Preface: Establishing moorings and foundations in entrepreneurial education

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The rapid expansion of entrepreneurship education over the past twenty-five years has resulting in a proliferation of entrepreneurship offerings at universities, with some institutions offering over forty unique courses and enrolling well over a thousand students each year. A growing number of universities now offer formal degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, including majors, minors, concentrations, certificates, master's degrees and Ph.D. programs in entrepreneurship. Yet, these rather remarkable developments have occurred largely in the absence of any real consensus among faculty regarding what should be taught, how it should be taught, the structure of an entrepreneurship curriculum, the role of co-curricular programming, and a host of related issues. And, while both the volume and rigor of scholarly research in entrepreneurship have also expanded significantly in recent decades, research focused on education and pedagogy has been much more limited.

A sizable gap exists between the ample demands for (and growing supply of) entrepreneurship education and our understanding regarding how to best approach the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship. Contributing to this gap are knowledge shortcomings across virtually every dimension of education. Much richer insights are needed regarding the field's content or substance, a degree program's structure and flow, the teaching techniques that are most effective under varying conditions, best practices in terms of classroom innovations, the relative effectiveness of differing educational delivery mechanisms, implications of different learning approaches, establishment of appropriate learning outcomes, and meeting assurance of learning standards when it comes to entrepreneurship.

Consider just a few of the vexing yet fundamental questions confronting entrepreneurship educators within and beyond the contemporary classroom:

- To what extent does entrepreneurship represent a unique discipline with its own defined content as opposed to a field of study that relies on teaching borrowed content from such fields as management, psychology, sociology, anthropology, physics and ecology?
- How much should entrepreneurship courses focus on teaching business basics, or how the different functional areas of business apply in an early stage venture context?
- How does one teach the entrepreneurial mindset?
- Is the business plan, historically the most emphasized learning tool in entrepreneurship programs, an effective learning device and, if so, what is its role and where does it belong within the curriculum?
- What models exist for structuring an entrepreneurship major or minor, which models are most effective in differing contexts, and what are the implications of models relying more on dedicated entrepreneurship courses versus some mix of entrepreneurship courses and courses from other disciplines?
- What percentage of an entrepreneurship educational program should experiential learning represent compared to other forms of learning?
- How is experiential learning best accomplished when teaching entrepreneurship online?
- In what ways should the different learning methods or models relied on by students affect how entrepreneurship education is delivered?
- What role should entrepreneurial competencies play in the design of courses and curricula, and which are the appropriate competencies?
- How, if at all, should the content, structure and delivery of an entrepreneurship course change when it is offered outside of a business school?
- What should we be assessing when attempting to demonstrate the relative effectiveness of an entrepreneurship course or program, and which mix of assessment methods best captures student mastery of the field?

Questions such as these remind us that our discipline is still in its infancy from a teaching standpoint. For a number of reasons, the size of the gap between the growth in the amount of entrepreneurship education being delivered and the growth in our understanding regarding how entrepreneurship can best be taught may actually be increasing. As a field of study, entrepreneurship education is not static, but instead represents a moving target, with continuous additions to both the depth and breadth of the content of the discipline. Further, new learning platforms, technologies and vehicles are appearing for enhancing how entrepreneurship can be

taught. In addition, the student audience for entrepreneurship education is not only growing in size, but it is becoming more diverse as reflected in the age, gender, life stage, ethnicity, professional background, motives, and contexts of those wishing to better understand entrepreneurship in all of its manifestations.

How do we begin to close this gap? Clearly there is a need for more incentives and outlets (journals, scholarly books, conferences) for research that focuses on the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship. One of the most valuable outlets throughout this period of dramatic emergence of the discipline has been the annual conference and published proceedings of the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (USASBE). As the largest scholarly professional organization in the world dedicated to the advancement of entrepreneurship education, USASBE has played a pioneering role as a clearinghouse for new insights into what and how we teach. For over thirty years, USASBE has provided a vital forum for sharing the emerging ideas, key research findings and novel approaches of many of the thought leaders and master educators within the entrepreneurship discipline.

In an attempt to capitalize on this rich body of knowledge, the USASBE leadership has created the *Annals of Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy*. The concept behind the *Annals* is to identify and revisit some of the most important and provocative work from the USASBE conference over the years. Specifically, the editorial board of the *Annals* is charged with systematically identifying the most important papers, presentations and workshops that have appeared at USASBE during the past thirty years, and then contacting and working with the authors and presenters of this work to produce updated perspectives. The intent is that the *Annals* appear every other year and capture the richest insights and best practices in teaching entrepreneurship, building entrepreneurship curricula, and developing educational programs.

It is my honor to serve as the inaugural editor of the *Annals*. Rather than specialize in a particular area of entrepreneurship education, we have sought to put together a volume that reflects the breadth of issues impacting the contemporary teaching of entrepreneurship. Deciding upon the topics to include was a somewhat problematic undertaking, given the considerable range of substantive questions surrounding entrepreneurship education. Selecting the particular entries/authors was also a difficult task, for the set of scholars offering valuable insights is also quite substantial. Not surprisingly, the scholars we arrived at represent a rich cross-section of some of the leading lights in the field.

We have organized the *Annals* into three sections. The first of these is a set of fourteen research papers that reflect the wide range of 'big issues'

in entrepreneurship education. Based on original papers, presentations, or workshops that have appeared at the annual USASBE Conference, each of these articles has been updated by the author(s), sent out for review, and subsequently revised. Let us briefly consider these contributions.

Chapter 1 by Neck, Greene and Brush addresses the distinction between theory and practice in entrepreneurship, and introduces the concept of ‘synthesis’ to capture highly experiential entrepreneurship education where theory is actionable, even if not visible to the student. The authors share five practices of entrepreneurship education grounded in actionable theories. White and D’Souza (Chapter 2) help us understand the role of learning speed in helping students master opportunity identification, especially in dynamic environments, and provide a useful model for capturing this relationship. Grossman and Means (Chapter 3) provide a systematic examination of emerging technologies that are available for use in educational efforts both inside and outside the classroom. Krueger and Welpke (Chapter 4) explore the potential of neuroscience for advancing entrepreneurship research, practice and teaching. Their notion of neuroentrepreneurship provides a fascinating perspective on entrepreneurial decision-making and the entrepreneurial mindset. Solomon and Matthews (Chapter 5) present a data-based investigation that helps us better distinguish entrepreneurship from small business management, with important implications for what is taught in entrepreneurship courses. Mitchell (Chapter 6) discusses the deliberate practice approach to entrepreneurship education, drawing on the expert information processing theory branch of entrepreneurial cognition research. He presents and examines issues around a pedagogy centered on cognitive scripts and the deliberate practice approach as it would apply in diverse contexts around the world. Distinguishing entrepreneurial from managerial competencies, Morris and Kaplan (Chapter 7) demonstrate how specific entrepreneurial competencies can both be used in designing curriculum and, based on different measurement approaches, play a central part in assurance of learning efforts. Joos and Leaman (Chapter 8) explore the rapidly emerging area of social entrepreneurship, sharing insights on how to approach the teaching of a social entrepreneurship course or set of courses. Miyasaki (Chapter 9) presents evidence regarding how entrepreneurship programs can contribute to the successful launch of ventures by students, and investigates some of the underlying issues, challenges and potential solutions. Goldsby, Kuratko and Nelson (Chapter 10) tackle the intriguing interface between entrepreneurship and design principles, an area that has received considerable attention in the past few years from both design schools and entrepreneurship programs. They propose design-centered entrepreneurship as an approach for teaching students about opportunity recognition

and exploitation. The interface between entrepreneurship and the arts is the focus of the piece by Thomas, McDonagh and Canning (Chapter 11). Noting significant training, knowledge and expertise gaps in the teaching of entrepreneurship to ‘creatives’, they discuss the development of the arts entrepreneur using the ‘learning cloud’, a model of teaching and learning arts entrepreneurship that places creativity and empathy at the core of learning. Morris and Schindehutte (Chapter 12) address how their six-component framework for capturing the business model of the entrepreneur can be taught to students and others, emphasizing a decision-making framework that distinguishes issues made at a basic or foundational level from proprietary decisions that produce sustainable competitive advantage. Doctoral-level education is the topic of Duval-Couetil and Wheadon (Chapter 13), and specifically, they investigate ways in which entrepreneurship education can enhance the preparation of Ph.D. graduates across academic disciplines. Finally, Cadotte (Chapter 14) examines computer-based simulations as a teaching tool from theoretical, empirical and practice vantage points. He demonstrates how simulations can be used to enhance critical thinking and adaptive learning skills with both entrepreneurship majors and broader audiences studying entrepreneurship.

Following these research perspectives, the second section of the *Annals* features five model academic programs in entrepreneurship. It is based on the National Model Programs Award Program coordinated by USASBE each year, which is highly competitive, and involves a systematic, multi-stage and quite rigorous selection process. Former winners serve as judges each year. Winners were selected from different years, with an emphasis on programs that we believe have had a significant impact on the advancement of entrepreneurship education at the tertiary level. Programs were also selected to provide a representation of larger and smaller, public and private, and urban and non-urban institutions, as well as universities with a stronger research versus teaching focus. In each case, we contacted the award winning school, and requested a synopsis of their program as it currently operates, and the submitters revised these submissions based on feedback from the editorial board. Importantly, while each program is outlined in fairly comprehensive terms, the reader will detect a unique theme or focal aspect embedded in the programs of each of these five universities.

The third section of the *Annals* provides a collection of ten leading edge examples of teaching innovations, unique approaches to experiential learning, and high impact community engagement initiatives. Many of these initiatives have also won awards or recognition both from USASBE and other prominent organizations and groups. Each of them has been

selected based not only on its innovativeness and the proven results it has produced, but also because of its potential for replication and adaptation at other institutions. Moreover, the ten initiatives that are featured reflect innovations at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, inside and outside the business school, on-campus and off-campus, and emphasize economic and social outcomes.

The contents of this volume make clear that it is an exciting time to be involved with entrepreneurship education. While what we do not know far exceeds what we do know about how to most effectively teach entrepreneurship and build entrepreneurship programs, these programs are emerging as innovation platforms. They are continually spinning off a fascinating array of new courses, pedagogies, student support programs and outreach initiatives. In some ways, entrepreneurship education is uniquely positioned to play a leadership role in the transformation of higher education that will unfold over the coming decades. Unfettered by a long history within the academy, entrepreneurship educators operate with a largely blank canvas and unwritten script. Where long-established academic disciplines operate with assumptions, traditions, rules and politics that can produce inertia and rigidity when it comes to experimentation and change, entrepreneurship as a discipline has yet to develop such obstacles. As a result, in years to come entrepreneurship educators are poised to shed new light on inter-disciplinary approaches to teaching, uncover entirely new methods for experiential learning and the design of curricula around experiences, and create new ways for universities to engage society and connect such engagement to the learning process. We sincerely hope the *Annals* will contribute in meaningful ways to this exciting journey.