Introduction

Let us be clear as to the aim of this text: it is not the intention to suggest what should be taught, or how to teach entrepreneurship (or enterprise) to undergraduates, hereinafter referred to as EE. Rather, the aim of this text is to provoke deeper engagement with how to think about teaching EE in higher education. Thus, the focus is not so much on how to teach, but rather upon how students learn. Indeed, this text is developed unashamedly from a learner-centred perspective. It will be my own personal experiences and observations of EE in higher education, along with the views of other EE educators, that set the parameters for the direction of the text. Stated another way, this text does not aim to connect to, or extend the ideas found in mainstream popular texts. In contrast, this text aims to challenge every individual EE educator to 1) develop their own ‘student specific’ learning outcomes, 2) conceive a variety of learning activities through which their identified learning outcomes can be achieved, and 3) construct appropriate (and authentic) assessment processes to guide the development of students’ learning; and to do so having thoughtfully considered the various issues introduced and discussed throughout the following chapters. Let us first consider the purpose of each chapter.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Chapter 1 Your Teaching Philosophy

The first chapter is premised upon a fundamental question: how do students learn to be entrepreneurial? Answering this important question has been the driving force behind the development of a unique approach to EE at the University of Tasmania (UTAS). It has led to the development of a unique teaching philosophy that has underpinned the development of a truly learner-centred EE programme, previously referred to as the *hic et nunc* model.1 This chapter aims to allow the reader to 1) locate themselves to the approaches discussed here vis-à-vis their own approach and teaching philosophy, and 2)
provide a simple working example of how EE programmes can evolve over time. This chapter is deliberately reflective and aims to calm the reader by elevating the needs of the student above those of the educator, school or institution. Recognising the centrality of the various dialogic relationships that exist in higher education (i.e. the outcomes of students, educators, schools and institutions cannot be fully explained without reference to at least one of the other elements) allows the reader to reconceptualise the environments they operate in. Finally, the controversial notion that at least half of what the student needs to learn already resides inside the student. That it is the task of the educator to expose the student to situations from which they can (via deep self and group reflection) challenge various epistemological assumptions that in turn open up new learning pathways. In summary, Chapter 1 exposes the reader to the author’s teaching philosophy and challenges the reader to create/account for their own teaching philosophy.

Chapter 2  Entrepreneurship Education

Chapter 2 moves away from the author’s underlying philosophy to consider briefly the history of EE, current approaches and debates within higher education. Attention is drawn to more than 44 identified teaching pedagogies for EE in higher education to highlight the challenges and opportunities that arise from revisiting the issue of how EE is commonly taught in higher education. This chapter also serves to introduce a number of educators from across the globe whose ideas and thoughts are woven into the discussion throughout this book. This chapter therefore allows the reader to become familiar with contemporary debates in the global delivery of EE. Debates that can be contrasted against the author’s personal perspective as to the challenges confronting educators in this domain.

Chapter 3  The Ontological Dilemma

This rather ambitious chapter commences with a focus upon a raft of concerns that have started to emerge related to the societal value of EE, the primary elements of EE, and the overall legitimacy of EE in higher education. Within this chapter, an argument based on consideration of the ontology of EE is presented. The key issue is the development of an explanation of how and when students become entrepreneurial. Whereas medical students graduate as doctors, engineering students as engineers and education students as educators, students of entrepreneurship/enterprise rarely graduate as entrepreneurs (in the business start-up sense). Clearly, it is important to determine what knowledge and/or other forms of realisable
value are actually gained from EE that can be used upon graduation. It is also important to understand why graduates of EE face unique challenges in the quest to acquire specific knowledge and/or specific skills prior to graduation.

A process of continuous reflection is argued to support the development of entrepreneurial capacity via the modification of each student’s habits of thought. To contextualise this issue, the opinions of other educators regarding what are the primary forms of value derived from EE are also presented. The chapter concludes with a series of challenges that the educator might consider to ensure the inherent ontological challenges of EE are tackled in the development of appropriate curricula.

Chapter 4 The Reasonable Adventurer

Chapter 4 provides an example of how resource profile development is possible through the deliberate crafting of a pro-student development curriculum. Achieved at UTAS through the inclusion of the reasonable adventurer concept, it has required a shift in the curriculum focus to ensure learning activities are designed to support the development of the six attributes of the reasonable adventurer. The first attribute is intellectuality, the ability to alternate between being a believer and a sceptic. The second attribute is close friendships, or the ability to discover and understand the individuality of others. The third attribute is independence in value judgements, or the ability to rely upon personal experience rather than known external authorities. The fourth attribute is a tolerance of ambiguity, or the ability to view life as a series of interruptions and recoveries. The fifth attribute is the breadth of interest, or an uncommon interest in the commonplace. The last attribute is a balanced sense of humour, or a benign, but lively sense of humour that distinguishes the reasonable adventurer, making him or her good company. So the aim has become focused on creating a fully functioning graduate, one that is capable of using his or her individuality in ways that are beyond their pre-existing mental endowments.

Essentially, the role of the educator has become increasingly refined. Gone is the assumption of future entrepreneurial glory by our graduates. In its place has risen a concern for allowing the students to grow in their here and now. The issue of how other EE educators tackle this student development issue is canvassed to provide the reader with alternative motivations to stimulate imaginative thoughts as to how their own curriculum might also be shaped to free students from themselves. The critical issue to emerge from this chapter: that we as educators must always be challenging ourselves vis-à-vis our role and purpose in the development and delivery of EE.
Chapter 5  Student Diversity

This chapter aims to advance beyond notions of students as individual learners. At the heart of my approach is an aim to exploit student interaction so as to significantly advance student learning outcomes. Acknowledging the overall increasing presence of student diversity within the higher education sector provides educators with a unique opportunity. Building upon past research that highlights the relationship between increased superior learning outcomes from exposure to higher levels of student diversity, the *hic et nunc* model deliberately uses student diversity in a positive way. The first challenge for any educator attempting to harness diversity in the student body is to identify the dimensions of any such diversity. Within this chapter, an index of student similarity is presented to illustrate a simple way of identifying the degree of diversity present within any learning environment. An index that facilitates simple comparisons between students, classes and cohorts. Essentially, the ‘elephant in the room’ is asked to step forward and contribute, rather than be silent (and hidden) in the corner. Importantly, the students are informed of the nature of the diversity in the room and this recognition forms an important part of their preparation for the reflection exercises.

Finally, the issue of how student diversity is dealt with by other educators is discussed. The aim of this discussion is not merely to balance the author’s arguments, but also to excite the reader of the endless possibilities to enlist diversity as a new and valuable addition to the learning environment.

Chapter 6  The Learning Environment

Chapter 6 highlights the potentially important role of the student in shaping the nature of the learning environments within which they interact. It is proposed that the use of constructive alignment in tandem with a learner-centred approach containing criterion-based assessment can empower students in important ways. That such empowerment can go further than increasing their ability to learn to also include an additional role in helping to shape their learning environment. The use of an evolutionary approach within this chapter helps facilitate discussion of the often-neglected process of niche construction through which such possible empowerment is enacted. The primary drivers of the processes discussed are regular summative and formative feedback.

The assertion is that a student’s habits of thought are susceptible to change once the student understands how they contribute to their overall fitness vis-à-vis satisfying the stated learning objectives. The implications of the arguments within this chapter go to the very heart of enacting the philosophy
of learner-centred approaches to teaching and learning. The opportunity to work with students to achieve both superior learning outcomes and learning environments is highlighted as an important consequence of being truly learner centred. Of critical importance for EE students is the development of confidence, an acknowledged component of why entrepreneurs initiate business start-ups and maintain strong levels of resilience. Again, the key ideas discussed in this chapter are considered against the degree of traction they hold for other EE educators. The aim is to once again create a reflective space for the reader to contemplate how the shifting nature of the learning environment can be used to positively increase the learning outcomes of our students.

Chapter 7 The Resource Profile

The aim of Chapter 7 is to discuss the underlying tools our students must develop/use in order to succeed in their future endeavours. From the perspective of making sense of the entrepreneurial journeys our students may contemplate and indeed attempt, few ideas hold more explanatory power than the notion of a resource profile. When we encourage our students to visualise an entrepreneurial business start-up and work towards this outcome, we must be mindful of the social, human and financial capital each student has vis-à-vis that particular idea under consideration. In the absence of the prerequisite resource profile (hereinafter referred to as RP), graduate entrepreneurship (as related to business start-up) is more often than not too challenging.

Within this chapter we will consider two variations of RP thinking, the first related to RP downsizing and the second to RP upsizing. RP downsizing is the use of small entrepreneurial challenges through which students plan to achieve an outcome and subsequently succeed and/or fail (in varying degrees) followed by reflection as to how their individual/team RP influenced the outcome achieved. RP upsizing is a mapping exercise in which the express resource needs (of an individual) for a particular idea are documented, and then collated across the class. Other members of the class help to upsize the RPs of fellow classmates by loaning their contacts, knowledge and access to specific resources to their fellow classmates.

The importance and/or development of the students’ RP are also considered from the perspective of what other practices exist in EE globally. Once again, the aim is that through elevating this issue to the reader’s attention, a reflection space has been created from within which possible strategies can be conceived as to how to assist the reader’s students to understand the importance of RP development.
Chapter 8  The Art of Selling

Chapter 8 unashamedly is intent on refuting the urban (academic) myth that marketing is not selling. Entrepreneurial marketing is action-oriented behaviour that combines strategic intent with an individual’s capacity to sell ideas and oneself. In the absence of a capacity to sell, the potential value of various forms of strategic knowledge will quite likely dissolve. Put simply, our graduates must walk alone when they begin their entrepreneurial journeys. They cannot rely upon others to advance their cause; initially the responsibility will quite frequently fall on their shoulders.

Entrepreneurial marketing is condensed down to two seemingly simple, but in reality very exacting questions. First, what are you selling to whom?15 Second, does a compelling reason exist for your customer to buy? To the extent that our students are capable of answering these questions and communicating their justification, they are well on the way to being capable salespersons. The obvious challenge; how to develop such a capacity? This chapter addresses this issue, adding to the author’s views alternative ideas from other EE educators. The ultimate aim is to convince the reader of the importance of developing such a capacity. Further, to stimulate the reader’s imagination as to how such a capacity might be developed.

Chapter 9  Evaluating Ideas

Chapter 9 is focused upon the evaluation of new ideas. The nascent entrepreneur is frequently inundated with multiple ideas whilst being inexperienced and lacking the required insight to choose between ideas. In this chapter, a structured method for the early assessment of ideas16 is outlined that is designed to identify new ideas with genuine commercial merit. Many students believe that the leap from a new idea to market entry is only a short distance and they often do not recognise how complex, costly and time consuming the process can be. Consequently, it is important to be able to assess the commercial feasibility of a new idea very early in the innovation process because it is the least costly stage in which to identify and eliminate likely failures.

Just as there are numerous pedagogies associated with teaching EE, determinations of commercial potential abound. In this chapter, various evaluative frameworks are introduced and the proclaimed merits of each are offered for the reader’s consideration. The aim being to encourage the reader to ensure that the needs of their students are well served through the provision of a sound and effective means of evaluating ideas.
Chapter 10  Business Plans

The contentious issue of the value of the business plan with higher education is addressed in Chapter 10. Frequently assumed to be a capstone activity in the EE, the business plan has a chequered past. Recently, concern has surfaced that draws into question the underlying value of the business plan as a must do learning activity in EE. Within this chapter this important issue is explored and the various sides of the debate considered. An alternative form of business plan is presented for consideration; a plan within which the ontological reality of the student looms large. From this perspective a trilemma is tackled head on, with the student’s RP set against an explanation of the conditions under which value can be created and captured and conversely, the conditions under which value cannot be created and/or captured. Within this approach, the traditional business plan headings become meaningless. They are superseded by a narrative that encourages readability and evidence-based appendices that support believability.

As in the previous chapters, the views of other educators are offered to the reader as a balancing mechanism to encourage broader reflection of how and why a business plan can be productively used in EE. The aim being to ensure that its application is sound and appropriate to the strategic aims of the EE educator. That student output will not fall into a category of pure fiction bereft of real-world logic.

Chapter 11  Accounting for Interaction

The final chapter seeks to test the reader’s capacity to remove themselves from their current teaching context; to step back and consider the nature of their teaching philosophy. The reader will be challenged to reconsider the ideas discussed in earlier chapters from some of the most compelling writers in the domain of education theory. Writers that lay bare our very purpose for stepping into the classroom, who are advocates for the rights of our students to take control of their futures, and who question the very basis upon how we know what we know when we study our classrooms. Throughout this text a range of ecological ideas have been coalescing, introduced into a vortex that has been timed to unite within this chapter. To the extent that the reader is able to think about the ideas that have preceded this chapter, they will have developed a unique capacity to think about how to teach EE. The examples of the author’s approaches to the dilemmas discussed within this text represent merely an example of how one person’s teaching philosophy has been translated into a range of (constantly modified) learning activities. They do not represent a roadmap as to how to teach EE. Neither do the numerous insights from the many EE educators included in
this text. This last chapter is an invitation to take up the challenge of campus ecology, to sense the invisible forces that exist (regardless of our awareness) through which our students learning outcomes are so indelibly determined. Forces that can be imagined, harnessed and manipulated by the thinking and ever reflective educator.

NOTES

1. See for example, Jones (2006a) for a discussion on the development of the hic et nunc approach.
2. Based on ongoing work by the National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship (NCGE) in the UK.
3. David Storey (2009) made several provocative comments about the societal value of EE during his keynote speech at the 2008 International Council of Small Business (ICSB) conference in Halifax, Canada. He questioned the assumed relationship between EE and any increased supply of entrepreneurs into society.
4. Bill Bygrave presented research at the 2009 Australian Graduate School of Entrepreneurship (AGSE) conference in Adelaide, Australia that demonstrated a negative relation between completing a business plan whilst studying entrepreneurship at Babson College and future business success.
5. Kevin Hindle (2007) convincingly argues that EE still has not developed legitimacy within the domain of higher education.
6. See Heath (1964) for a full description of the notion of the reasonable adventurer.
7. See Dewey (1922).
8. See Whitehead’s (1929) seminal discussion on the value of educating in the student’s here and now.
9. See Biggs (2003) for more discussion of ever present diversity in higher education.
11. See Hayward et al. (2009).
12. Within the context of this discussion an entrepreneurial journey relates to behaving in a manner contrary to prevailing (local) social norms to achieve an improvement outcome. By improvement, it is assumed the journey relates to the advancement of one’s position or that of others in society, not necessarily dependent upon financial gains.
13. See Aldrich and Martinez (2001) for their discussion of resource profiles, specifically their explanation of the process of the entrepreneurial act.
14. See Hegarty and Jones (2008) for an argument that EE should not always be based on a business context.
17. See note 4.
19. See Baxter-Magolda (1998; 2004) for wonderfully insightful commentary on how students in higher education can take control of their personal development.
21. See Banning (1978) for the seminal roots of the campus ecology school of thought.