Evidence from Early Entrepreneurship Education: The Junior Business School

by Jan-Martin Geiger and Andreas Liening

Fayolle, Gailly, and Lassas-Clerc (2006) define Entrepreneurship Education as any pedagogical programme or process of education for entrepreneurial attitudes and skills, which is not focused on the immediate creation of new businesses. For instance, there is evidence that participating in such programmes can affect a change in entrepreneurial self-efficacy, -intention and -attitude (Bae, Qian, Miao, & Fiet, 2014; Wilson, Kickul, & Marlino, 2007). Thus, demands for the implementation of entrepreneurship education programs in higher education have raised over the past years (Vanevenhoven & Liguori, 2013). But in the curricula of general education schools Entrepreneurship Education is barely taken into consideration yet (Studdard, Dawson, & Jackson, 2013).

Due to the lack of Entrepreneurship Education in school education, several initiatives started to offer adequate programmes to support entrepreneurial learning. This also includes the Junior Business School (JBS), a practice-orientated research project that integrates Entrepreneurship Education into both school and scholar curricula.

Rigg and O'Dwyer (2012) constitute that much literature on Entrepreneurship Education pays little attention on learning theories. That there are still unanswered questions concerning the didactical perspective on Entrepreneurship Education is summarized by (Fayolle, 2013, p. 694): “For whom?”, “What?”, “Why?”, “How?” and “For which results?”

For this reason, the concept of the provided case will be reflected from a didactical perspective. The JBS is designed as a project between universities and cooperating schools of secondary education. Pupils and student teachers participate in it for one year and complete the project with a certificate. Therefore, the JBS primarily constitutes a method

1. for pupils (at the age of 14-18) to get theoretical and practical experience in entrepreneurship
2. for student teachers to get experience about developing entrepreneurial learning arrangements

The JBS has a modular structure that is divided into three parts:

- Module 1 includes general topics like economic policy to confront the participants with the economic, political and social aspects of their environment and their meaning for entrepreneurship. The role of the student teachers consists in selection and didactic reduction of topics, for instance forms of enterprise and the concept of value creation. The pupil’s role consists in reflecting and applying them for their own business.

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- Module 2 contributes to theories and methods concerning the development of entrepreneurial skills and attitudes (Fayolle et al., 2006). Beside financial and marketing skills, this element pursuits methods like business modelling (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010) to foster innovation and creation. We also introduce the concept of effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2008), a resource oriented concept, that is taken into account in order to contrast with traditional business planning. It is up to the student teachers to create adequate learning arrangements for the pupils. To pursue entrepreneurial learning objectives, the JBS provides blended learning methods like case studies, role-plays and e-learning, for instance.

- Module 3 is a practice track, pupils lead and develop their own enterprise for a year, they can freely dispose of their profits. One of the companies manufactures and sells various honey products; another distributes school related merchandise articles. As contributed by different authors, learning by interaction (Nandan & London, 2013; Rigg & O'Dwyer, 2012) plays an important role in entrepreneurial learning. In the provided case, pupils are confronted with challenges concerning creation of products, marketing, distribution and pricing. It is also mandatory that the business-model and the products are regularly presented to the public.

This contribution will also provide results of an empirical preliminary investigation of the authors, according to pupil's perceptions about Entrepreneurship Education Programmes. As mentioned in previous articles (Draycott, Rae, & Vause, 2011; Frank, Korunka, Lueger, & Mugler, 2005), it seems that the teaching person is an important factor for entrepreneurial learning, for instance.

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