

Entrepreneurial Learning: New Perspectives in Research, Education and Practice

Edited by David Rae and Catherine L. Wang

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I waited with anticipation to read and review this edited volume on entrepreneurial learning. The title promised to provide new perspectives on entrepreneurial learning research, education and practice. It delivered what it promised and a great deal more.

Inclusive of the Introduction, the volume is organised in 13 chapters, followed by an Index. In the Introduction, (Chapter 1), the editors, David Rae and Catherine L. Wang, outline the structure of the book and their justification for editing an up-to-date research volume on a topic that arguably goes back a long way, to the “great and mighty” of entrepreneurship, such as Schumpeter in 1934 and Kirzner in 1973. The editors offer, in this opening chapter, a brief but nevertheless useful review of relevant early research, as it relates to this topic. The aim of this ambitious book, we are informed, is to provide an exploration of developments in entrepreneurial learning since its inception, as a field of academic enquiry, back in the 1990s. As expected, Rae and Wang also highlight some of the major definitional, conceptual and contextual difficulties inherent in researching learning in general and entrepreneurial learning in particular. They offer coherent and well-constructed definitions of this concept, to which I would not hesitate to adopt for my own research on entrepreneurial learning. Issues, challenges and difficulties relating to definitional complexities are critiqued more extensively by Catherine L. Wang and Harveen Chugh in Chapter 2, “Entrepreneurial learning, past research and future challenges”. The authors’ substantive review of the literature charts relevant publication from 1972 and up to 2011, inclusive. For those readers who are interested in the long-term, historical development of this topic, the review makes compelling reading. Thus, we can observe that exclusively empirical studies appeared sporadically from 1972 until 2000. Beginning with 2001, however, a sprinkling of conceptual articles appeared between 2001 and 2003. From 2005 until 2011, a mix of both conceptual and empirical papers was published on alternative years. Overall, however, empirical publications dominate during this time period.

In Chapter 3, Dilani Jayawarna, Oswald Jones and Allan Macpherson focus on “Becoming an entrepreneur: the unexplored role of childhood and adolescent human capital”. The creation of human capital during childhood and adolescence, as applicable to entrepreneurial learning, is a fascinating and largely under-researched aspect of the emergence of an entrepreneur. In contrast, the impact of human capital upon new venture creation, acquired through post-compulsory education and employment is relatively better researched and understood. The authors argue that the basis of human capital formation for entrepreneurship can be initiated early on, starting from childhood and consolidated through adolescence. Similarly, relevant knowledge skills and competencies can also be built throughout early stages of entrepreneurial



education. The topic of Chapter 4: “Entrepreneurial learning through intuitive decision making”, authored by Cinla Akinci, relates to how entrepreneurs learn through multi-level organisational interaction and decision-making processes. We know that intuition is a powerful factor in a wide variety of decision-making routines. Entrepreneurial cognition involves discriminant aspects of decision making, such as discovery, evaluation, conversion and exploitation. In addition, entrepreneurial alertness empowers certain individuals to intuitively discern entrepreneurial opportunities and convert existing resources into value-added outcomes. Thus, seeking, recognising and converting entrepreneurial opportunities, through intuitive learning processes, could allow some individuals to follow a discriminant path of successful self and organisational learning. In Chapter 5, David Rae investigates “The contribution of momentary perspectives to entrepreneurial learning and creativity”. The author argues that moments are transitory and can pass without lasting significance or consequences. In contrast, critical incidents or entrepreneurial events can be independent and distinct from any related emotions and action that these might cause. Furthermore, entrepreneurial moments can offer learning opportunities as well as outcomes directly relevant to opportunity recognition and their successful conversion into action and its reward.

Jeff Vanevenhoven and William A. Drago present in Chapter 6 an overview of “The structure and scope of entrepreneurship programs in higher education around the world”. They acknowledge the need for universities to balance the learning requirements of entrepreneurs with academic rigour. This is by no means a new challenge, and it has long presented itself, one way or another, ever since entrepreneurship education found its way onto the curriculum in higher education. Much of existing entrepreneurship education programmes is still being delivered in business schools, mostly in management departments. The authors recommended that entrepreneurial learning should break out beyond the restraints of business disciplines, shed traditional pedagogical approaches and develop closer links with communities of knowledge. In the next chapter (7), Per Blenker, Sarah Robinson and Claus Thrane outline “Progression and coherence in Enterprise Education: an overall framework supporting diversity”. The authors make a strong case for the expansion of enterprise education beyond the classroom and into entrepreneurship centres, student incubators and teaching colleges. They point out that teaching and learning are distinctive elements of enterprise education, each affecting and influencing entrepreneurial learning in differing ways. In Chapter 8, Rita G. Klapper and Deema Refai propose “A Gestalt model of entrepreneurial learning”. The term “Gestalt” can be interpreted as, and also equated with, “needs-based” approaches. This, and other similar methods of general or specific teaching and learning, has been around for a long while and manifest in both entrepreneurship-related and unrelated education. It relies, however, on accurate and timely needs evaluation and identification. Interestingly, in their conclusion, the authors argue that they developed a Gestalt learning model to support those educators who are involved in the delivery of entrepreneurial and enterprising education. One can only hope that in implementing this method in practice, many more stakeholder types would become involved, catered and supported in their specific entrepreneurial learning endeavours [...].

In Chapter 9, Ian McKeown contextualises “Entrepreneurial learning in small firm management teams”. The author argues that there are three major approaches to entrepreneurial learning: assimilation of new knowledge, learning by doing and community of practice based. He concludes that entrepreneurial learning and knowledge transfer can support management teams in their efforts to achieve, sustain and enhance competitiveness in small firms. Mark D'Souza-Mathew, Robert Pickard, Howard Pickard and Jeff Gold are the authors of the next chapter (10): “The struggle for product development and innovation in a family-owned business: a knowledge transfer partnership approach”. In this case study, the authors conceptualise and contextualise entrepreneurial learning within a long-established family business in the UK. As a well-structured and competently

written case study, this chapter makes interesting reading and a useful, deeply qualitative contribution to the existing body of knowledge on entrepreneurial learning. In Chapter 11 “Learning to evolve: developing a practice-based evolutionary language of entrepreneurial learning”, Dermot Breslin examines the emergence of a language that could assist entrepreneurs and their firms in the struggle to adapt and survive in increasingly hostile economic environments. It emerges that entrepreneurial learning can contribute valuable evolutionary knowledge components to inform survival strategies and sustainable competitive approaches in small businesses. Entrepreneurial learning in China is explored in “Entrepreneurial preparedness: an exploratory case study of Chinese private enterprises” (Chapter 12). Catherine L. Wang, Mohammed Rafiq, Xiaoqing Li and Yu Zheng developed an exploratory case study approach involving two high-tech private enterprises operating in the healthcare sector of the Chinese economy. Entrepreneurial learning for entrepreneurial preparedness appears to vary considerably across different stages of new venture creation, development and management. Experiential and social learning, as well as implicit and explicit entrepreneurial goals, tend to affect the acquisition and development of entrepreneurial preparedness. The final chapter (13), authored by Lorraine Watkins-Mathys, explores “Entrepreneurial learning in the Chinese context”. The author explores conceptual aspects related to entrepreneurial learning, in the context of insights gained from interviews and focus groups conducted with Chinese high-tech entrepreneurs. She concludes that entrepreneurial learning in China, as a topic of research, remains largely under-explored and in need of further investigation by both Chinese and Western researchers.

Overall, this book is a high-quality collection of well-researched and expertly written chapters, aimed at developing, consolidating and advancing the entrepreneurial learning topic. Personally, I found each chapter interesting, informative and challenging (in a positive and constructive way). I have just one minor criticism, perhaps nothing more than a personal preference: the first chapter challenges the reader to become involved, and also guides him/her through the journey ahead. I would have preferred an additional, closing chapter, that could have summarised the main findings and discuss the value of new research as well as highlight existing and persisting gaps in our knowledge on how, when and where entrepreneurs learn. To some extent, this is attempted by the editors in the opening chapter, but for the novice reader, as well as the undergraduate and postgraduate student, who is interested in studying this important entrepreneurship topic, an expert summary of relevant research and new developments in entrepreneurial learning would have proved invaluable.

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For last year’s special issue in *Education + Training*, which focused on aspects related to entrepreneurship education, I reviewed *Annals of Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy – 2014* edited by Michael H. Morris, who served as the inaugural editor of the *Annals* series (see Matlay, 2016). The 2014 edition, the first in the series, was based on a

selection of papers and workshops that were presented, over the previous 30 years, at annual US Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship conferences. These were updated and revised by their authors, in preparation for inclusion in the edited book. The research monograph under review in the 2017 special issue of Education + Training is the second volume of the *Annals of Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy*, edited by Michael H. Morris, who is James W. Walter Eminent Scholar Chair, University of Florida, USA and Eric Liguori, Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship, University of Tampa, USA. The volume was published in 2016, to great acclaim, and is organised into three parts, containing a total of 31 chapters. Due to time and space restrictions, I am not able to outline the content (455 pages) or review in full all of the chapters included in this excellent research monograph.

There are 15 chapters included in the first part of the book, suitably titled “Leading edge research perspectives”, in itself sufficient to fulfil the requirement of an average-sized research monograph. The opening chapter (1), “What I have learned about teaching entrepreneurship: perspectives of five master educators”, authored by Jerome S. Engel, Minet Schindehutte, Heidi M. Neck, Ray Smilor and Bill Rossi, outlines the individual learning and teaching reflections of five reputable master educators in entrepreneurship education. This chapter, like the other in this book, is well written, expertly argued, thoroughly insightful and densely informative in the full richness of ideas, perspectives and lived classroom experiences. In the next chapter (2), “What entrepreneurship educators do not understand about creativity and how to teach it”, Jeffrey Stamp examines relevant ways to convey pertinent aspect of creativity, within the context of entrepreneurship programs. In Chapter 3, “Does entrepreneurship education change minds? A multinational analysis of mandatory and voluntary entrepreneurial training”, Carlos Albornoz and Jose E. Amoros appraise empirically the relevance, impact and outcome of entrepreneurship education and training on entrepreneurial intentions and actions. In “Bridging entrepreneurial cognition research and entrepreneurship education: what and how”, (Chapter 4), Susana C. Santos, Silvia Fernandes Costa, Xaver Neumeyer and Antonio Caetano investigate entrepreneurial cognition and its implications for entrepreneurship educators and the programs that they teach.

In Chapter 5, “Weighing in: reflections on a steady diet of Lean Startup”, Elissa Grossman appraises the massive popularity, amongst enterprise educators, of the “lean start-up” method of new venture creation. Next, in Chapter 6, “Competency based education in entrepreneurship: a call to action for the discipline”, Rebecca White, Giles Hertz and Kevin Moore argue for a need to progress towards competence-based approaches in entrepreneurship education. In Chapter 7, “The art of case teaching”, David W. Rosenthal provides guidelines to and insights for the use of illustrative case studies in the teaching of entrepreneurship. Chapter 8, “The experiential learning portfolio and entrepreneurship education”, is dedicated to student experience portfolios. The authors Minet Schindehutte and Michel H. Morris suggest that for the student of entrepreneurship, the adoption of an experience portfolio can enhance and maximise entrepreneurial learning. Alex Bruton, in Chapter 9, “Deliberate opportunity design: a practical integrative product and business design framework to enable new frontiers in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship”, evaluates the growing dilemma of new approaches to curricular design in this field. Chapter 10 is dedicated to “New venture creation as a learning agenda: experiences, reflections and implications from running a venture creation programme”. The authors, Leigh Morland and John Thompson argue that in terms of teaching new venture creation, experiential learning is best embedded and most effective within action learning.

In Chapter 11, “The principles and practices of delivering experiential entrepreneurship education to mega-classes”, Christopher Pryor focuses upon the practicalities, problems and benefits of large, mega-classes of entrepreneurship students. In the next chapter (12), “Entrepreneurs in action! An authentic learning experience”, R. Wilburn Clouse, Terry Goodin and Joseph Aniello describe the development and outcomes of a problem-based

learning approach to entrepreneurship education. In Chapter 13, “Using the SEE model in entrepreneurship consulting courses and programs”, Michael H. Morris outlines the “Supporting Emerging Enterprise” model that guides the consulting efforts and strategies of entrepreneurship student teams. The focus of Chapter 14, “Integrating the A-GES framework into a family business course”, by Erik Markin, Clay Dibrell and Richard J. Gentry is on the development, delivery and assessment of a foundation family business course. The impact of entrepreneurial ecosystems is evaluated by Diana M. Hechavarria, Amy Ingram and Justin Heacock in Chapter 15, “Entrepreneurial ecosystems and entrepreneurship education: the role of universities in fostering ecosystem development”.

Part II of this volume, “Model university entrepreneurship programs”, introduces five educational programs in entrepreneurship, each one representing a distinct type of provision and institutional environment. Kathleen R. Allen, in Chapter 16, “Entrepreneurship at the University of Southern California”, outlines the main characteristics and features of entrepreneurship education at her institution. In the next chapter (17), “Entrepreneurship at Lancaster University”, Eleanor Hamilton, Helen Fogg, Sarah L. Jack and Fionnuala Schultz describe undergraduate and postgraduate entrepreneurial learning at one of the best higher education institutions in Great Britain. In Chapter 18 “Baylor University: entrepreneurship for everyone through innovative programming”, written by Kendall Artz, we are introduced to entrepreneurship education on offer in one of the first institutions to provide formal modules and courses in this important topic of academic endeavour. Elana Fine authored Chapter 19 “Entrepreneurship education at the University of Maryland”, where entrepreneurial education, research and practice are vigorously pursued. In Chapter 20, “Entrepreneurship at Syracuse University”, Alexander McKelvie and John M. Torrens critically evaluate provision of entrepreneurship education across the entire university.

The 11 shorter (three to five pages) chapters in Part III, “Best practice innovations inside and outside the classroom”, chart a range of innovative, leading edge examples of ground breaking entrepreneurship teaching, original approaches to experiential learning and highly successful community engagement initiatives. Chapter 21, “Teaching entrepreneurial foresight”, by Sam Miller, outlines how entrepreneurial foresight can intensify student idea discovery processes. In Chapter 22, “Teaching lean: value creation (for students and faculty) in the classroom”, Doan Winkel and Jeff Vanevenhoven set out to convince the reader that the “teaching lean” approach is both innovative and powerful in actively engaging students in entrepreneurial learning. In the next Chapter (23), “Games for the entrepreneurship classroom”, Jim Hart describes entrepreneurship games that he developed in order to teach students hard and soft skills. Sara L. Cochran, the author of Chapter 24, “A unique student angel investing fund”, presents a programme designed to teach entrepreneurship students about the fundamentals of “angel investing”, by involving them in a hands-on approach. In Chapter 25, “Teaching entrepreneurial sales skills: a co-curricular approach”, Eric Liguori, Birton Cowden and Giles Hertz demonstrate the importance and benefits of an Entrepreneurial Sales Skills Bootcamp (SOLD) that equips entrepreneurship graduates with necessary sales skills. In the next chapter (26), “Entrepreneurial consulting courses: increasing benefits to students in the new economy”, Nathalie Duval-Couetil and Kris Taylor highlight the value of consulting courses offered to entrepreneurship students and active entrepreneurs.

Susan Scherreik, Chapter 27, “University collaboration: the New Jersey state business model competition”, describes an innovative and highly collaborative initiative, involving the entrepreneurship centre directors of 11 universities in this state. The benefits accruable and the processes involved in virtual enterprise start-ups are evaluated by Christoph Winkler, Stuart A. Schulman and Edgar E. Troudt in Chapter 28, “CUNYSTEM Virtual Enterprise program”. The development of student entrepreneurial identities is the subject of

Chapter 29, “UCCS Entrepreneurial Identity Project”, authored by Thomas N. Duening and Matthew L. Metzger. In Chapter 30, “The Campus-linked Accelerator Program in Canada”, Francine Schlosser, Margaret Cichosz-Grzyb, Martin Croteau, Donovan Dill, Valerie Fox and Annette Markvoort critically appraise institutional support initiatives aimed at youth entrepreneurship in Ontario, Canada. In the final chapter (31), “Social media – a powerful tool for entrepreneurship students”, Gene Poor and Kirk Kern argue that social media represents a very powerful marketing tool, yet in terms of entrepreneurship education this aspect is still in its infancy.

I thoroughly enjoined reading and reviewing this excellent edited volume on entrepreneurship education. I would unreservedly recommend it as a “must read” monograph, to all those interested in this fast-growing and rapidly evolving topic of research. The content of this book would be of global interest, to a wide range of stakeholders, including, amongst others: researchers, educators, students, entrepreneurs, faculty members and policy makers. We already look forward, with excitement, to the next year publication of the third volume of the *Annals of Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy – 2018*.

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Reference

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