ENTREPRENEURSHIP
VIA CREATIVITY
FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP
IN EDUCATION

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THE PROGRESSION MODEL FOR INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION AND HOW TO FOSTER CREATIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

In this paper we discuss the Lisbon Strategy and the Budapest Agenda on Entrepreneurship Education. This takes us to present the Progressing Model for Initial Teacher Education on Entrepreneurship Education, which gives us an opportunity to stress the importance of creativity. Finally we give some suggestions to foster creativity in the classroom as an essential aim of education, overall considered, and as main feature for Entrepreneurship Education.

Keywords: teachers, entrepreneurship, creativity, models

1. From the Lisbon Strategy to the Budapest Agenda on Entrepreneurship Education

The Lisbon Strategy (European Commission, 2000) acknowledged entrepreneurship contribution to the EU economy and recently Europe 2020 Strategy (European Commission, 2010) has also drawn on its development.

One could ask what we mean when we refer to “entrepreneurship”. The Green Paper on Entrepreneurship in Europe (Commission of the European Communities, 2003), states that entrepreneurship is multidimensional and it can occur in different contexts, aside the business field, but it always involves the exploitation of creativity or innovation. “Entrepreneurship is first and foremost a mindset. It covers an individual’s motivation and capacity, independently or within an organization, to identify an opportunity and to pursue it in order to produce new value or economic success. It takes creativity or innovation to enter and compete in an existing market, to change or even to create a new market. To turn a business idea into success requires the ability to blend creativity or innovation with sound management and to adapt a business to optimise its development during all phases of its life cycle. This goes beyond daily management: it concerns a business’ ambitions and strategy” (Commission of the European Communities, 2003, pg.4).

Although entrepreneurship is a conditional asset required by competitive economies, we should keep in mind that the aim of the European Union doesn’t confine only to economy. The EU also aims to be an intelligent and sustainable society; issues that pertain social cohesion, employment, inclusion and sustainability, among other desiderata, like freedom, democracy and emancipation. Being these, in our point of view, the really aims our societies long for. Thus we should be aware of the priority that creativity takes over entrepreneurship. If it is rather consensual that the later requires creativity, education should not aim to it only for entrepreneurship sake, but because it is an intrinsic component of education central aim: human perfectibility (Pring, 2003). However we should keep
in mind the maxim from Toshiro Kanamori, who proposes that education has to correspond to “happiness” as a human general “telos”.

So we do not really aim to raise entrepreneurs at the age of ten, but to raise creative people that can be successful entrepreneurs in all areas of their lives. “Yet there are certain common characteristics of entrepreneurial behaviour, including a readiness to take risk and a taste for independence and self-realization” (Commission of the European Communities, 2003, 5-6).

The “Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning” states that competences are “a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfillment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment” (2006, 13). Among the eight key competences the “sense of initiative and entrepreneurship” is put forward as “an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities, and is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance” (European Parliament and the Council, 2006, 17).

As it has happened before regarding several European issues, it became broadly recognize that teachers have a critical role to play in the development of entrepreneurship education. In fact, a study mapping “Teachers’ preparation for entrepreneurship education” has confirmed that successful implementation of entrepreneurship education is strongly dependent on teachers’ interventions in the classrooms (Gibb, 2005). Thus, it is very wise to focus in fostering EE among teachers’ educators as well as to give them the suited training on the subject and related fitted pedagogies. Besides, we also need to foster a new paradigm that envisages education institutions as entrepreneurial organizations, classrooms as entrepreneurial places and teachers as enterprising people.

This new way to educate teachers is crucial for the success of the entrepreneurship spirit and attitude implementation in all levels of education. European Commission researcher’s state that the core skills and values linked to entrepreneurship should be focused on creativity and a new culture to support the creative and innovative approaches to learning needed.

Taking the above mentioned into special account, the European Commission has been making a strong effort to develop effective teacher education systems for entrepreneurship, since the High Level Symposium on “Entrepreneurship Education: Teacher Education as critical success factor” which took place in Budapest on 7-8 April 2011. The main concern of the Symposium was to determine “how best to equip teachers with the skills, knowledge and attitudes they need to foster the entrepreneurial mind-sets of young people”. The results of the Symposium came to be known as the Budapest Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education (EE).

Two workshops were then organized during 2012 aiming at: discussing the current state of the art; presenting the challenges; collecting and sharing good practice examples; inviting people to discuss new ideas; discussing and refining a progression model for implementation.

Accordingly to the former, the aim of the ‘Budapest Agenda’ is to provide a catalogue of measures to be drawn upon by stakeholders at all levels within the worlds of education, business and the wider community in order to take forward the development of teacher education in entrepreneurship. It draws on the work and experiences of practitioners and policy makers from across Europe, EU partner countries from the EU pre-accession and Mediterranean neighborhood regions, and is backed up by good practices, as evidenced by report of the “First workshop on enabling teachers for entrepreneurship education – initial teacher Education” (Ballassarri and Curavic, 2012).

If the importance of creativity as an educational purpose, and in particular as core element of entrepreneurship education is well
documented, we must now apply ourselves to provide some clarification on how to promote in the classroom.

2. The Budapest Agenda and the Progressing Model for Initial Teacher Education

The Budapest Agenda is intended to be used by all those with an interest in the subject, who can select measures and tailor them to their own particular circumstances. Each action indicates the relevant actors. As a reference document it states the monitoring of the following strands: A) Initial Teacher Education (Entrepreneurship education for all; Curriculum content and pedagogy; Assessment; Selection of student Teachers; Partnerships); B) National Support (Strategies; Entrepreneurship education curricula; Assessment of the entrepreneurship key competence; Incentives; Resources; Communication; Communities of entrepreneurial Teachers); C) Continuing Professional Development (Curriculum content, pedagogy and assessment; Buy-in and ownership; Businesses and the wider community as a resource; Recruitment and promotion of teachers; Continuing professional development in national/regional strategies); D) Local School Support (Entrepreneurial school strategies; Entrepreneurial leadership; Resources; Community networks and partnerships).

The Progression Model for Initial Teacher Education considers three domains:

1. Entrepreneurial teacher education institutions;
2. Entrepreneurial teacher educators; and
3. Entrepreneurial teacher education programmes.

For each domain several subjects are displayed under a scale of four development levels: Baseline; Start-up; Development and consolidation phase; and Mainstreaming phase. The overall score gives an insight of the institution progress regarding Initial Teacher Education for Entrepreneurship.

3. Fostering creativity in the classroom

One my ask where new ideas come from and how can we have more innovative people and organizations. From an environmental perspective some contexts are more propitiatory than others. Some recurrent patterns seem to emerge from such contexts (Johnson, 2010), as we will try to show in the following lines.

1. Most innovative ideas need a long period to evolve, they result from a slow hunch of two or three years of gestation; this is because great new ideas come from the “interaction” between small ideas; Tim Berners Lee idea of a world wide web could be taken as an example of the phenomenon, it took ten years for him to come up with a network of ideas that resulted in the final insight.

2. We need the opportunity for an idea, someone had, to come to meet another idea from another person or the same person, which requires a space where ideas can mingle and swap to create new forms. A great driver of innovation has been the historical increase of connectivity, which facilitates the process of access and borrow other people ideas, sometimes from very distant places, in order to combine distance ideas that then generate something new. Serendipity also plays a productive part in creative processes and it has been favoured by the increase of connectivity ICT came to provide.

3. In principle, creativity always entails a response from imagination. To foster creativity in the classroom one should remember that creativity takes time. In this particular, excessive stress could be counterproductive and so planning giving time management are essential to get good results.

4. Explaining deadlines and assigning flexible tasks are also a requirement. The exploration of wild scenarios is also a must, if we want creativity to have a chance to stem out from the proposed tasks. This means divergent thinking gets the right conditions to flow and bloom.

5. A broad range of sources that expose students to a wide variety of stimuli –like films, news, books, blogs and so on–, is also very important.

6. Creativity is very favoured by social and cooperative settings, so we should arrange classrooms in order to propitiate this kind of ambiances,
where participants can express freely their differences and debate their perspectives on the subjects. Creating classroom corners of informal interaction and using natural surroundings are very good options.

7. Mind maps and colored schemes can also be powerful tools to foster divergent thinking.

We have a lot of reasons to foster creativity as well as a lot of resources; we just need to give creativity a chance within our classrooms and our students are clamoring for these opportunities.

REFERENCES


