to think outside the box and try new things. Additionally, they practice resilience and tackle challenges when meeting the first hurdle.

And what could be the future of entrepreneurship education? First, students could start the entrepreneurial journey at a younger age, and educators could reflect more on the personal well-being of the entrepreneur (van Gelderen, Wiklund, & McMullen, 2021).

Furthermore, cocurricular programs with other disciplines could be created, and competitions, workshops, startup weekends and networking may be developed.

Wraae (2021) summarizes that we, as entrepreneurship educators, send our students on an entrepreneurial journey to solve challenges and try new things. This journey is uncertain and can be frustrating, and at the same time, it activates the students and enforces learning processes. The students learn it on their own. The entrepreneurial classroom offers something unique compared to other disciplines because dealing with uncertainty is key to our field.

The strengths of the book are manifold. First, it is refreshing to read about the author's positive attitude when writing about the relationship between educators and their students and the uncertainty of the entrepreneurial journey. It is about creating a supportive environment for students to grow. Second, this transformation process involves students developing business ideas according to their interests, letting them grow personally. Learning takes place through actions. Third, she gives ideas for educators to deal with the uncertainty of the entrepreneurial journey and to include these ideas in the classroom. Fourth, there are passages of various students reflecting on their entrepreneurial journey. This consists of a valuable perspective of the students. Fifth, the interviews with other entrepreneurship educators also give other ideas and impressions to experiment in the classroom. Sixth, Wraae (2021) also addresses essential aspects such as measuring the impact of our classes and how we can foster students' learning process through reflection. Additionally, she talks about the dark side of entrepreneurship and how entrepreneurship educators could improve.

To conclude, there are many studies and literature included in the argumentation. It has advice, perspectives and fresh ideas to improve how to teach entrepreneurship and how we can assist our students in their development not only of entrepreneurial skills but also their own identity.

There are also some weaknesses of the book and avenues for improvement, although the merits are high. The book is written with much creativity; however, the red thread was not always clear. There were various repetitions in the text. For example, the role of the entrepreneurship educator is outlined at various passages in the text.

Although the author highlights that the book is not a "how-to" guide, at some points in the book, it would have been great to have more insights and concrete advice on how to address the aspects raised. For example, what could a midterm meta reflection report look like or what could be possible evaluation criteria? What can a workshop concept look like where the students can reflect on the bright and dark side of entrepreneurship?

The conclusion could be substantiated. What do we learn from the book besides the transformation of the students? If the book's target group is entrepreneurship educators, this would be a fruitful avenue for further improvement.

Furthermore, more visualizations could be included in the book, such as tables. For example, I recommend including a table with the interviews of the entrepreneurship educators in a condensed form. For example, what did they say about measuring the impact or designing the beginning of the course? How do they cope with the different aspirations and experience levels of students? Which methods and pedagogies do they use? Maybe, more interviews could be conducted and included in the next version of the book. All interview partners could be asked the same questions relevant for inclusion in the next version of the book. An idea might be to organize a session at an entrepreneurship education conference. Additionally, a table or visualization could help differentiate between the classical way and how Birgitte Wraae understands the entrepreneurial classroom.

To conclude, I want to thank the author. The book is worth reading for all entrepreneurship educators and educators of related disciplines looking for a more action-oriented way to teach. And my key inspiration from the book for us as entrepreneurship educators is to reflect on our role in the classroom and transform the students.

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Further reading

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