Preface

The fundamental social-cognitive ability that underlies human culture is the individual human being's ability to and tendency to identify with other human beings.

(Tomasello, 1999, p. 90)

Entrepreneurship is an academic discipline that, despite decades of unrivaled growth in regards to both research and teaching activity (Kuratko, 2005; Low, 2001), lacks a “traditionally” distinct or common theoretical domain (Busenitz et al., 2014). This presents both challenges and opportunities for educators who, absent a homogeneous approach to teaching entrepreneurship, assemble and implement topics from disparate disciplines including law, sociology, business and its various domains (e.g., strategy, finance, marketing, etc.), and many others. In this book, we explore entrepreneurial identity; a concept derived from psychology and sociology that we believe is applicable at all levels (i.e., pre-collegiate, collegiate, and post-collegiate) and facets of entrepreneurship education and, indeed, in the development of entrepreneurs generally.

Entrepreneurship educators have long been challenged to justify the interventions they utilize within their classrooms. Yet, despite decades of scholarship into the “how” and the “why” of entrepreneurship education, there remains little agreement among educators (Bygrave, 2008). Schramm (2014) highlighted flaws in contemporary entrepreneurship education. He likens current efforts to teach entrepreneurship to the early days of teaching medicine when the case study method predominated. The case study approach in medicine, while it does convey knowledge, was found to be inadequate because of the unavoidable idiosyncrasies of specific cases. Schramm invokes the analogy between medical education and entrepreneurship education to suggest that a revolution is required in entrepreneurship education. He goes on to suggest that even among those that receive a PhD in entrepreneurial studies, signifying the highest level of aca-

ademic mastery of the subject, “there is no academic consensus on what works for starting a new business.”

In recent years, Steve Blank and Bob Dorf (2012) have developed a popular approach to teaching entrepreneurship, adequately defined as the “lean startup approach.” The lean startup approach has captured wide interest in the past few years. The lean startup focuses on tools and techniques that entrepreneurs should use during the startup phase of a venture. A principal contribution of this approach is the idea that the startup is a temporary organization that advances via customer discovery and validation. The latter is regarded as an iterative process that is centered on repeated introductions of an evolving minimal viable product to the target market. In short, in the lean startup approach, startups differ from established companies in that the former should be designed to *search* for a repeatable, scalable business model, while the latter should be designed to *execute* that model.

We agree with many of the ideas and concepts of the lean startup approach. There is much wisdom in the simple distinction between an organization designed for searching and one designed for executing. Indeed, the lean startup has been adopted by the National Science Foundation as a means of improving the rate of commercialization of the research it funds (Blank, 2013).

Despite the value in the lean startup, however, several of its underlying assumptions limit its applicability (see Metzger, Chapter 6, this volume). For example, the lean startup assumes that undergraduate students have a venture idea well-formed and ready to enter into the customer discovery and validation process. In our experience, this is rarely the case. We surmise that it may be more likely that many students entering entrepreneurship courses at Berkeley and Stanford, where Blank and Dorf teach, have well-formed venture ideas, but that is certainly not the case at the public university where we teach.

Of course, it is possible to address this general lack of undergraduate venture ideas by assigning students the task of generating ideas and pursuing them via the lean startup methodology. But this does not address what we believe is the primary unsupported assumption in the lean startup approach. That is, we believe that many undergraduate entrepreneurship students simply do not yet *identify* themselves as entrepreneurs. That is, prior to—or at least simultaneous to—exploring venture ideas and endeavoring to discover and validate customers, they need to explore and become comfortable with what it

means to be an entrepreneur. As such, we think it premature to teach specific tools of entrepreneurship prior to, or without regard to, helping students develop their individual entrepreneurial identities. Teaching the tools of entrepreneurship without regard to development of a concomitant entrepreneurial identity is akin to teaching someone to use laboratory equipment without teaching them what it is to be a chemist (Duening and Metzger, 2014).

Another currently popular approach to teaching entrepreneurship is based on effectuation and the distinctive logic used by expert entrepreneurs (Read and Sarasvathy, 2005). This approach teaches students that expert entrepreneurs practice a different form of logic than do corporate managers. The latter are said to practice causal logic in their professional activities. Causal logic is a well-known approach in management, where a single, well-defined goal is set, and then the means for achieving that goal gathered and deployed toward its realization. Effectual logic, by way of contrast, doesn't aim at specific, predetermined goals. Rather, it asserts that expert entrepreneurs begin with the resources they control and then, in a non-predictive fashion, attempt to create unique value through deployment of those resources. The distinction between these logics is illustrated in Figure P.1.

Similar to our analysis of the lean startup, we think that the effectuation approach to entrepreneurship education is based on several unsupported assumptions that limit its applicability. For example, the notion of a goalless, amorphous future seems to be developmentally out of phase with undergraduate students who are struggling to internalize and express concrete individualized identities. The analogy with the aspiring scientist is again illustrative here. Imagine

Figure P.1 Causal vs. effectual logic

an aspiring scientist being trained to design and run experiments while simultaneously being instructed that there are no particular goals to be pursued via this training. It would likely seem disorienting to the aspiring scientist who probably pursued science for specific goal-oriented reasons such as to understand a realm of nature, cure a disease, or, more nebulously, pursue truth.

There is no shortage of scholarship on the psychosocial issues common to undergraduate students traversing a critical developmental stage in their lives. Erikson (1963), Perry (1999), and others have offered well-known analytic frameworks for understanding the developmental stages of typical undergraduate students. Contemporary identity theory builds in part on the work of these earlier scholars, but also benefits immensely from new discoveries in positive psychology, evolutionary psychology, developmental neuroscience, and other fields. Most notably, the analytic frameworks available today integrate the human emotional/affective systems and the cognitive/thinking systems. This represents a dramatic advance over the cognitions-dominant scholarship of the past several decades. The result is a more robust understanding of key concepts such as “self” (Damasio, 2012), “identity” (Tomasello, 2009), “motivation” (Seligman, 2011) and others.

We believe that identity theory provides an important perspective on undergraduate education that integrates this variety of disciplines. As educators at the collegiate level, we are especially interested because the typical individual at the center of our teaching is deeply and critically engaged in personal identity construction. We believe that our role as educators and facilitators of individual identity construction comes with the profound responsibility of helping to shape individual identities.

Yet, truth be told, most of us have not integrated the emerging scholarship on identity theory into our curricular and pedagogical practices. While it is understandable that this complement to traditional pedagogy has for the most part escaped our notice, it is no longer excusable to ignore the sensitive transitional stage of our students, the practical lessons being discovered in a variety of scholarly disciplines about how to nurture and facilitate identity construction, and the power of individual identity to shape the futures of those who trust our judgment about how best to prepare for it.

Our focus on entrepreneurship is particularly apropos, we think, because the social category “entrepreneur” is stubbornly amorphous.

Attempting to define the social category reveals its obscurity. For instance, we often think of entrepreneurship as comprised of starting and operating a venture. Yet, many people who identify themselves as entrepreneurs are not currently involved in starting or operating a venture. Some are between ventures, some are focused on investing, and others are providing a wide range of other services to practicing entrepreneurs. There are also emerging distinctions between entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, and intrapreneurship (a term that refers to people working within large corporations who are entrepreneurial within its boundaries). If social entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs are distinct social categories with which one may attempt to identify, do they require a wholly different curriculum?

The amorphous nature of the social category “entrepreneur” makes it difficult for students to develop an identity consistent with it. As such, our role as entrepreneurship educators is made all the more difficult. It seems to be incomplete, at best, to introduce students to concepts concerning entrepreneurial activities without simultaneously providing them with some idea of what it is like actually to *be* an entrepreneur.

With that said, we are thrilled that our interest in entrepreneurial identity has attracted an internationally renowned cadre of academics as collaborators on this book. Our co-authors include scholars from Europe, Australasia, and North America. Collectively, the authors ply a variety of methodologies to examine entrepreneurial identity. In addition, the authors draw from a variety of non-entrepreneurial theoretical domains that include leadership, social learning, organizational change, ethics, sustainability, and, of course, identity formation and change. Despite conducting very different academic research at widely dispersed global outposts, the authors are united by their shared interest in advancing entrepreneurial pedagogy and entrepreneur development via the entrepreneurial identity construct. Our explorations of entrepreneurial identity, in this book and in our individual works, are consistent with a call to action in the broader discourse among entrepreneurial educators. We call on educators to look for complements to popular process-based pedagogical techniques (e.g., the business model canvas, the business plan, etc.) and go beyond simply teaching the tools required for entrepreneurial careers. This book addresses how we can and should shepherd individuals towards success and respect in entrepreneurial careers.

To contribute to this ongoing conversation, this book assembles various works that explore both the loci of entrepreneurial identities and the individual-level processes that accompany their development, internalization, and enactment among aspiring entrepreneurs. Consequently, each chapter either focuses primarily on macro-level identity issues (i.e., how these entrepreneurial archetypes form, persist, and sometimes change) or micro-level identity issues (i.e., how educators and resource providers can identify, communicate, and incentivize identity construction among aspiring entrepreneurs).

The first three chapters in this book are best categorized as macro-level explorations of entrepreneurial identities. In Chapter 1, “Entrepreneurial identity: Professional virtues moderate attraction and persistence,” Thomas N. Duening explores entrepreneurship as a profession that consists of a set of virtues that, if well-articulated and understood, can be better communicated to attract more aspirants to the profession and to promote greater levels of persistence among those who choose the entrepreneurial professional path in non-educational (e.g., incubator, accelerator) settings. Subsequently, Rebecca Gill explores several disparate sources of discourse that effect the social construction of an entrepreneurial archetype in Chapter 2, “The Entrepreneur in the age of discursive reproduction: Whence comes entrepreneurial identity?” She posits that collectives at several levels (physical place, industry, and personal networks) might influence an individual’s perception regarding the entrepreneur archetype and, consequently, their ability to incorporate entrepreneurship into their own identity. Robert Smith and David Boje explore the construction and perpetuation of parodied entrepreneurial archetypes that are both influenced by and influence shared macro-level assumptions regarding successful entrepreneurial identities and personas. In their Chapter 3, “Visualizing Bill Gates and Richard Branson as comic book Heroes: An examination of the role of cartoon and caricature in the parodization of the entrepreneurial persona,” Smith and Boje specifically examine how celebrated entrepreneurs Richard Branson and Bill Gates have become caricatured in cartoons in ways that have effected Western perceptions of entrepreneurs and antecedents to entrepreneurial success.

In Chapters 4–6, the authors examine several phenomena that are decidedly more focused on individual-level phenomena. For instance, in Chapter 4, “Entrepreneurial identity and motivation,” Blake Mathias examines disparate motivations and identities that precede

entrepreneurial careers, the evolution of identities as individuals advance from entrepreneurship as a career aspiration to a reality and provides advice to educators wishing to foster entrepreneurial identities among their diverse student populations. In Chapter 5, “Learning to become entrepreneurial/fostering entrepreneurial identity and habits,” Karen Williams Middleton and Anne Donnellon speak directly to educators interested in modifying their syllabi to not only teach *about* entrepreneurs, but also to educate students about how to *become* an entrepreneur (i.e., educating for practice). In doing so, the authors highlight several individual-level characteristics (emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and drive) that influence students’ abilities to successfully bridge the identity gap between their current state and one where they perceive themselves as an accomplished entrepreneur. Lastly, in Chapter 6, “Teaching the aspiring entrepreneur,” Matthew L. Metzger provides a historic perspective on the evolution of contemporary entrepreneurship pedagogy and draws upon the concepts introduced in Chapter 1 to develop a virtues-based approach that complements these alternatives.

Given the different backgrounds and theoretical motivations of the authors of this volume, each chapter in this book serves as a standalone piece and, as such, need not be read sequentially. Our hope is that educators, practicing entrepreneurs, or students considering entrepreneurial careers can find insight from the different ideas outlined in this book and can actually apply these to their lives. As educators, however, we have provided a few resources throughout the text meant to provide direct and actionable guidance to readers in similar careers. Specifically, you will notice several “call-out boxes” in each chapter that are meant to communicate (1) a pedagogical innovation that should help faculty develop entrepreneurial identities among their students, (2) ideas for incorporating modern technologies into these developmental processes, or (3) the possible implications for faculty (e.g., changing mindsets, goals, etc.) that might result from adopting entrepreneurial identity creation as an important part of their teaching and/or research. We are excited to share these insights with scholars and practitioners alike. We also hope that you enjoy this book, and welcome any feedback you might have.

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