Dr Colin Jones*
University of Tasmania, Australia
Colin.Jones@utas.edu.au

Professor Harry Matlay
Birmingham City University, United Kingdom
Harry.Matlay@bcu.ac.uk

Professor Alex Maritz
Swinburne University, Australia
AMaritz@groupwise.swin.edu.au

ENTERPRISE EDUCATION: WORLD DOMINATION OR HUMILIATION?

Summary: The role of enterprise/entrepreneurship education globally whilst strongly supported, is relatively plastic. This paper steps back the various debates that relate to the expected contribution of enterprise/entrepreneurship education to contemplate the positioning of enterprise/entrepreneurship education in Higher Education. We utilize four scenarios to explore a variety ways in which enterprise/entrepreneurship education is typically positioned. Our aim is not to determine what positioning is most appropriate for enterprise/entrepreneurship education, but rather to consider the issues associated with the four types of positioning discussed. We conclude that a united pathway forward can be built around providing genuine choice and allowing individual students to travel a learning pathway that is most appropriate to their life circumstances.

Keywords: Enterprise Education, Entrepreneurship, Commercialization

INTRODUCTION

Over the last three decades, enterprise and entrepreneurship education have become commonplace in Higher Education institutions the world over. Increasingly, governments globally have also been supporting the provision of enterprise/entrepreneurship education in its many forms (see Rae et al., (2012) and Matlay, (2009)). It would be easy to see the enterprise/entrepreneurship landscape as one full of promise and deliberate purpose. However, we argue that it is not. We argue that the current state of enterprise/entrepreneurship education and its immediate future are very much under question. Adding to this confusion is the inherent diversity and complexity associated with enterprise/entrepreneurship education (see Jones and Matlay, 2011). The question that begs asking is; are our contextual differences making us stronger or are we being viewed as weaker because of such differences?

This paper steps back from the current rhetoric regarding the ever-increasing importance of enterprise education to ponder what the world might be like under several provocative scenarios. Scenarios provide the means to conduct thinking at a meta-level (Mietzner and Reger, 2005). As such, scenarios provide a window towards possible future situations without assuming any predicative power. Our thinking has been provoked by the recent challenge of Storey (2009) to the widespread assumption that enterprise education is on the verge of (metaphorically) saving the world. Essentially, if general accounts of the world's history reveal no absence of entrepreneurs in terms of frequency and importance, why assume enterprise education will change the supply and/or quality of future entrepreneurs? Why concern ourselves with such issues when many other issues regarding the provision of enterprise/entrepreneurship education seem more pressing? Well, as the old saying goes; if you don't know where you're are going; any road will take you there. Our fundamental concern is that at some point in the not too distant future, enterprise educators will be brought to account for the lack of focus (or purpose) in their collective journeying.

At present, we see primarily four main ways in which enterprise/entrepreneurship education is positioned in Higher Education. First, it is promoted as a subject area for all,

a transformative experience capable of creating an entrepreneurial mindset in all who participate. Second, it is supportive pathway towards business start-up and/or the specific skills required to do so. Third, it provides skills and knowledge to students in the sciences and arts who seek to commercialize their intellectual property. Fourth, it is just another subject in the suite of offerings provided by the business school, alongside marketing, finance and economics etc. We do not seek to comment on the merits of each of the four types of positioning. Rather, we seek to envisage a world where one type of positioning exists at the expense of the other three.

METHODS

First, our approach is best captured with direct reference to Hayward's (2000) cycle of reflective practice. This approach incorporates the philosophical approaches of Dewey (1933), Kolb (1984) and Schon (1983; 1987) to facilitate a process of reflective practice designed to allow the self-reflection of our own practices with the aim being the development of new knowledge that is personally relevant. That is, we have relied upon our collective knowledge of enterprise/entrepreneurship education. Second, we adopt the process of scenario development of Wilson (1988) who argues that the golden rule is for no fewer than two scenarios, and no more than four scenarios. Scenario1: enterprise/entrepreneurship education should be positioned as a transformative experience capable of creating an entrepreneurial mindset in all who participate. Scenario 2: EE should facilitate a supportive pathway towards business start-up and/or the specific skills required to do so in the near future. Scenario 3: enterprise/entrepreneurship education should provide skills and knowledge to students in the sciences and arts who seek to commercialize their intellectual property. Scenario 4: enterprise/entrepreneurship education should be just another subject in the suite of offerings provided by the business school, alongside marketing, finance and economics.

In addition, we have ensured that our scenarios are; capable of happening; structurally different and not simply variations of the same theme; not prone to any built-in internal inconsistency; capable of prompting specific insights into the future; and finally, designed in such a way as to challenge conventional wisdom. The development of

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scenarios in our enterprise/entrepreneurship education approach forces us to take a holistic view of our current and future environment – including, importantly, social values and expectations (Wilson 2007). We see an integration of scenarios and enterprise/entrepreneurship education theory for practice sake perspectives as appropriate to explore and provide insights into the further development of enterprise/entrepreneurship education (Bradfield *et al* 2005).

IMAGINING FOUR DIFFERENT WORLDS

Before entering our four imagined worlds, let us briefly reflect upon the purpose of enterprise/entrepreneurship education, as espoused in the literature. Garavan and O'Cinneide (1994) have also distinguished between various objectives of enterprise/entrepreneurship education. In their view, some of the most common objectives include: to acquire knowledge about entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship; to develop skills and techniques to be used to analyse business situations; to stimulate an entrepreneurial drive; to cope with and assess risk; and to encourage new start-ups. Then, Gibb (1999) distinguished three types of enterprise/entrepreneurship education programmes. Each type of programme includes separate objectives, target populations, and operationalization measures. The first type of programme helps participants *learn to understand entrepreneurship*. The second type of programme is aimed at *helping participants to become entrepreneurial*, and the third type of programme is to *help participants become entrepreneurs*. More recently, Liñán (2004; also see Hynes 1996) distinguishes four objectives of enterprise/entrepreneurship education. Each of these four objectives is directly related to the audience of the programme with the objective of "shifting" them from one stage of entrepreneurship to another. The three types of programmes defined by Gibb (1999) have received empirical support in the research of Hytti and O'Gorman (2004) who reviewed 50 enterprise/entrepreneurship education programmes. They found most programmes were designed to help individuals become entrepreneurs, followed by programs to help individuals understand entrepreneurship and become entrepreneurial in their lives. Despite the importance of programme objectives, there is "still a limited understanding of how best to achieve these quite diverse

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objectives" (Hytti and O'Gorman 2004, p. 12). These objectives shape the nature of the discussion presented below.

Scenario 1

Enterprise/entrepreneurship education should be positioned as a transformative experience capable of creating an entrepreneurial mindset in all who participate. This scenario is very consistent with many recent contributions to the literature. For example, whilst cautioning against the limitations of graduate entrepreneurship (i.e. actual startups), Hegarty and Jones (2008) argue strongly using resource profile logic that enterprise/entrepreneurship education should be transformation. A clear challenge to this position is that different types and/or stages of enterprise/entrepreneurship education are not fully appreciated. For example, in Liñán's (2004) classification, the most basic objective of entrepreneurship education is *awareness education*. The goal of awareness education is to increase the quantity of people with knowledge of entrepreneurship so they might consider self-employment as an option. It would not necessarily seek to increase the supply of entrepreneurs, but would help individuals see their future career choice with a greater perspective (Garavan and O'Cinneide 1994). These are typically university-level courses and, according to Jack and Anderson (1999, p. 122), are "relatively straightforward." According to Liñán (2004), this is an essential starting point for entrepreneurship education. The key issue here is that they are relatively straight forward and/or a starting point; that is not an ending point.

Toward creating an entrepreneurial mindset in all who participate, a direct correlation to entrepreneurial intentions, attitudes and motivation is appropriate. Entrepreneurial intentions can be generally defined as a conscious awareness and conviction by an individual that they intend to develop a start-up venture in the future (Nabi and Linan 2011). Much research has been done with models of entrepreneurial intentions, with Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) probably being the most dominant (Krueger *et al* 2000). Opportunities centred on creating an entrepreneurial mindset are reflected in the literature on entrepreneurial intentionality, with many outcomes such as increase in propensity to entrepreneurial motivation and attitudes. Threats are that an entrepreneurial

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mindset does not necessarily result in entrepreneurial outcomes (Krueger *et al* 2000). Consequences are that whilst intentionality may be deemed an appropriate scenario (Nabi and Linan 2011), it may well *not* result in the most assumed of enterprise/entrepreneurship education outcomes, being the launch of new start-ups.

So there are some challenges that arise from settling on positioning enterprise/entrepreneurship education as a transformative experience capable of creating an entrepreneurial mindset in all who participate. When we equate enterprise/entrepreneurship education as a process that accommodates the presumption of future action oriented towards business creation we lose sight of the initial importance of the enterprising mindset. To move towards adopting scenario 1, we might consider the context appropriate for developing such a mindset without inclusion of a business startup focus. In the secondary school context, enterprise education serves a similar role vis-à-vis the development of an enterprising mindset (see Draycott, Rae and Vause, 2011). The question to be asked is; to what extent is an 18 year old secondary student less prepared/capable than a 21 year old university graduate to start a business? We suggest, on the whole, there is little difference. Young students typically are short and life experience and have a shallow resource profile (Jones, 2011). Consequently, scenario 1 is best achievable when the focus is primarily upon the student, their individual learning and not the holy grail of enterprise/entrepreneurship education; the business startup. However, this increasingly is not the case, with the focus remaining on the process of starting a business being central to the most enterprise/entrepreneurship education curriculums. What is frequently ignore is the application of an enterprising mindset to other contexts, such as gaining employment and/or engaging in social entrepreneurship activities.

Scenario 2
Enterprise/entrepreneurship education should facilitate a supportive pathway towards business start-up and/or the specific skills required to do so in the near future. A second objective in Liñán's (2004) classification is *education for start-up*, which prepares an individual to be the owner of a new business or venture. Gibb (1999) separates the on

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individual capacity building and organizational contexts, and in doing so introduces the issue of defining small business owner as potentially distinct from the dynamic entrepreneur. This scenario would seem to place too much emphasis on assuming commercial activities are born from engaging in startup activities. The reality is that many business owners gain their start buying an existing business.

In developing specific skills towards a supportive pathway to successful start-up, we most often refer to the entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE). ESE is a construct that involves the individual's belief about their capabilities for attaining success and controlling cognitions in order to manage challenging goals during the business start up phase (Drnovsek *et al* 2010). The roots of self-efficacy are in social-cognitive theory (Bandura 1986), and correlates well with the process of scenario development (Wilson 1998). Given the variety and multitude of tasks associated with starting a new venture (Cooper and Lucas 2006), it is not surprising that entrepreneurship studies show that high ESE is an asset for aspiring entrepreneurs. Opportunities centre on ESE as an appropriate measure of skills required as a pathway towards business start-up (Drnovsek *et al* 2010), however, research indicates threats in areas of rare use as an outcome measure (Wilson *et al* 2009). That enterprise/entrepreneurship education should facilitate a supportive pathway towards business start-up is almost universally recognised (Krueger and Brazeal 1994), despite the optimal need for longitudinal measures and studies beyond the convenient studies of students (Chen *et al* 1998).

So there are challenges in accepting the suitability of scenario 2. Doing so means that the purpose of enterprise/entrepreneurship education is to facilitate the creation of businesses; now and into the immediate future. The problem? Entrepreneurship reveals itself in society in every aspect of our daily lives and is not therefore only associated with the act of starting a business.

Scenario 3
Enterprise/entrepreneurship education should provide skills and knowledge to students in the sciences and the arts who seek to commercialize their intellectual property.

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Increasingly, cross-campus entrepreneurship education has become ever popular, particularly where universities see opportunities to gain addition research income from commercialisation activities of local intellectual property. Morris (2010) purports such purpose to be *transformative*, taking effect on students, transforming university and programs and rooted in community as key constructs. Thus, clearly there are opportunities to developing entrepreneurial competencies on as well as enhancing more broadly an entrepreneurial culture university wide. This further may develop into the *entrepreneurial university* (Frederick 2012). Threats however centre on the willingness of university leaders to adopt such an approach, together with making such transformative purpose a strategic intention of the university. Consequences are that only a limited number of students in the sciences and arts may wish to commercialize their intellectual property, resulting in dissonance amongst the majority of students.

The key it would seem is to elevate the focus from the *process* of commercialisation to also simultaneously include the specific *development* of the student. This is not so easily achieved as enterprise/entrepreneurship education curriculums tend to get highly scrutinised as they encounter the consideration of science faculties. Of most concern are the development of soft skills (selling, communications, the capacity for personal reflection etc), the manner in which such skills are developed are often at odds with traditional pedagogical approaches used in the sciences. So again, in general terms, this scenario is problematic to, as the *process* tends to trump the *development* despite the obvious required interaction between the two.

Scenario 4

Enterprise/entrepreneurship education should be just another subject in the suite of offerings provided by the business school, alongside marketing, finance and economics. Sadly, many enterprise/entrepreneurship educators fear this is a looming reality. Increasingly business school subjects are poorly attended by time poor students who feel confident to catch up their inattention through applying themselves during the exam period. Their individual self is rarely revealed throughout the course of their business school studies. However, understanding the heterogeneity of an audience (programme

participants) for enterprise/entrepreneurship education is crucial, as participants have different learning needs and might even fit into multiple categories at different times (Ghosh and Block 1994; Jones, 2011). For example, classification of participants can occur based on socio-demographics (age, gender), stage of venture (idea stage, start-up), or, in the case of a university entrepreneurship course, type of degree (undergraduate, postgraduate). Understanding the needs and wants of the audience of a program will influence the objectives of the program (Fayolle and Gailly 2008).

With few exceptions the academic research on enterprise/entrepreneurship education has been based on university courses, which are typically taught to undergraduate students, ages 18-25. For example, Krueger (1993) used a sample of 126 upper-division university students in a business program. Audet (2000) conducted research on 89 undergraduate students in an entrepreneurship program. Zhao *et al.,* (2005) had a sample of 265 MBA students at 5 universities, and Souitaris *et al.,* (2007) conducted research on 232 science and engineering students. Research on the large pool of potential entrepreneurs who are non-business university students is less common (Levie 1999), despite their backgrounds and motivations suggesting the need for tailored programs (Brand *et al.,* 2007).

Opportunities for enterprise/entrepreneurship business-school wide centre on the resources and willingness of leaders to integrate such an approach. Threats are however domain outcome dominated, whereby dominant MBA type courses are typically *resource* outcome driven, whereas entrepreneurship specific courses are *opportunity* outcome driven (Maritz *et al.* 2010). Therefore enterprise/entrepreneurship education is most often seen to be an inappropriate outcome of business schools, being predominantly MBA driven (resource versus opportunity output).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There is a clear need to recognise the importance of factoring in pedagogical differences in terms of the assumed contents and processes related to each of the four scenarios. Our work was designed to stimulate further debate. Indeed, in suggesting four possible future states related to the provision of enterprise/entrepreneurship education we have

deliberately aimed to be provocative. In this sense, we believe our musings have potentially exposed some of the fallacies related to enterprise/entrepreneurship education and its positioning in Higher Education. The diversity of contexts related to the provision of enterprise/entrepreneurship education has recently been the focus of Penaluna, Penaluna and Jones (2012). Interestingly, their study highlights an apparent tendency amongst enterprise/entrepreneurship educators towards personal startup experience. They also reported a significant willingness to engage with a broad array of stakeholders in developing their respective curriculums.

Incorporated inside the nature of diversity is the issue of the size and breadth of enterprise/entrepreneurship education programmes. Some programmes are delivered via a single subject, others across 8 to 10 subjects. Returning to the observations of Garavan and O'Cinneide (1994), Liñán (2004) and Gibb (1999), once we recall the different types and/or stages of enterprise/entrepreneurship education programmes, we run into problems. Regardless of one's personal preference for any of the four scenarios discussed above, they all are dependent upon the context of enterprise/entrepreneurship education in any particular institution. Put simply, there can be no off the shelf solutions imported to support the provision of enterprise/entrepreneurship education. Returning to our scenarios, this point becomes more obvious.

In scenario 1, enterprise/entrepreneurship education is positioned as a transformative experience capable of creating an entrepreneurial mindset in all who participate; a noble, but problematic aim. Consider this, how many subject offerings are required to enable diverse cohorts of students (with differing aspirations) to develop an enterprising mindset via a transformative educational experience? We will all differ in our answer to this question, but we should be able to largely agree that it would be more than one or two subjects. Thus scenario is highly dependent upon institutional contexts. The presence of enterprise/entrepreneurship educators (excellent or otherwise) will not ensure the development of enterprising graduates (across the board) if insufficient curriculum space is not created.

For scenario 2, enterprise/entrepreneurship education facilitates a supportive pathway towards business start-up and/or the specific skills required to do so in the near future. Again, assuming the relationship between enterprise/entrepreneurship education and business creation is positively related, again, a potentially noble aim. However, it ignores the fact that approximately 10% to 15% of university graduates studying enterprise/entrepreneurship engage in startup activities during or at graduation. Essentially, such a focus is akin to creating a focus on the research and writing skills required by PhD students within a graduate programme, because, they might enrol in a PhD one day. Worse still is the almost impossible task of achieving constructive alignment in curriculum development (see Biggs, 2003) when the ultimate learning objective cannot be properly know in advance. That is, not all business startups are governed by a universal set of process and circumstances. Therefore, how can we know what our current students learn when we don't know what their future behaviours will be? (see Jones 2011). So this scenario is also quite difficult to support.

Moving on to scenario 3, enterprise/entrepreneurship education as a means to provide skills and knowledge to students in the sciences and arts who seek to commercialize their intellectual property. In reality the process of commercializing science discoveries is often complex, long-winded and made possible all too frequently via complex negotiations. This does not mean we shouldn't enable a focus on such issues, but realistically, those students who find they need such knowledge/skill development (typically) will also require intensive mentoring along the way. Otherwise, we risk reducing our teaching pedagogies to teaching *about* rather than *for*, *through* and/or *in*.

The extent to which such knowledge and skills should be developed during the actual process of commercialization as a component of the research process, rather than as a teaching/learning interaction is open for debate. The jury is still yet to form an opinion as to what be most appropriate. As always, the institutional context appears to matter. Those universities that place a greater emphasis on commercialization of local research may indeed favor teaching organized around this scenario. Alternatively, other institutions

may be more guided by the emphasis placed on such processes by their educators. Whichever the approach, this scenario is difficult to adopt as it potentially reduces enterprise/entrepreneurship education to too specialised an area.

Finally, Scenario 4 proposes that enterprise/entrepreneurship education simply be just another subject in the suite of offerings provided by the business school, alongside marketing, finance and economics. The size of the enterprise/entrepreneurship education literature that has emerged (relative to business school related literature) is nothing shortly of amazing. While the outputs appear quite equal in terms of publications, the enterprise/entrepreneurship education literature is essentially being produced by less than a tenth of the academics employed across business schools. What is clear from this literature is that enterprise/entrepreneurship education relates to the creation of that which doesn't already exist; not the maintenance of that which does. It is about the use of scarce resource; not strategic resources. It is experiential or it is of little or no value to its recipients. The ongoing differences of opinion around a host of pedagogical issues provides obvious evidence of the difficult fit between enterprise/entrepreneurship education and it frequent host, the business school.

Clearly there is a need for the subject offerings that traditionally exist in the business school to relate to entrepreneurship and vice versa. However, there is a major difference, and that is that enterprise/entrepreneurship education can offer value to any other area of learning in Higher Education, and vice versa. Whereas the traditional subject offerings of the business school cannot make such a claim. As a result, enterprise/entrepreneurship education should have the opportunity to act as a free agent in terms of how it is structured and able to interact with other faculties/schools. So again, from the perspective of the enterprise/entrepreneurship educator, this final scenario is difficult to support as well.

In summary, this process has provided unexpected insights into the potential of scenario planning as a tool that could conceivably be employed more often to tackle complex

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issues, such as the positioning of enterprise/entrepreneurship education in Higher Education. But for now, we have briefly travelled four distinct roads with purpose and we are satisfied that we have indeed learned along the way. We conclude that enterprise/entrepreneurship education should be shared across the university and not owned by any school or faculty, although we accept that technically this is difficult to achieve. We find it difficult to dismiss the underlying purpose of each scenario. We sense an opportunity to unite their common focus on the development of a transformative student experience. To this end, we sense that a united pathway forward can be built around providing genuine choice and allowing individual students to travel a learning pathway that is most appropriate to their life circumstances. This we believe perhaps offers enterprise/entrepreneurship education its best chance to fulfil its promise with in the context of Higher Education. While such an approach may never lead to world domination, it should remove the possibility of humiliation for any and all of the stakeholders who stand to gain from the development of truly enterprising graduates.

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