Learning to Become Entrepreneur(ial).
New Perspectives on Enterprise Education in Practice

PhD dissertation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This PhD dissertation contributes to research in enterprise education with new perspectives onto its practice. There is growing recognition in education policy and research that entrepreneurship as a subject in higher education has more to offer students and society than the skills to start up and manage a business. It is also valuable as a way to develop in students the attributes and behaviours of the enterprising person, understood to be valuable in various contexts beyond commercial business. Hence, entrepreneurship education is no longer “just” about starting a business and becoming an entrepreneur, but also (and increasingly so) a question of becoming entrepreneurial. This study aims to better understand the conditions set upon students and their participation in enterprise education and thus how higher education settings become contexts for entrepreneurial learning.

In three essays, I address the question of how the process of becoming entrepreneurial is imagined and practiced in higher education. Two empirical studies attend to this question through analyses of how students operate in learning settings organized to facilitate entrepreneurial becoming. The third essay treats the question of access to enterprise conceptually through an analysis of how entrepreneurship education is organized to facilitate an initiation into a specific belief system. The empirical material was derived through an ethnographic method for inquiry, which is highly legitimised in education research, however seldom employed in enterprise education research.

*Essay 1* identifies an important dilemma in an enterprise education module that explicitly targets students entrepreneurial becoming, but where this identity work takes place in a learning environment, where students are evaluated by an educator and graded on their performance. Findings suggest that classroom practices worked to disconnect the student and entrepreneur identities that it was actually was supposed to bridge. The paper therefore concludes that identity work is not a context-free practice and I argue that it is necessary to reconsider the functionalist framing of identity work as something which can be steered towards specific and desirable outcomes in enterprise education. *Essay 2* directs attention to the constitution of the entrepreneurial process as a transformative agent in education. The analysis suggests that becoming a learner in process-driven enterprise education is an ambiguous undertaking. Even though in theory enterprise students are imagined to be autonomous and self-
directed, this study highlights how the students pursued access to learning opportunities through a dynamic participation between three shifting and context-given stances. However, since these stances were contradictory in nature it produced paradoxical situations and a pervasive meta-communication about how to learn and how to be a “proper” entrepreneurial learner. Essay 3 introduces the lens of the “cult” to discuss the role of enterprise education in reproducing and legitimising specific values and beliefs as a hidden curriculum. Hence entrepreneurship education teaches students to feel reverence towards certain kinds of people (deities) and to replicate behaviours (rituals) in order to live a fulfilling life (salvation).

Altogether, the thesis contributes to enterprise education research and practice by introducing a discussion about access to entrepreneurial becoming and how this access is imagined and practiced in education. The three essays show enterprise education to be a complex learning setting in higher education, characterised by a set of ambiguous roles and interactions. The study thus points to some consequences of the utilitarian value attached to entrepreneurship in education and its constitution as a transformative agent with the power to yield entrepreneurial experiences that change the abilities and self-understandings of student learners towards becoming (more) entrepreneur(ial).
DANSK RESUMÉ

Denne PhD afhandling bidrager til forskning i entreprenørskabsundervisning gennem en undersøgelse af undervisnings forløb og praksis på et dansk universitet. I både uddannelses politik og forskning er der udbredt forståelse for, at entreprenørskabsuddannelsel har mere at tilbyde de studerende og samfundet generelt end klassisk undervisning om iværksætteri og i metoder til opstart af nye virksomheder. Undervisningen er også vigtig for at lære de studerende at tænke og handle foretagsomt ligesom en entreprenør, men ikke alene i forretningsøjemed. Entreprenørskabsuddannelsel handler derfor ikke længere ”kun” om at starte nye virksomheder og med formålet at blive en entreprenør. Det handler også (og i større grad) om at lære at blive entreprenøriel.

Formålet med dette studium er at forstå de betingelser som møder de studerende og de krav der stilles til deres deltagelse i denne form for undervisning og dermed hvordan universiteten som uddannelsesinstitution kan blive en kontekst for entreprenøriel læring. I tre essays adresserer jeg, hvad der sker i entreprenørskabsuddannelsel, der særligt handler om at lære de studerende at blive entreprenørielle. Samlet behandler artiklene spørgsmålet om, hvordan man forestiller sig, at det er muligt at blive entreprenøriel gennem deltagelse i entreprenørskabsundervisning, samt hvordan denne form for undervisning forløber i praksis.

To empiriske studier adresserer dette spørgsmål gennem analyser af, hvordan studerende opererer i læringsmiljøer, der er særligt indrettet til at facilitere, at de studerende bliver entreprenørielle. Det tredje essay behandler spørgsmålet om adgang til entreprenørriel tilblivelse konceptuelt gennem en analyse af, hvordan entreprenørskabsuddannelse er organiseret som en indføring i en særlig tro. Det empiriske materiale er indsamlet med etnografiske metoder, som er bredt anerkendt i uddannelsesforskning, men meget sjældent anvendt i entreprenørskabs uddannelses forskning.

*Essay 1* belyser et vigtigt dilemma i den form for entreprenørskabsundervisning, der er rettet mod studerendes entreprenørielle selvførstældelse, men som stadig finder sted indenfor traditionelle undervisnings rammer, med lærerevalueringer og karaktergivning. Analysen antyder, at interaktionen i klasseværelset faktisk modarbejdede det, som egentlig var uddannelsens formål, at bygge bro mellem

Samlet viser disse essays, hvordan entreprenørskabsuddannelsen udgør et komplekst lærings miljø karakteriseret af tvetydige roller og interaktioner. På den måde vidner dette studium om nogle ofte oversette konsekvenser af den brugsværdi, der tillægges entreprenørskab i uddannelse som en lærings og transformationsproces henimod at blive (mere) entreprenøriel.
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis investigates how enterprise education engages students in a process of becoming “entrepreneurial”. Higher education institutions have seen a rapid increase in the demand for entrepreneurship education programmes and courses worldwide (Katz, 2003; Kuratko, 2005). This rise in entrepreneurship education is linked to an increased focus on entrepreneurship as an engine driving the economy (Gorman, Hanlon, & King, 1997). Research links entrepreneurship as new business creation to economic growth and job creation (Wong, Ho, & Autio, 2005). New established businesses may absorb unemployment and ease deprivation. Entrepreneurship also relates to issues on the labour market, since enterprising individuals may not only start new businesses; they can also work as innovators and change agents in existing firms (Scott, Rosa, & Klandt, 1998). Additionally, entrepreneurship may take over some of the duties formerly handled by the Welfare State (Heelas & Morris, 1992). Hence, there is trust that entrepreneurship can be of vital importance when trying to conquer some very serious societal challenges associated with the increased pace and turbulence of social and economic change (Anderson & Jack, 2008; Rae, 2010).

Researchers foresee that it will grow more common even for organizational actors to self-organize around the creation of value (Fjelstad, Snow, Miles, & Lettl, 2010), and employees must deal with portfolio careers, demanded flexibility in jobs, more responsibilities at work, fast advancements in technologies, a globalized market and the uncertainties that it all brings along with it (Gibb, 2002; Henry, 2013). Hence, individuals must be able to self-manage in turbulent environments, thrive on risk, and adjust to a high degree of uncertainty (Edwards & Wajcman, 2005). Therefore, scholars argue, that as a preparation for life in the globalised economy, the education system must not alone teach people to “observe, describe and analyse”, but also teach them to “see opportunity, cope with uncertainty and ambiguity, make sense out of chaos, initiate build and achieve, in the process not just coping with change, but anticipating and initiating it (Kirby, 2007b, p. 23). Hence, there is a growing recognition that enterprise education has more to offer than teaching skills to start and manage businesses. Education must also focus on the development of the nature of enterprise in individuals (Gibb, 2002) and on teaching an entrepreneurial approach to life in general (Sarasvathy & Venkataraman, 2011). Consequently, enterprise education can be of value for all and not just for those who intend to start up...
new firms. More generally, it prepares individuals for employability in a world where they increasingly will need to manage their own careers and lives in an entrepreneurial way (Berglund, 2013; Hyttì & O'Gorman, 2004; Rae, 2007).

In Denmark, entrepreneurship receives a growing political attention and the Government has launched several initiatives to integrate entrepreneurship in the Danish educational system from “ABC to PHD” (The Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship, 2011). Policy states that enterprise education should introduce students to an “entrepreneurial way of thinking” and stimulate the desire to become “entrepreneurial” both as future employers and employees (Danish Agency for Science Technology & Innovation, 2009). As expressed by the Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship:

“The purpose of teaching entrepreneurship to children and young people is that they will leave the educational system with achieved skills and competences to think in new ways, discover opportunities and translate ideas into value. These competences may be defined in one word as 'entrepreneurial'.” (The Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship)

European policy recognizes “initiative” and “entrepreneurship” as one of eight “key competences” that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employment (European Parliament and the Council, 2006). In that respect, entrepreneurship is not only closely interwoven with images and ideals of economic growth and coherent societies. It is also associated with images and ideals of the competent and self-fulfilled individual. Consequently, enterprise education balances two understandings of entrepreneurship: an “instrumental view” related to what entrepreneurship education does to the individual as a contributor to economy and society, as well as “an existential view”, related to what such education may do to individuals’ self-identities as engaged human beings (Johannisson, 2016, p. 404). Therefore, when contextualised in education, learning entrepreneurial skills is not “simply” to learn “about” entrepreneurship or learn the tools “for” starting and managing a business. It is also conceived in terms of competencies, which may be put to good use in whatever context is desired (Jones & Iredale, 2010). In fact, to be “entrepreneurial” as a goal for education is expressed in terms of a general and decontextualized quality of the person often expressed in terms of “mindset” (Robinson, Neergaard, Tanggaard, & Krueger, 2016) or as an entrepreneurial identity (Donnellon, Ollila, & Middleton, 2014; Hyttì & Heinonen, 2013).

However, research widely recognises that education which seriously seeks to stimulate a sense of enterprise in people and invites them to understand themselves as entrepreneurial, challenges traditional ways of teaching in higher education (Kyrö, 2005; Rae, 2010). Indeed, the education system is often held responsible for the lack of enterprise in its graduates (Kirby, 2004; Löbler, 2006). In the field of enterprise education research, it is therefore widely debated how it is possible to create particular environments in formal education, which may stimulate this entrepreneurial becoming (Pittaway & Cope, 2007b; Robinson, et al., 2016). Scholars argue that enterprise education ideally should engage students through a “personalised pedagogy” (Blenker et al., 2012) and help them recognise themselves as entrepreneurial actors (Hytti & Heinonen, 2013; Smith & Woodworth, 2012). In other words research suggests that entrepreneurial learning environments should actively facilitate the construction of entrepreneurial identities (Blenker, Korsgaard, Neergaard, & Thrane, 2011; Donnellon, et al., 2014; Harmeling, 2011; Smith & Woodworth, 2012).

This thesis contributes to this growing field of enterprise education research, with an in-depth analysis of how this becoming of entrepreneurial individuals is imagined to take place in higher education, and how it unfolds in practice within this particular interpretation of enterprise education, which explicitly targets students’ self-understandings in support of their process of becoming entrepreneurial. Yet, in order to reason why this study is both interesting and worthwhile, I will first, share an experience from the enterprise classroom.
1.1 More than “Just” Starting a Business

On the very first day, I stepped into an enterprise education classroom, the teacher showed a short film to welcome me and the other participants into this new world of learning. The following is an extracted quote from this film:

“Entrepreneurship is much more than “just” starting a business. It is a discipline and a mindset for creating value and sustainable change. But what makes an entrepreneur successful? What have they got? What do people like Janus Friis\(^2\) have? What do people like Steve Jobs have? What do people like Henry Ford have? Luck? No! They’ve got the right spirit. The entrepreneurial spirit. They believe in themselves. They believe they can. Because it is not only about the idea. But the woman or man, the team behind it. And the actions. Because with the right actions. Even the smallest thing can grow big. […] “Denmark must continue to be part of the European entrepreneurial elite in terms of start-up activity.” “Denmark must be one of the countries in the world that has the highest percentage of high-growth start-ups by 2020.” As an entrepreneur you’re not just making profit for yourself, you’re making progress for the entire society. By engaging in entrepreneurial training or education you will be three times more likely to realize your idea. […] When the wind is blowing. Some build shelters. Others build windmills. What will YOU do?”\(^3\)

When I saw this film, I did not know much of enterprise and what was supposed to take place in enterprise education, just like most of the other students there. We were all present in the classroom with the purpose of learning. Now we were informed of the specific characteristics of successful entrepreneurs and we were strongly encouraged to take up that identity. We were told that Denmark needs us to start businesses, and we were made aware of the certain win-win situation for both society and individual, when it comes to engaging in entrepreneurial activities. Yet, we were also informed that entrepreneurship is “much more than “just” starting a business.” We were told about a specific “mindset” for creating value. Most importantly, we were told, that entrepreneurship and success is not a matter of luck. It is a matter of action. It is a matter of self-confidence. It is a matter of proper training; and as an opportunity for everyone, it is highly a matter of choice. What will YOU do?

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\(^2\) Janus Friis is a Danish entrepreneur and billionaire. Among other things, he co-founded the telephony application Skype.

\(^3\) From: “Next Generation – Being an Entrepreneur”. An animation made by entrepreneurship education institutions in Copenhagen. I made a few minor language changes (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwVstpQk1Dc).
I was immediately wary of the film’s rather aggressive drafting rhetoric and I was sceptical. Nevertheless, it made me think about who I am, who I ought to be, and whether I could ever become an entrepreneur and be a female Janus Friis, Steve Jobs or Henry Ford. In other words, would I build a “windmill” or would I stick to building “shelters”?4

Thinking about this, I asked Anne, a student in class, whether she saw herself as a shelter- or windmill builder. She answered:

“It is really hard to say, because one of them sounds so negative. You don’t really want to be the one building a shelter, do you? But I don’t think that I from nature am the kind of person, who immediately gets a good idea. I need to know of some techniques. I need to know that I should think in a certain way. I need to learn the right way of thinking before I can build a windmill. But then I believe I could certainly do it. But it doesn’t come naturally to me.” (Anne, Interview 1)

The film clearly asserted that there is something enriching about entrepreneurship. Like me, Anne responded. She did not like the idea of belonging to the less attractive group. But she did not see herself as naturally belonging with the group of entrepreneurs. Therefore, enterprise education presented an opportunity to change these dispositions and teach her “the right way of thinking”. In Anne’s answer learning “techniques” and “thinking” represents a way to approach an enterprising behaviour and an aspiring identification with entrepreneurial individuals. Clearly, she reflected an understanding in alignment with education. Hence, enterprise education is not “only” about teaching and learning knowledge about innovation and entrepreneurship. It is also about changing self-perspectives (Harmeling, 2011), and internalising an entrepreneurial mindset (Krueger, 2007), and with that the ability to act in an entrepreneurial way (Rae, 2010). Consequently, enterprise education not only directs itself towards teaching the techniques and tools for acting outwards, to help the student mould and change something in the world, for example in the form of creating a business. It also directs itself towards teaching techniques and tools for acting inwards, to help the student mould and change something “inside” herself (Komulainen, Naskali, Korhonen, & Keskitalo-Foley, 2011). Hence, inherent to entrepreneurship education, is a promise to deliver a transformation in attitudes, behaviours and personal skills (Holmgren & From, 2005). In that way, enterprise education represents a

4 The film cited above refers to a supposedly Chinese proverb: “When the winds of change are blowing, some build shelters, while others build windmills”. (http://scribu.net/quotes/when-the-winds-of-change-are-blowing.html)
transformative agent as it offers an opportunity for students to “re-invent” themselves (Harmeling, 2011; Robinson, et al., 2016). Enterprise education becomes an “identity work space” (Harmeling, 2011), where the facilitation and stimulation of identity formation are important means to increase entrepreneurial competence and behaviour (Donnellon, et al., 2014; Hytti & Heinonen, 2013).

This fieldwork experience points towards themes central to the work in this thesis. It suggests how enterprise education to a large extent involves identification as a growing sense of belonging to a group of entrepreneurial individuals (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Certainly this necessarily implies notions of how to create access to this group. With a view to what is “really” going on in enterprise modules in higher education, my research directs an analytical lens to enterprise education as a context for entrepreneurial learning and identity construction, that is, becoming entrepreneurial. The thesis attends to how this process of becoming entrepreneurial is imagined and practiced in higher education contexts in mandatory modules in postgraduate education. Hence, I seek knowledge of how teachers and students work in settings of these new pedagogical initiatives to facilitate and accomplish this educational task.

1.2 Aim, Motivation and Question

The main objective of this thesis is to examine, how entrepreneurship in education is constituted as an “agent of change”, with regards to individual’s entrepreneurial attitudes and self-understandings. Hence, I seek to understand how and under what conditions students in interaction with peers and educators work to accomplish entrepreneurial becoming, that is, how they believe and are believed to develop repertoires for entrepreneurial practices. The study is motivated by a desire to do something alternative to traditional entrepreneurship education research. A review of the literature found that empirical studies of entrepreneurship education to a high extent are conducted by researchers who themselves are enterprise educators and often they report from the courses they teach (Blenker, Frederiksen, Korsgaard, Trolle, & Wagner, 2014). Hence, existing research is to a high extent written from a teacher’s perspective. In that way, there is a strong tendency to speak “inside” the field, and much of the literature represents a “top-down” research approach, conducted by teachers on their
students (e.g. Pittaway & Cope, 2007b; Smith & Woodworth, 2012). The main concerns in this literature are the pedagogical and didactical developments of effective entrepreneurship and enterprise education (Pittaway & Cope, 2007a). Typically it also involves a strong normative focus on ideal forms of behaviours e.g. how educators ought to teach, how enterprise learners ought to learn or the proper “ingredients” in the organization of entrepreneurial learning environments (Mueller & Anderson, 2014; Pittaway & Cope, 2007b).

The scholarly debate on how to create effective entrepreneurial learning environments in education, typically builds on general understandings of how and under what conditions an entrepreneur learns and how this explains the development of entrepreneurial competence (Cope, 2005; Corbett, 2005). These understandings are then transferred onto the formal learning environment, where enterprise learners must train by operating in and tolerating such environments (Löbler, 2006; Pittaway & Cope, 2007b). Not only do these discussions about how to induce entrepreneurial learning involve specific images of what makes someone entrepreneurial. They also involve an implicit theorization of the entrepreneurial learner, who is able to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered by this kind of environment. Hence, theories on enterprise education involve notions of a “fictive entrepreneur” and a “fictive student” (Jones, 2014). Yet, there is little questioning of this implicit theorization and the potential consequences of constructing learner identities and requirements in the image of the entrepreneur in a formal education context defined by its learning purpose, and populated by people in the roles of educators and students. Inquiry into these matters requires insights into the day-to-day practice of enterprise education and the experiences of students and teachers. However, there are few empirical studies on participant interaction in entrepreneurial learning contexts and thus little knowledge of the social practices that such learning environments actually generate; how opportunities for learning in reality can be accessed, how the theoretical field in practice presents and offers entrepreneurial identities and how they are taken up by learners. These are all questions typical of research in learning and education (Boaler & Greeno, 2000; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Yet, they are seldom asked in the field of enterprise education.

Unlike education in mathematics, science or medicine, entrepreneurship education has not received much attention from scholars of education, who may ask these kinds of questions. This means that the connection between entrepreneurship research and research in education has not been properly
employed to bring new knowledge into enterprise education research (Béchard & Grégoire, 2005; Fayolle, Verzat, & Wapshott, 2016). Yet, since a growing number of students across the academe in higher education most likely will engage with entrepreneurship education in the future, and since a growing number of teachers will have to contribute to the education of entrepreneurial and innovative graduates, it is necessary to understand these educational contexts better. However, there is an overall scarcity of a nuanced and empirically based research that explores the complex everyday interactions of people, objects, spaces and meanings in enterprise education. In fact, Fayolle (2013) calls for research initiatives which may prompt reflexivity regarding educational practices as well as literature providing a critical stance to what may be taken for granted in the research community. With this dissertation, I seek to address these gaps.

The study contributes to enterprise education research, with a “bottom-up” perspective in local classrooms and a focus on actual practice rather than “best practice”, a focus on process of education before the outcomes of education (Hammersley, 1999). Therefore, the immediate purpose of this research is not to establish facts with regards to whether this kind of education “works” or not. I am not investigating whether the students start businesses or whether they become (more) entrepreneurial and change their behaviours and self-understandings, since I do not use any such before-after treatment measures. Instead, I look deeply into the actual interaction patterns and practices of education as it unfolds (Hammersley, 1997). I seek to understand classroom interaction and its meaning-making processes. In that way, my concern is with how meanings of enterprise and the entrepreneur is negotiated and constructed in education processes as well as the negotiation and construction of the possible requirements for becoming entrepreneurial (Holland, Lachicotte Jr, Skinner, & Cain, 1998). Taken as a whole, this brings me to a concern with the sociocultural construction of entrepreneurship (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009) in local education settings, and to how these settings, set up to stimulate the process of becoming entrepreneurial, actually generate particular forms of learning identities and practices. The general research question of the thesis is:

*How is the process of becoming entrepreneurial imagined and practiced in enterprise education?*
With this broad question, this study places the process of entrepreneurial “becoming” in theory, practice and in empirical settings. The study attends to the theory of the entrepreneurial individual, which underpins enterprise education. This is what I refer to with the term “imagined”. The study also attends to the theory in practice, that is, how the process of becoming an entrepreneurial individual is organized and facilitated in context. Finally, the study involves a consideration of how the becoming is practiced, i.e. what is going on, the interactions and activities in the learning setting. In that way imagination and practice encompasses the educational event and must be considered in conjunction. Below, I will clarify the key concepts entailed in the research question in more detail.

1.2.1 Key Concepts

1.2.1.1 The Process of Entrepreneurial becoming

I regard “entrepreneurial becoming” as an integrative term in the way that it includes both emic and etic connotations. Hence, it is simultaneously a conceptualization central to the empirical field, as well as a notion used for an analysis of this field. I will shortly clarify the differences in its use and meaning.

As shown above, enterprise education is supposed to stimulate processes of entrepreneurial becoming in its students. Hence, it is a goal that students are to become (more) entrepreneurial through education. Not only does that mean, that they should be taught knowledge and tools. They should also learn entrepreneurial attitudes and an understanding of themselves in relation to the world. In that way, I regard the emic notion of entrepreneurial becoming as a concern with the facilitation of entrepreneurial identity work, which refers to the ongoing activities that individuals undertake to form, repair, maintain, or revise their identities (Ibarra, 2007; Snow & Anderson, 1987; Svenningson & Alvesson, 2003). Hence, it is the objective of education to target and stimulate individual’s reflective identity work to facilitate a process of entrepreneurial becoming. My intention in this study, is to examine how this is sought accomplished and with what consequences in local learning settings. However, my analytical approach to entrepreneurial becoming entails the understanding that any learning always entails a process of becoming (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In that way, the concept of becoming reflects the conceptual framework of a social practice perspective on learning, which views learning as a social and contextual accomplishment and as a process of participation, enculturation and “becoming”
(Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 15; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000; Wenger, 1998). Hence, learning always involves crafting identities and “becoming kinds of persons” in specific contexts (Lave, 1996b, p. 157). However, even though participation in enterprise education initiatives always entails processes of learning and becoming, it may not always be the learning and becoming intended by the teaching curriculum (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

1.2.1.2 Practice

With the term practice, I highlight the intent of this study, to gain insights into how activities unfold in interaction in local learning environments. Thereto, the term also refers to “social practice” and the theoretical lens I employ to investigate enterprise education activities. Following Wenger (1998, p. 47) this implies an understanding of “doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do”. Hence, practice is always embedded in meaning and context. As a consequence, learners are not treated as autonomous agents, but as participants in social practice in local contexts (Lave & Wenger, 1991). When I consider entrepreneurship education in terms of a “community of practice”, it becomes possible to question the actions and interactions that occur in classrooms, and the possibilities for participation and identification that the community affords (Morton, 2012). It makes it possible to move the level of analysis beyond the individual, towards the module, its pedagogical model, and the interactions, meanings, and patterns of common practices that it generates.

1.2.1.3 Enterprise education

In the literature, you find a general distinction between “entrepreneurship education” and “enterprise education”, defined by their different objectives and pedagogies. Entrepreneurship education concerns the development of entrepreneurial competencies specifically for use in the context of setting up a new business and for students becoming self-employed (Jones & Iredale, 2010; Jones & Penaluna, 2013). Enterprise education focuses on the development of enterprising persons in terms of mindset, abilities and attitudes, with the expectation that this will be useful in whatever career the student chooses (Jones & Iredale, 2010; Jones & Penaluna, 2013). The term “entrepreneurial education” has been used as a more neutral term embracing both perspectives (Higgins & Elliott, 2011). In Danish there is no widely
used discrimination between enterprise and entrepreneurship in education. Actually, all is called entrepreneurship education, even though it implies the much broader notion of enterprise. However, in this thesis, I focus exclusively on forms of education based on a broad conceptual model of entrepreneurship in education. Therefore I prefer to use the term “enterprise education”. When treating the phenomenon in general, I use the term “entrepreneurship in education”, which will include both forms of education.

In order to understand the empirical field of this study, I find it necessary to clarify some important connotations to the general term “education”. I understand education as a societal institution, which works to change people’s abilities and self-perceptions in ways appreciated by society (Kyrö, 2005; Levinson, 2000). Levinson describes the process of education as “humanity’s unique methods of acquiring, transmitting, and producing knowledge for interpreting and acting upon the world” (Levinson, 2000, pp. 2, italic as in original). Hence, education is a historically and contextually specific process, not only producing knowledge considered important and relevant, but also commissioned to transmit this knowledge and produce “educated persons” (ibid.). Visions of what constitutes the educated person and how this person is fostered have implications for the conceptualization of worthwhile curricula and effective pedagogies required to make students learn such curricula (Campbell, 2009). Hence, education and learning always occurs in a specific context with its own cultural and social dimensions (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Moreover, Scott (2011) highlights how students consider higher education institutions to be “re-inventive institutions” with the powers to help them cultivate new and future-oriented selves.

1.2.1.4 Entrepreneurial Competence

In contrast to notions of entrepreneurial personality traits, a conception of entrepreneurial competence is closely associated with a process of development and learning. Certainly, it is the objective of enterprise education to develop some level of entrepreneurial competencies in people. Yet, what exactly characterises entrepreneurial competency is debated, which is mirrored in the variety of different educational forms within the field of entrepreneurship and enterprise education. It is important to note that competence must be distinguished from qualification. While qualifications are certified through education and traditionally tied to disciplines and professions, competence is associated with
situations and contexts and is most often use and action oriented (Hermann, 2008). For an overall definition of entrepreneurial competencies, I follow Lackéus (2015, p. 12) who regards entrepreneurial competencies as “knowledge, skills and attitudes that affect the willingness and ability to perform the entrepreneurial job whatever that is defined to be”.

1.3 Method

Methodologically, I align this study with studies of education in other subject fields, which employ an ethnographic fieldwork method (Boaler & Greeno, 2000; Hasse, 2008; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Walford, 2008). This kind of research has produced knowledge about everyday lives and interaction patterns of learners and teachers in various educational institutions (Delamont, 2014). In general, the research method is descriptive in that it sets out to describe and interpret what is (Cohen & Manion, 1980, p. 70). It aims at recognising and describing prevailing practices, beliefs, points of view and attitudes in the field. The study is therefore qualitative and interpretive in nature. I am concerned with connecting enterprise education practice to its meaning and its sense to the people involved (Geertz, 1973). Hence, I am not concerned with “postulating forces and measuring them”, but with “noting expressions and inspecting them” (Geertz, 1983, p. 34). This also means that ethnography in education generally challenges research that begins with a priori meanings of what counts as good education and as a good student. Rather, it involves asking questions about the kinds of people produced in and by school (Carlone, 2012).

Ethnographic research may not immediately contribute to the delivery of entrepreneurship education in ways of indicating appropriate teaching techniques to use in particular situations. Instead, the nature of the contribution is closer to what Hammersley (1997) calls the “enlightenment model,” which involves a provision of information, which may bring attention to assumptions or contexts in which teachers (and researchers) view aspects of their situation. Consequently, I do not aim at a direct evaluation of what works or what does not work in enterprise education. I do not measure the degree to which participants learn or whether they in fact become entrepreneurial through the education treatment. Still, I do address the identification and production of the “entrepreneurial” and the becoming of
entrepreneurial people in local settings. However, I examine it in process rather than outcome. Hence, my research does not directly tell educators what to do or not to do, but instead provides resources that they can use to compare, reflect and make sense of their own situations and behaviours (Farnsworth & Solomon, 2013). In that way, I aim to provide empirical accounts from the micro-level to engage in the larger debate on the practice and delivery of enterprise education.

1.4 Structure and Content of the Dissertation

The dissertation contains a collection of research papers and the empirical analysis is found in two of the three essays. The dissertation is structured as follows: The remaining part of this introductory chapter shortly presents the three essays and their progress towards publication. This is followed by a chapter where I introduce important theoretical movements in enterprise education research and where I outline the theoretical perspectives of my research. The theory is also presented in the individual essays, but in this chapter I discuss in greater detail, the main theoretical concerns that motivated my research. Next, I present some of the methodological considerations and challenges, which are not included in the essays. This is followed by the conclusion, where I discuss the findings and contributions of the research. Table 1 provides an overview of the structure.

1.4.1 The three essays

The dissertation includes three essays. Each of them makes a separate contribution towards the general research question. Essay 1 and 2 are empirical research papers, which address the question of entrepreneurial becoming in education from a micro-level perspective based on data from two different cases of educational practice. Essay 1 revolves around a specific pedagogical initiative, which engages students in a process of reflexive entrepreneurial identity work and the resulting interpretations and practices. Essay 2 follows up that theme and addresses the questions of access to the learning opportunities represented by entrepreneurship as a transformative agent in education. Essay 3 treats entrepreneurship in wider terms as a belief system institutionalised in education as a hidden curriculum. Together these three research papers work to provide insights to how entrepreneurship education
contributes to the sociocultural production of the enterprising individual in general and the enterprising learner in particular e.g. an individual who is able to respond positively to entrepreneurship education and take advantage of the learning opportunities that it offers.

**Table 1. Dissertation structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Type of essay</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>Presents the overall topic of the thesis, motivations and aims, research questions, and it shortly introduces the three research papers which represent the analytical work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical context</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>Presents the theoretical positioning of the research in central themes and literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The study: Method and Conduct</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>Introduces the wider research design and methods for data collection and analysis. Moreover, it involves some personal reflections on the method and the process of data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion and Conclusion</td>
<td>_</td>
<td>This chapter summarises the conclusions of the three essays and presents a discussion of the implications of the overall conclusions for theory and practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Essay 1** Empirical
*Entrepreneurship Education as Identity Workspace. A Situated Perspective on Identity work in Practice*
*Research Question:* How is entrepreneurship education practiced as an identity workspace, when reflective identity work is turned into a pedagogical strategy for entrepreneurial learning?

**Essay 2** Empirical
*Meeting the Promise of Process. Dynamics of Participation in Enterprise Education*
*Research Question:* How does a process driven enterprise education construct learners?

**Essay 3** Conceptual
*The CULTure of Entrepreneurship Education*
*Research Question:* How are values and beliefs about entrepreneurship institutionalised in entrepreneurship education?
Essay 1: Entrepreneurship Education as Identity Workspace. A Situated Perspective on Identity Work in Practice

This essay presents an empirical analysis of how entrepreneurship education is practiced as an identity workspace, when reflective identity work is turned into a pedagogical strategy for entrepreneurial learning. The study builds on empirical data from a single case: an eleven week entrepreneurship module embedded in postgraduate business education at a Danish university. Through self-reflective excersises the module intended to strengthen the students’ awareness of their own means, abilities, and opportunities to act entrepreneurially. The module therefore represents an extreme case of entrepreneurship pedagogy explicitly aimed at facilitating processes of entrepreneurial identity construction outcomes. Hence, the learning setting was explicitly constituted as an identity work space directed towards what I suggest is an “imagined community” of entrepreneurship. With an outset in a classroom conflict between students and the teacher, I draw attention to how education as a social setting contextualises the identity work practice. Hence, I address entrepreneurial identity work from a level of analysis beyond the individual.

Findings suggest that classroom interactions evoked two distinct practice communities associated with incompatible identity positions and modes of legitimate participation. Therefore it posed conflicting demands on the student-learners. In the entrepreneurship module, a community of entrepreneurial practice was conjured by symbolic markers such as self-awareness, autonomy, authenticity, a willingness to take risks, and take responsibility for your life choices. However, legitimate participation in the immediate school community was characterized by a sense of reproduction, assimilation, and compliance. Consequently, the analysis shows how classroom practices still disconnected the worlds it was actually supposed to bridge. In that way, the study highlights the complexity of entrepreneurship education and it offers a critique of the functionalist understandings of identity work as a pedagogical instrument to achieve desired outcomes.

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5 This paper has been in two rounds of revise and resubmit in Academy of Management Learning and Education. This current version was presented at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting 2016 in Anaheim, US
Essay 2: Meeting the Promise of Process. Dynamics of Participation in Enterprise Education

While the analysis in Essay 1 evolves from an event and interactions in class in relation to this event, Essay 2 offers insights to broader patterns of student participation. It reports from a process-driven entrepreneurship module, where students are set to learn “through” enterprise. This entrepreneurship education paradigm seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice characteristic of classic teaching “about” entrepreneurship. It seeks to enhance the capacity of students to enact the knowledge they gain, and it challenges conventional learning environments in higher education and the traditional roles of teacher and student. In this qualitative field study, I examine how students manoeuvred to “get through” an entrepreneurial process to take advantage of the opportunities to learn, that it represents in the education setting. The study is therefore motivated by the research question: How does a process driven enterprise education construct learners?

Findings suggest that students and educators in class were involved in a constant meta-communication about “how” to learn. Drawing on situated learning theory and the concept of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991), I found that students pursued access to learning opportunities through a constant dynamic of participation, which involved three participatory stances: compliance, authenticity, and autonomy. However, these participatory stances were contradictory in nature and produced contradictory practices, which again nurtured student uncertainty.

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6 An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 3E Conference - ECSB Entrepreneurship Education Conference 2016, Leeds, UK
Essay 3: The CULTure of Entrepreneurship Education

The aim of the paper is to critically reflect on the role of entrepreneurship education in reproducing and legitimising a belief system. We claim that the introduction and general settlement i.e. institutionalization of entrepreneurship in education involves a promotion of beliefs and values which compares with forms of evangelising. Through numerous educational programmes, entrepreneurship is offered as a meaningful description of the world, while it simultaneously prescribes meaningful and desirable actions and ways of being in this world. Therefore, we ask the question: How are values and beliefs about entrepreneurship institutionalised in entrepreneurship education? Compared to the two empirical essays, this paper offer a more general and critical perspective on the role of educators as perpetrators of a specific discourse on enterprise. In that way, it may work as a “background” paper giving insight to some general drivers for and in enterprise education.

Since the field of entrepreneurship and enterprise education is characterised by ideological assumptions and normativity, we seek analytical distance by employing an alternative lens: “the cult.” We explore three elements characteristic of a cult; “deities”, “ritual” and the “promise of salvation.” In detail, we show how entrepreneurship education involves the identification and reverence of certain personalities and role models (deities). We suggest that entrepreneurship students are taught to replicate behaviours through the educator’s application of distinct pedagogies and practices (rituals). Finally, we consider how entrepreneurship education promotes a professional skillset for entrepreneurship, which is also considered a life skill necessary for survival and fulfilment in modern life (salvation). Altogether, this makes a totalising discourse – a discourse which presses for a single truth – on entrepreneurship as inherently good, which makes it difficult if not impossible to question. This discourse forms a hidden curriculum in entrepreneurship education. With inspiration from critical pedagogy, we call for reflexive practices in entrepreneurship education to counter this hidden curriculum and the uncritical reproduction of beliefs.

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7This paper is co-authored with Steffen Farny, Martin Hannibal, and Sally Jones and published by Taylor & Francis in Entrepreneurship & Regional Development v. 28 (7-8) on August 31, 2016, available online: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08985626.2016.1221228
2  THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Effective theorizing, Zahra argues (2007, p. 452) “centres on framing the debate, seeing things afresh and offering fresh insights into things we know and those we should know.” This chapter aims to draw out theoretical themes central to the scholarly debate on entrepreneurship in education and discuss important convictions in this research and practice. Moreover, I motivate the analytical position whereby this thesis frames its debates and aspires to offer “fresh insights” to research on entrepreneurship in education. The thematic review is not exhaustive, but acts to show how the research field conceptualises entrepreneurship in education not solely in terms of business creation, but also as an opportunity for learning and identity creation. Hence, this chapter presents movements in the literature, which strongly impact on the design and practice of educational programmes. Particularly, I point to a movement towards a widened conceptual model of entrepreneurship in education, pedagogical experimentation and the establishment of specific environments for entrepreneurial learning. Moreover, I point to a movement towards understanding identity as an important entity in enterprise development efforts, and finally how the process of entrepreneurship in itself is considered an opportunity for learning and transformation. These themes map out the theoretical context in which educators and student learners operate to accomplish entrepreneurial becoming in education.

2.1 Entrepreneurship in Education

Research into enterprise education is typically concerned with the development of curriculum and programme content and the identification of sets of knowledge, skills and values that support entrepreneurship as an activity (Garavan & O'Cinneide, 1994; Gorman, et al., 1997; Pittaway & Cope, 2007a). Hence, scholars no longer seriously discuss whether entrepreneurship can be taught or not, but rather how it may best be taught (Gorman, et al., 1997; Kuratko, 2005; Neck & Greene, 2011). Over the last decades, the number of published studies in entrepreneurship education research has grown.
consistently, and several review papers reflect this ongoing accumulation of knowledge (Blenker, et al., 2014; Gorman, et al., 1997; Hytti & O'Gorman, 2004; Mwasalwiba, 2010; Pittaway & Cope, 2007a). Some of these overviews seek to establish explicit theoretical foundations beneath reflexive teaching models, in order to legitimize the practice of education as a science (Fayolle & Gailly, 2008; Thrane, Blenker, Korsgaard, & Neergaard, 2016). However, they also stress a lack of consensus on what entrepreneurship or enterprise education actually is when implemented in practice (Béchard & Grégoire, 2005; Blenker, et al., 2011; Katz, 2003; Kuratko, 2005; Neck & Greene, 2011; Pittaway & Cope, 2007a). There has been little uniformity in the programmes offered (Gorman, et al., 1997), and what is supposed to be the learning inputs as well as outcomes (Mwasalwiba, 2010). Instead, there are widespread opinions as to the ontology of entrepreneurship as a teaching subject, different understandings of entrepreneurial learning processes and a range of various didactic and pedagogical approaches to stimulate this entrepreneurial learning in education (Fayolle & Gailly, 2008; Neck & Greene, 2011; Thrane, et al., 2016).

2.1.1 Conceptual models of entrepreneurship in education

With no unifying theory of entrepreneurship, there are different views on what entrepreneurship in education actually means and how it can and should be conducted and what the desired learning outcomes are. In general, the literature falls into two categories supported by different definitions of entrepreneurship as a construct in education. The definition can be “narrow” and strictly related to a conceptualisation of entrepreneurship as business start-up; or it can be “broad” related to a conceptualisation of enterprise as a group of competencies with an important all-round use (Ball, 1989, p. 7; Lackéus, 2015). Mwasalwiba (2010, p. 20) identifies a shift from a “start-up view” towards an “attitude-changing perspective”. This distinction is also reflected in the discrimination between “entrepreneurship education” and “enterprise education”. Entrepreneurship education concerns the development of entrepreneurial competencies specifically for use in the context of setting up a new business and for students becoming self-employed (Jones & Iredale, 2010; Jones & Penaluna, 2013). Business creation is regarded as the learning objective and the student is in the process of becoming an entrepreneur. Alternatively, enterprise education focuses on the development of enterprising persons in terms of abilities and attitudes, with the expectation that this will be useful in whatever career the
student chooses (Jones & Iredale, 2010; Jones & Penaluna, 2013). Yet, this widened conceptualization also makes the desired outcomes and processes of education more ambiguous and difficult to communicate and evaluate, since the educational target primarily is the becoming of entrepreneurial individuals rather than the business outcome of their activities.

2.2 The Entrepreneurial Individual in Education

In enterprise education, the “becoming” of the enterprising individual is an anticipated outcome. Heinonen and Poikijoki (2006, p. 81) explicitly define entrepreneurship education as “activities aimed at developing enterprising or entrepreneurial people and increasing their knowledge and understanding about entrepreneurship and enterprise”. However, even though we may all use the term seemingly in agreement, there is no stable discourse on what exactly defines “enterprising” or “entrepreneurial”, much less with regards to how this is taught and learnt effectively (Fayolle, 2013; Fayolle & Gailly, 2008; Katz, 2003; Kuratko, 2005; Neck & Greene, 2011; Pittaway & Cope, 2007a; Scott, Penaluna, Thompson, & McCracken, 2016). Therefore, what exactly characterises the enterprising individual in education is something constantly negotiated and discussed closely related to course content and design.

2.2.1 The Business Start-up Entrepreneur

Traditionally, entrepreneurship was taught in business schools and concerned with tools for minimizing risk when starting up new businesses (Delmar & Shane, 2003). An early study of the beliefs and experiences of 15 expert university entrepreneurship educators showed two main objectives of entrepreneurship in education. One was to increase students’ awareness and understanding of the process involved in initiating and managing a new business. The other was to increase awareness of small business ownership as a serious career option (Hills, 1988). Hence, entrepreneurship was closely associated with business venturing activities and the entrepreneur was a person who starts and manages a business. In this view, education must prepare students to undertake such activities in the near future (Jones, Penaluna, Matlay, & Penaluna, 2013). What is regarded as central to the process of business
venturing is the willingness to take calculated risks, the ability to put together an effective team, creativity to acquire needed resources, building a solid business plan and to recognize opportunity (Kurakto & Hodgetts 2004, p.30; cited in Kuratko, 2005, p. 578). Since education is meant to encourage students to start their own companies, learning is focused on the theory to help them predict the future and what they ought to do to succeed (Fiet, 2001). The business plan is a central tool serving this purpose (Delmar & Shane, 2003). Hence, students are taught how to make a business plan, do market analyses and set important milestones in the process of unfolding and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities. However, the literature presents a growing critique of teaching entrepreneurship with an outset in the business plan (Blenker, et al., 2011; Honig, 2004; Jones & Penaluna, 2013; Neck & Greene, 2011). First of all, planning can never be complete since it is impossible to account for all future contingencies (Honig, 2004), and much less if you are a student with limited experience (Jones & Penaluna, 2013). Secondly, scholars argue that entrepreneurship students may not want to start a business at all (ibid.). Therefore, when the learning outcomes are imagined more in terms of personal development rather than business development, the student business plan does not contribute any value (Blenker, et al., 2011; Jones, et al., 2013). This critique reflects alternative definitions of entrepreneurship and a growing recognition that the focus on new business creation represents a too narrow view of what entrepreneurship is and what entrepreneurship education has the potential to offer students and society.

2.2.2 From Entrepreneur to Entrepreneurial

In entrepreneurship research, several scholars point out, that our attention to enterprising behaviour should not necessarily be restricted to the economic sphere, since that may conceal whatever else entrepreneurship is and does (Calás, Smircich, & Bourne, 2009; Chia, 1996; Steyaert & Katz, 2004). Recent years have seen a movement in the literature, which strives to liberate the entrepreneurship concept from its economic and political affiliation. This literature emphasises the importance of “reclaiming” (Steyaert & Katz, 2004), “re-writing” (Hjorth, 2003), (de)mobilizing (Bill, Bjerke, & Johansson, 2010), and “unmasking” (Jones & Spicer, 2009) entrepreneurship in order to free the concept from a specific discourse on enterprise, which in fact distorts the notion of entrepreneurship itself (Johannisson, 2010). Hence there is more to entrepreneurship than the “heroic figurehead of
capitalism” (Williams & Nadin, 2013). It is presented as a method of human problem solving (Sarasvathy & Venkataraman, 2011) and as a natural expression of a generic human capability (Johannisson, 2010, 2016). Accordingly, people’s enterprising behaviour is considered more generally in terms of change oriented activities transcending the business sphere and encompassing society at large (Calás, et al., 2009; Hjorth, Johannisson, & Steyaert, 2003; Steyaert & Katz, 2004). However, it is also considered as a “sublime” expression of human activity (Jones & Spicer, 2009) and in terms of skills that when exercised make human beings live lives at their best (Spinosa, Flores, & Dreyfus, 1997). This view is also reflected within the field of enterprise education research as Gibb (2002) stresses that traditional educational focus on business and new venture management is inadequate as a response to societal needs. Instead, he highlights the importance of placing entrepreneurship in a much wider context than that of business, and that it is necessary to focus on the “nature of enterprise in individuals” and how enterprising behaviour can be encouraged in a variety of circumstances (Gibb, 2002, p. 243). The tool based education thus gives way for an education focused on fostering enterprising behaviours, competencies, and identities. In this view, entrepreneurship education should develop entrepreneurial persons rather than building stocks of knowledge (Neck & Greene, 2011).

Blenker et al. (2011) suggest that education should direct attention to what comes “before” the business creation phase and concentrate on individual platforms for enterprising behaviour. Accordingly, students are not specifically trained to become entrepreneurs, but more generally to become “entrepreneurial” (Lackéus, 2015). In Finnish education, Komulainen et al. (2011) identifies a discourse on “internal” entrepreneurship directed towards educating enterprising mentalities. Students are encouraged to make entrepreneurship a method and approach to life itself, as opposed to a discourse on “external” entrepreneurship related to the development of skills for starting a business.

There are a range of values, abilities and characteristics inherent to this education project. In fact, it is the purpose of education to develop entrepreneurial values, abilities and characteristics in students, and advocates see transformative potential in this form of education, that it may positively change the attitudes and self-conceptions of the individual (Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2012; Holmgren & From, 2005). Hence, in education there is movement towards defining entrepreneurship in terms of the individual competence, yet it is a decontextualized competence since its application is not related to a specific sphere. Therefore, scholars also suggest that entrepreneurship education ought to build on
wider conceptualizations of entrepreneurship such as “opportunity creation” (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Thrane, et al., 2016) or “value creation” (Bruyat & Julien, 2001; Lackéus, 2015), rather than business creation. Besides, entrepreneurship should not only be taught to those students who are “naturally inclined” to business, but to everyone “as a necessary and useful skill and an important way of reasoning about the world” (Sarasvathy & Venkataraman, 2011, p. 113). This broader formulation of entrepreneurship in education thus highlights an entrepreneurial potential in all people and it seeks to make education accessible to a wider range of students, as a “process of becoming entrepreneurial”.

2.2.3 Defining “Entrepreneurial” in Education

As seen above, it is possible to detect a growing consensus that entrepreneurial competency is important, not only for business venturing activities, but as a general human capacity for problem solving and living. However, what is actually the content of this entrepreneurial skill-set that education should foster? As Mitchelmore and Rowley (2010, p. 96) argue it may be easy to recognise outstanding and publically visible figures such as Bill Gates and Steve Jobs as entrepreneurs. Yet, it is more difficult to identify the characteristics that make us identify them as entrepreneurs. Moreover, even though entrepreneurship is often associated with the act of starting a new business or managing a small business, not all owner managers can be regarded as entrepreneurs and not all small businesses are entrepreneurial (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010). Schumpeter (2008 [1934]) characterised entrepreneurs as those people whose function it is to innovate the economic system. Entrepreneurs break equilibrium and failing routines. They generate “creative destruction” which involves the simultaneous destruction of traditional ways in favour of novelty as the consequences of radical innovation. In this perspective, the entrepreneur is a change agent. Faced with the pressure to adapt, entrepreneurs turn away from institutions such as routines, norms and traditions to bring about something new. Hence, the entrepreneur takes a reflexive stance towards established practices (Beckert, 1999) and envisions alternative ways of doing things. This “paradigm-shifting mentality” (Chia, 1996), is characterised as an entrepreneurial hallmark. Yet, Schumpeter did not regard the entrepreneur in terms of a profession or a lasting condition, but rather as the social practice of carrying out new combinations (Schumpeter 2008 [1938]), p. 78). However, this practice was “the privilege of a type of people, who are much less numerous than all those, who have the “objective” possibility doing it (Schumpeter 2008 [1938]), p.
Hence, Schumpeter defined the entrepreneur in terms of rarity and in terms of the ability and power to act. Along with these notions of uniqueness, nonconformity and individuality, he also grants the entrepreneur a heroic imagery.

Possible explanations of enterprising behaviour is explored in what is known as the “trait approach”, where entrepreneurs are considered to be predisposed to make certain choices over others due to some innate social psychological traits, which set them apart from non-entrepreneurs (Brockhaus Sr, 1980; Johnson, 1990; McClelland, 1961). Hence, enterprising behaviour is attributed to a particular personality structure. This strand of research has met critique for constituting entrepreneurs as an exclusive “species” (Gartner, 1988; Sarasvathy, 2004), and for not being able to account for the variations among entrepreneurs (Gartner, 2010) and for obscuring a reality of context and circumstance (Dodd & Anderson, 2007). However, it is still common to assume that entrepreneurs are high above average in “their willingness to take risks, their desire to excel, their personal optimism, their tolerance for ambiguity, and in their powerful preference for shaping their own destiny” (Baron, 1998, p. 276).

Entrepreneurs seem to have a high tolerance for ambiguity and changing situations in the environment (Taatila, 2010). They are able to handle decision-making under conditions of uncertainty (Sarasvathy, 2008), and they are portrayed as “jacks-of-all-trades” who are flexible and competent enough in several fields of activities (Taatila, 2010). Hence, to be enterprising refers to some psychological characteristics that we associate with enterprising behaviour (Caird, 1990). For example, opportunity seeking, initiative and risk taking behaviours, along with self-awareness, self-confidence, perseverance, motivation and a commitment to achieve (Gibb, 1993, p. 14). Most importantly, Gibb suggests that the entrepreneurial individual shows the ability to cope and enjoy conditions of uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (Gibb, 1993, 2002). Aherton (2004) adds notions of responsibility and innovation to the definition of the personal dispositions characterized as “enterprising.” Kirby (2007a, p. 22) insists that enterprising individuals are “equipped with a set of personal attitudes and competencies that enable them to see opportunities and bring them to fruition”.

This shift away from personality traits as the explanation of enterprising behaviour towards an understanding of behaviour supported by individual attitudes and competencies brings enterprise education to the fore as an institution where this can be taught and learnt. Hence, it is possible to develop incentives for enterprising behaviour in students and “equip” them with these attitudes and
competencies, because, in contrast to personality traits, competencies are learnable (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010). Additionally, scholars argue that even though enterprising behaviour may find its clearest expression among risk-taking business owner-managers, it can be found among other people as well and shown in all aspects of working and non-working life (Aherton, 2004; Caird, 1990). Hence, “entrepreneuring” is not exclusively about individuals equipped with specific personality traits, who bring radical innovations to the market. Rather, it is “an attitude to life where change is considered to be a natural state” (Johannisson, 2016, pp. 404, 406). Consequently, it is the job of entrepreneurship in education to invigorate this “attitude to life”. Chia (1996) argues that education should cultivate “entrepreneurial imagination.” Students should develop an ability to see beyond the obvious and re-think their world-views and themselves in this process (Chia, 1996). In this view, entrepreneurship is associated with a certain style of thinking and the construction and deconstruction of imaginative spaces that may offer themselves to entrepreneurial interventions (Spinosa, et al., 1997).

The characteristics of the entrepreneurial individual, such as attitudes, values, competence and entrepreneurial imagination often come together under the term “mindset” (Henry, 2013; Robinson, et al., 2016). Scholars argue that education ought to equip students with an “entrepreneurial mindset”, where the student “adopts an entrepreneurial and creative approach to the world of work either in an employee or employer role” (Hynes & Richardson, 2007, p. 112). In this view, enterprise education is about inducing a certain way of being in the world. A generic “value-creating entrepreneurial meta-competence” which can be put to use in “an everyday practice” (Blenker, et al., 2011). Gibb argues that those sets of behaviours, attributes and skills will allow individuals and groups to create change and innovation and cope with, and even enjoy higher levels of uncertainty and complexity in all aspects of their life. Further, he points to the relevance of such skills as a general preparation of all students for a future life-world (2005, p. 45). Therefore, there are many customers for enterprise education. Consequently, Gibb argues that it is necessary for education to acknowledge that complexities and uncertainties necessitate an entrepreneurial response in many different aspects of life. Hence enterprising behaviours are actually “open to all” (Gibb 2002, p. 243). Therefore, Gibb calls for a

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9 As compared to “cognitive competencies” i.e. primarily intellectual capacity based competencies, many of the competencies labelled as entrepreneurial are similar to what researchers define as “non-cognitive factors” such as perseverance, self-efficacy, learning skills and social skills (Lackéus, 2015).
confrontation with the heroic imagery inherent to the Schumpetarian entrepreneur. Even so, entrepreneurship in education is still included in a normative discourse as something inherently good (Bill et al., 2010) and it still attributes virtue to the enterprising individual. For example, when Fayolle and Gailly (2008, p. 575) posit that “[e]ntrepreneurship enables individuals to develop their talents and creativity to achieve their dreams, to acquire more independence and a certain feeling of freedom”. Or when Kirby (2007, p. 21) associates entrepreneurship in education with the development of graduates, who can be “innovative and take responsibility for their own destinies”. In that way, entrepreneurship still entails a range of hopes and values attributed to its learning and practice, and the spread of educational initiatives make them an opportunity for all. Hence, entrepreneurship in education is increasingly associated with experiential and existential lifelong learning practices (Robinson, et al., 2016). In the widened conceptual model of entrepreneurship, the range of practices and skills, which may be recognized as entrepreneurial, has broadened considerably and it turns the enterprising individual into an abstract category and a symbol of value, beliefs and ideologies. Hence, the entrepreneur has become a general role model for subjectivity (Marttila, 2013).

2.3 Theorising Entrepreneurial identity in Education

A recent strand of literature connects entrepreneurial competence development in education to a concept of identity formation and identity work. Higher education should not alone fill the student’s “tool bag of skills” for subsequent employment, but encourage “entrepreneurial identity” as the key to the creation of entrepreneurial values (Nabi, Holden, & Walmsley, 2010, p. 549). There is a dawning attention to identity and its importance when trying to foster and constitute motivation for enterprising behaviour in students (Farmer, Yao, & McIntyre, 2011; Harmeling, 2011). This is reflected as a concern with the construction of pedagogical designs that can actively facilitate students’ entrepreneurial identity constructions and help students recognize themselves as entrepreneurial actors (Blenker, et al., 2011; Donnellon, et al., 2014; Harmeling, 2011; Hytti & Heinonen, 2013; Smith & Woodworth, 2012). Scholars argue that enterprise education gives students a chance to “re-interpret themselves” (Robinson, et al., 2016). Consequently, notions of identity construction have become integral to a definition of entrepreneurial competence development. The entrepreneur is defined as
someone you become through a process of identity work (Thrane, et al., 2016) and education is conceived as an “identity workspace” where “individuals construct, revise, and reconstruct their narrative identities” (Harmeling, 2011, p. 741). Hence, the educational institution should provide a “holding environment for identity work” (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010) and provide students with opportunities to not only discover and make sense of who they are, but also who they can become (Harmeling, 2011, p. 747).

Entrepreneurial identity studies represent an alternative lens in the study of the individual element of entrepreneurship privileging social construction, embeddedness and fluidity (Lewis, 2016). It also offers an alternative to the notion of the entrepreneurial mindset that is to be developed in education. While the concept of mindset is presented in somewhat static terms in the form of (achieved) entrepreneurial values and attributes (Krueger, 2007), the conceptualization of identity entails a sense of process. Rather than a state of being, the entrepreneur is described in terms of a becoming (Anderson, 2005) and entrepreneurship is considered as a process of identity construction (Ireland & Webb, 2007, p. 916). In that way, the identity construct integrates conceptions of entrepreneurship as process, learning and change.

2.3.1 Entrepreneurship as a process of change

In the wake of the traits studies, entrepreneurship research has generally turned towards a notion of process (Gartner, 1988; Moroz & Hindle, 2012). Entrepreneurship infers a process of change initiated by an act of human volition (Bygrave & Hofer, 1991), a process of becoming rather than a state of being (Bygrave, 1989), a process of opportunity discovery and exploitation (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), it is presented as a “journey” (McMullen & Dimov, 2013), an effectual process (Sarasvathy, 2008) and even conceptualised in the active as “entrepreneuring” (Johannisson, 2010; Steyaert, 2007). Entrepreneurship disrupts established ways of doing things and alters patterns of behaviour (Schumpeter, 2008 [1934]; Smilor, 1997). It involves a process of learning (Cope, 2005) and it turns the individual into an entrepreneur (Rae, 2005; Rae & Carswell, 2001). Bruyat and Julien (2001, p. 173) hold that entrepreneurship can be regarded as a process of change, emergence and creation of new value. At the same time it is also a process of change and creation for the individual entrepreneur. The
entrepreneurial process is conceived in terms of identity construction (Down, 2006) and Anderson (2005, p. 592) suggests that entrepreneurship is “the performance of the process of becoming”. He highlights how the entrepreneurial process involves an ongoing and joint production of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur. An argument which is also found in the literature on entrepreneurial learning, which associates the entrepreneurial process with personal learning experiences and the development of individual competencies and self-understandings (Cope, 2005; Rae, 2005; Rae & Carswell, 2001). Hence, entrepreneurship is conceived as a process of transformation not only in terms of the environment, but also in terms of the individual (Blenker, et al., 2011; Cope, 2005; Downing, 2005).

2.3.2 Entrepreneurial identity work

It is now broadly recognized that identities cannot be conceived as a stable essence in the individual. Research, adhering to a social constructionist tradition, points to a constructed, relational, and contextual nature of identity, as well as the central role of discourse and narrativity in its construction (Anderson & Warren, 2011; Down & Giazitzoglou, 2015; Watson, 2009). Individuals are constantly engaged in processes of “identity work”, which refers to the ongoing activities that individuals undertake to form, repair, maintain, or revise their identities (Ibarra, 2007; Snow & Anderson, 1987; Svenningson & Alvesson, 2003). The term identity work directs attention to identity’s multiplicity and dynamism as well as people’s strategies to create coherence and cope with multiple conflicting and ambiguous identities in various situations (Ibarra, 1999; Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010). In other words identity work involves a continuous and conscious struggle to respond to the question “who am I?” (Svenningson & Alvesson, 2003). Scholars emphasise how this work is relational and dialogic (Beech, 2008). Hence, identity is not something a person “has” or accomplishes alone through self-focused practice. The identity construction process entails a permanent dialectic between the individual and the sociocultural structure as individuals draw on various sociocultural resources to position themselves and others as certain types of persons (Burke & Stets, 2009; Holland, et al., 1998; Ybema et al., 2009). Therefore, a focus on identity involves sensitivity towards individual agency as well as the framework constituting and/or structuring that agency. Identity is thus both a matter of being subject to and take positions within discourses, as well as an active process of discursive work in relation to others.
(Ybema, et al., 2009). It involves processes of “positioning” by others as well as “self-authoring” (Holland, et al., 1998).

As seen above, engaging in an entrepreneurial process is tightly connected to identity formation processes. Moreover, research on entrepreneurial identities suggests that enterprising behaviour involves or perhaps even requires identity work and changes to the individual’s self-understandings (Hoang & Gimeno, 2010; Jain, George, & Maltarich, 2009; Middleton, 2013). In an educational perspective it is therefore interesting how entrepreneurial learning environments may facilitate such entrepreneurial identity work. Following Donnellon et al., (2014) it is inevitable that students will to some extent take on a new identity when engaging in venture creation processes. Therefore, education ought to involve reflection on this process. Likewise, Thrane et al. (2016, p. 913) argue that the development of entrepreneurial identity and opportunity creation are two sides of the same process. Therefore they emphasise that “doing one without the other, will fail to realize the potential of learning through engaging and experiencing entrepreneurship. In Robinson et al.’s study a reinterpretation of student identity stands as “the ultimate aim of entrepreneurship teaching” (Robinson, et al., 2016, p. 574). In that way, identity work stands out as an actual activity to be supported in the education process. These rationales turn identity into a pedagogical tool, a target for educational interventions and a learning objective. Despite the popularity of the identity concept in entrepreneurship research, theoretical understandings of how identities are formed in enterprise education and the consequences of turning identity theories into pedagogical strategies are still unknown territory and only few empirical studies today address this issue.

2.3.2.1 Identity work: Recognizing Yourself in “The Entrepreneur”

Entrepreneurial identity relates to the self-conceptions of individuals acting as entrepreneurs. It is a contested concept with many definitions, but generally entrepreneurial identity is defined as self-definition related mainly to the professional role of the entrepreneur i.e. a founder of a new company (Donnellon, et al., 2014; Vesala, Peura, & McElwee, 2007). Entrepreneurship research suggests that becoming an entrepreneur involves construction of an “entrepreneurial identity” and studies show an interest in how entrepreneurial identities develop and how they drive entrepreneurial activities (e.g.
One explanation of entrepreneurial identity development relates to a process of social role internalisation (Hoang & Gimeno, 2010; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). In the education field, studies in this vein stress the meaning of entrepreneurial role-models (Farmer, et al., 2011). Research emphasise how individuals through education may come to identify with entrepreneurs as a social category and over time internalise behaviours and meanings associated with that category in ways that become self-defining (Hoang & Gimeno, 2010; Smith & Woodworth, 2012). The literature thus works with a distinction between social role and self-identity, where a role-identity is related to established ideas and rules of conduct, while self-identity refers to interpretations of the individual actor’s self (Ibarra, 1999).

When an identity as entrepreneur is integrated and becomes central to the self-concept, the role can be performed with a sense of authenticity (Ibarra, 1999) and it motivates individuals to act in ways that are consistent with it and again will confirm it. Farmer et al. (2011, p. 246) found that the identity aspiration of students was significantly associated with the extent to which the individual’s self-description fitted his or her perceptions of the entrepreneurial role. Hence, if it is possible for a student to imagine him or herself as a future entrepreneur, then it is also more likely that this person will take to entrepreneurial activities (Farmer, et al., 2011). Therefore they argue that when trying to encourage entrepreneurship in education, it is not only important to teach the skills required to found new businesses.

Identity research in general is vast and varied to such an extent that some scholars express their doubts about the explanatory power of the term (cf. Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Hall, 2000). For reviews of the concept identity, see for example: Burke & Stets, 2009; Cerulo, 1997; Côté & Levine, 2002; Gleason, 1983; Jenkins, 2004. Identity research in entrepreneurship can be divided in two streams informed by different academic disciplines. In the first stream, studies employ understandings deriving primarily from social-psychology, which examines identity in terms of cognitive structures and internalised meanings (Hoang & Gimeno, 2010; Murnieks, Mosakowski, & Cardon, 2012). In the other strand of literature, you find studies which adhere to a social constructionist tradition and regard identity primarily in terms of its relational, dialogic, and contextual nature (e.g. Down & Giazitzoglou, 2015; Watson, 2009). Both streams of literature influence how the becoming of entrepreneurial individuals is perceived and stimulated in education contexts.

For example, Murnieks et al. (2012, p. 7) define entrepreneurial identity as “cognitive schemas of interpretations and behavioural prescriptions that allow individuals to understand what it means to be an entrepreneur”. Hoang and Gimeno propose that organizational founding always involves a role transition where individuals must disengage from a current role and undertake a new social role as founder. In fact, they argue that the founding process is conditioned on the development of a “founder role identity” defined as the individual’s thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about oneself in the founder role (Hoang & Gimeno, 2010, p. 42).

Entrepreneurial identity is therefore also used to explain what triggers passion in the entrepreneur (Cardon, Wincent, Singh, & Drnovsek, 2009; Murnieks, et al., 2012).
businesses. It is equally important to cultivate a desire in individuals to become entrepreneurs by making them consider whether their conception of self is in any way congruent with an entrepreneurial role identity.

In traditional entrepreneurship education, the transition into entrepreneurship is facilitated by teaching entrepreneurial skills or instruments when starting a business. By introducing knowledge that belongs to an entrepreneurship community and business practice, education can facilitate the adaptation and perhaps internalization of a self-understanding as entrepreneur (Donnellon, et al., 2014). Supposedly, students are motivated for starting a business and therefore already consider entrepreneur to be a desired identity. Hence education is a way of bridging a current identity with a desired identity (Smith & Woodworth, 2012). Entrepreneurship education as an identity workspace thus involves reflection and activities of exploring and constructing a sense of belonging to a defined group of entrepreneurs. As students start acting as entrepreneurs and learn the tools to operate in entrepreneurial practice, they will start creating new entrepreneurial identities for themselves (Donnellon, et al., 2014; Harmeling, 2011). In this perspective, identity work is viewed in terms of a strategy for tailoring role identities to fit a sense of self (Ibarra, 1999; Middleton, 2013). In other words, students are supposed to create congruence between themselves and an external role model entrepreneur and internalize this role and the values and behaviours associated with to this role. Hytti and Heinonen (2013) found that not all students in an entrepreneurship class identified with a heroic image of the entrepreneur, but instead, preferred alternative forms of alignment with entrepreneurship. In that way, they point to the possibility of broadening conceptualizations of the entrepreneur role and thus make identification an opportunity for a wider range of people. This is in accord with the sensed need to liberate entrepreneurship from its heroic and economic connotations in the widened conceptualization of entrepreneurship in education (Gibb, 2002).

### 2.3.2.2 Identity work: discovering “an entrepreneur” in you

In newer forms of entrepreneurship education it is not the intention to turn students into entrepreneurs by making them adapt to an entrepreneur role. Students are required to look into themselves and provide a self-narrative that can make a basis for opportunity creation and entrepreneurial action
When the teaching model rests on a widened conceptual model of entrepreneurship in education, it becomes problematic to conceive of identity work in terms of establishing a fit between the self and entrepreneurs acting as venture founders. In this model for education, entrepreneurship is understood as a capability, which transcends situations and contexts. Therefore it allows students to identify for themselves their own unique entrepreneurship and what characterises their own entrepreneurial selves. Instead of identification with an entrepreneurial profession community of entrepreneurs, students are to discover themselves as opportunity and value creators through reflexive identity work (Blenker, et al., 2011; Harmeling, 2011). Hence, rather than business creation, entrepreneurship as identity work space is about a synchronised opportunity and self-creation (Thrane, et al., 2016) and identity work towards greater self-awareness (Robinson, et al., 2016). Actually, Blenker et al. (2011) highlight the capacity to imagine other ways of being as a core competence to learn, in order to meet the challenges and demands of constant flexibility in a turbulent world. Therefore, education ought to convey images of different identities to students and assist identity transformations. Blenker et al. (2011) suggest that this can be done through increasing students’ sensitivities towards their own means, their own everyday practices and by helping them imagine new identities through reflective and imaginative learning activities (Blenker et al. 2011). This conception of identity work in entrepreneurship education comes with the conceptualization of entrepreneurship as an individual-opportunity nexus (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000) and with influence of effectuation theory (Sarasvathy, 2001, 2008). In effectuation theory self-assessment and identity construction constitutes the outset for entrepreneurial action, since the first steps in the effectual process of entrepreneurship is to be conscious of one’s available means through reflecting on the questions: “who am I?”, “what can I do?” and “who do I know?” (Sarasvathy, 2008). In that respect, identity is presented as a stable yet changeable platform, which guides entrepreneurs in situations where the outcome of an action is unknown. In entrepreneurship education, bringing students to consciousness of their selves emerges as a condition for opportunity creation and thus as a first critical step in their entrepreneurial becoming (Blenker, et al., 2012). Consequently, the alignment with a social category of professional entrepreneurs is weakened. Instead, entrepreneurship education conceives of students as an asset of unused resources, which the students may discover through his or her entrepreneurial activities in education (Thrane, et al., 2016). Moreover, entrepreneurship in education...
should support student capacity for autonomous action in terms of an inner endorsement of one’s actions and the sense that one’s actions emanate from oneself and are one’s own (van Gelderen, 2010).

This sense of autonomy is closely related to self-awareness e.g. knowing one’s dreams and aims (van Gelderen, 2010). In that way, focus is on the importance of self-reflection and the development of self-knowledge amongst students. This means that learning should be a “distinct learner-centred journey of exploration and self-discovery of “who am I?” and “what do I want to achieve?” (Draycott & Rae, 2011, p. 140). In that way, the work undertaken in and through education should be understood as contributing to the realization of personal goals, interests and values (van Gelderen, 2010). As Berglund notes, this form of entrepreneurship education emphasizes “discovering one’s personal passions and dreams, taking initiative, daring to try new things, learning to fail and to never give up” (Berglund, 2013, p. 727). Hence, students may discover their own potentials and expertise through enterprise. Hence, instead of becoming entrepreneurs, students are to become a better and authentic fulfilled version of themselves through enterprise (Berglund, 2013).
2.4 Entrepreneurial learning in Education

The previous sections in this chapter, showed how theories on entrepreneurship in education constitute images of the enterprising individual as a figure equipped with competencies of value to all in modern societies. Certainly, enterprise education scholars are engaged in the discussion of how education may provide learning settings that can foster this competency, reinforce enterprising behaviours, and provide those identity workspaces for personal development and transformation. Hence, the literature asserts a need to create entrepreneurship specific frameworks for teaching and learning (Hannon, 2005; Pittaway & Cope, 2007b). Yet, how to actually construct such effective entrepreneurial learning environments is a matter of debate. The demand for higher education institutions to develop in students the attributes and behaviours of enterprising persons, seriously challenges the establishment, since entrepreneurial competencies are considered to be more “holistic and psychologically oriented than traditional subject-matter skills” (Taatila, 2010, p. 48). Moreover, the nature of entrepreneurial learning is multiplex in ways that elude simple pedagogy (Gorman, et al., 1997). Because how do teachers design educational frameworks that “encourages learning by doing, exchange, experiment, positive mistake-making, calculated risk-taking, creative problem-solving and interaction with the outside world”? (Jones & Iredale, 2010, p. 12). Kyrö (2008) highlights how the concept of entrepreneurship brings its specifics of creativity, opportunity creation, and proactive action in complexity into education. Due to this complexity, entrepreneurship in education is a teaching domain distinct and distanced from mainstream management education, and it requires an educational “mind-shift”, pedagogical innovation and experimentation (Chia, 1996; Kirby, 2007a; Mueller & Anderson, 2014; Rae, 2010; Robinson, et al., 2016).

Scholars argue that education should mimic the entrepreneurial process (Draycott & Rae, 2011; Gibb, 1993) and simulate entrepreneurial learning environments (Pittaway & Cope, 2007b). In turn, it is trusted that engaging in entrepreneurial activities or mimicking entrepreneurs may provide experiences and learning that can be transferred and put to use in other contexts. In that way, the conceptualization of entrepreneurship in education changes from being linked directly to business start-up activities into being a learning opportunity that may result in various learning outcomes that cannot be predefined. This section reviews some central contributions to this debate on how to educate within the widened conceptual model for entrepreneurship in education.
2.4.1 Enterprise as an alternative discourse on education and learning

Much of the scholarly debate on entrepreneurship in education distinguishes between a “traditional” and a specific “entrepreneurial” way of teaching and learning. Scholars argue that enterprising behaviour cannot be taught in traditional ways (Löbler, 2006; Mueller & Anderson, 2014) and entrepreneurship teaching is sometimes regarded to be in direct contrast to what is considered “academic learning” (Robinson & Blenker, 2014, p. 10). Teaching entrepreneurship in conventional academic institutions involves an inherent opposition between on the one hand the academic notion of intellect and objectivity, and on the other hand the entrepreneurial process as an embodied activity driven by personal interest, passion and desire (Blenker, et al., 2012; Johannisson, 2016). In fact, scholars regularly present the school system as detrimental to the development of enterprising skills (Kirby, 2004; Kirketerp, 2012; Löbler, 2006). Therefore, they also assert the need to create entrepreneurship specific frameworks for teaching and learning (Hannon, 2005; Löbler, 2006; Pittaway & Cope, 2007b). Hence, following Lackéus (2015, p. 14) “standardized, content focused, passive and single-subject based curriculum characteristic of traditional education, is contrasted with an individualized, active, process-based, project centric, collaborative, experiential and multidisciplinary approach in entrepreneurial education.” Entrepreneurial teaching is described as dialogic as opposed to traditional monologic education (Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2012). Entrepreneurship students are autonomous and active (van Gelderen, 2010), as opposed to the passive students found in conventional education (Robinson & Blenker, 2014). In that way, entrepreneurship in education not only makes the educational institutions more open and cooperative, and adapted to reality (Etzkowitz, Webster, Gebhardt, & Terra, 2000), it also liberates individuals from the negative impact of traditional teaching techniques (Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2012). Traditional teaching in higher education defines the knowledge that students are supposed to gain in the curriculum and the students are tested in their knowledge of this curriculum. This means that students learn and participate in education in order to do an exam. Research in enterprise education criticises this mechanical view of knowledge, since it hinders activities which advances creativity and development (Andersen & Bager, 2012). Predefined competence measures impede students in the process of exploring and exploiting their own potential. As a contrast, enterprise education ought to reject predefined goals with regards to the learning outcomes of students (Löbler, 2006) and celebrate their autonomy and their personal drives (Blenker, et
al., 2012; van Gelderen, 2010). Alternatively, entrepreneurship in education makes an outset in the student’s inner motivation and the student’s own process of opportunity creation (Blenker, et al., 2012; Kyrö, 2005; Thrane, et al., 2016). Therefore, this form of education it is also badly aligned with very specified forms of assessment and competency goals (Pittaway & Edwards, 2012). Consequently, entrepreneurship represents an alternative or even counter discourse to conventional forms of teaching in higher education as an opportunity to recapture and remedy some important elements lost in mainstream educational forms. Hence, it is embedded in a general debate on the improvement of education and its adaptation to changed realities and futures.

2.4.2 Entrepreneurship as a learning opportunity

The literature shows that the suggested entrepreneurial learning methods and forms vary considerably in higher education. It is common to organize education through a distinction between teaching and learning “about”, “for” or “through/in” entrepreneurship where the pedagogical approaches and goals vary (Hannon, 2005; Kirby, 2007a; Scott, et al., 1998). Teaching “about” entrepreneurship helps raising an awareness of entrepreneurship and introduces students to entrepreneurship as a subject matter and field of research. Hence, it is perhaps what is most comparable to traditional teaching in higher education (Robinson, et al., 2016). Education “for” entrepreneurship seeks to develop the attributes of the successful entrepreneur in students and is aimed at training students for new business development and a career in self-employment (Scott, et al., 1998). The third model concerns the ways that the education process itself can be enhanced by using pedagogic styles that work in and make use of enterprising situations, such as starting a business (fictive or real) (Robinson, et al., 2016; Scott, et al., 1998). The learning through enterprise model insists that students learn to behave as entrepreneurs and learn in entrepreneurial ways (Rae, 2010, p. 594). Hence, entrepreneurial learning is conceptualized as learning from and when acting entrepreneurially. Therefore, students may experience this kind of learning if they go through a similar process facilitated by the education institution (Pittaway & Cope, 2007b; Rae, 2010). Consequently, the entrepreneurial process is organized in order

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13 Actually, entrepreneurship modules or programmes rarely operate in only one model for teaching and learning. Certainly, action-oriented education not only involves learning “through”, but may often also include elements of learning “about” and “for”. 
to generate effects beyond new venture creation. Rather than being an outcome of education, entrepreneurship is made into the medium through which learning is possible, that is, entrepreneurship becomes an opportunity to learn and acquire important competency. The entrepreneurial process is consolidated as an educational treatment with transformative qualities.

2.4.3 Organizing entrepreneurial learning contexts

Within the last three decades, scholarly debate on how to teach and learn entrepreneurship in formal education institutions has shifted from concerns with instructional content and classroom delivery towards learner-oriented methods and action-oriented teaching models (Hägg & Gabrielsson, 2013). It is consistently repeated that formal education institutions should support hands-on experiences for students and organize specific learning environments to promote entrepreneurial learning. Research proposes that the individual can only learn particular skills, when she performs in an environment as close to real life as possible (Shepherd & Douglas, 1997). Higgins et al. (2013, p. 142) clearly states, that “in order to become entrepreneurial one must acknowledge and embrace the chaotic nature of entrepreneurial practice”. Hence, at best, entrepreneurial learning environments must resemble the environments in which “real” entrepreneurs learn (Pittaway & Cope, 2007b). While some aspects of entrepreneurial learning (e.g. financial exposure) cannot be simulated in a student-learning environment, other key aspects can (Pittaway & Cope, 2007b). Educators must provide environments in which students may learn “new ways of doing, feeling, seeing and communicating things” (Kyrö & Carrier, 2005, p. 25). Hence, in order to create learning contexts fitted to the characteristics of entrepreneurial learning, research recurrently points to a range of key elements to be included in educational modules or programmes. Those are: hands-on experience and reflection, learner autonomy and responsibility, uncertainty and risk, and idiosyncrasy.

2.4.3.1 Hands-on experience and Reflection

Since the general conceptualization of the enterprising individual implies initiative, creativity, and sometimes innovation, research recognizes that lecturing about entrepreneurship from a theoretical perspective do not sufficiently develop entrepreneurial agency. Types of education where the educator conveys knowledge to students imply a degree of passivity from the learner, which does not fit well
with entrepreneurial becoming since it does not support the ability of students to enact their learning (Hannon, 2005). Instead, education should grant personal experiences to students of acting and being entrepreneurial. Kyrö (2015, p. 599) argues that entrepreneurship education brings “action-orientation, autonomy and interplay between risk and responsibility to the centre of the learning process”. As a consequence, entrepreneurship education represents a shift away from transmission models of teaching to experiential learning models in order for students to “act, experience, and reflect” (Hägg & Kurczewska, 2016).

The learning through entrepreneurship model connects a concept of entrepreneurial learning with entrepreneurial experiences. Hence it falls under the notion of action-oriented or experiential learning, which researchers suggest more genuinely supports the entrepreneurial competence development of students. Hence, students construct new knowledge from experiencing entrepreneurial practice (Pittaway & Cope, 2007b; Rasmussen & Sørheim, 2006; Shepherd & Douglas, 1997). This is aligned with the conception that “real” entrepreneurs actually learn through doing and reflection, experience and discovery (Cope, 2005; Rae & Carswell, 2001). Student must discover for themselves how to do things and who to do them with (Gibb, 1993, p. 18). They must take action and reflect on their actions in order to learn experientially (Pittaway & Cope, 2007b).

2.4.3.2 Learner autonomy and responsibility

Rae (2010, p. 595) argues that enterprising learning is led by “creativity, informality, curiosity, emotion and its application to personal and real-world problems and opportunities”. In that way, the students’ experiences and construction of new knowledge is celebrated. Debates on entrepreneurship pedagogy prioritizes a discourse on learning rather than teaching, and changes focus from questions of learning content to questions of learning process (Blenker, Dreisler, Færgemann, & Kjeldsen, 2008; Blenker, et al., 2012; Kyrö, 2008; Löbler, 2006). Kyrö argues that entrepreneurship defined in terms of the ability to recognize and exploit opportunities, relates to the human being as a “unique, risk-taking, creative, and innovative, free, and responsible actor” (Kyrö, 2008, p. 43). She highlights that this constitution of the enterprising individual is not well reflected in higher educational frameworks resting on conventional learning paradigms. However she finds that the image of the entrepreneurial agent is somewhat recognizable in a social constructivist perspective on learning (Kyrö, 2008). Along with
other researchers, this makes her argue that constructivism is a more suitable learning paradigm to explain and support the specificities of entrepreneurial learning in higher education (Löbler, 2006; Mueller & Anderson, 2014). In the constructivist paradigm, knowledge is not something to be discovered, achieved or transmitted. It must be constructed by the individual (Mueller & Anderson, 2014). Hence, rather than passive receivers, learners are considered to be active producers of knowledge in accordance with their individual past and interaction with the world (Löbler, 2006; Mueller & Anderson, 2014). In that way, the individual is regarded as the primary actor in the process of knowledge construction and research emphasises how this particular learning paradigm actually frees students to autonomously pursue their own learning (Löbler, 2006). Certainly, this notion implies that the learner must be free to decide and actually create his or her own reality (Kyrö, 2005).

Notions of autonomy also underpin the visions of the “paradigm breaking mentality” of the entrepreneur (Chia, 1996). This entrepreneurial capability of “breaking free” from and “breaking up” perceived constraints in the world, is understood in terms of individual emancipation (Rindova et al., 2009). Moreover, it is regarded as individual empowerment in a world characterized by conditions of growing uncertainties and complexities (Gibb, 2002). Education thus focuses on developing “the freedom to choose one’s life, so to develop one’s autonomy and act creatively in a complex and uncertain world” (Fayolle, et al., 2016, p. 900). The constructivist stance and its learner-centred orientation involves necessary changes to traditional educator-learner relations where the traditional role of the teacher is seriously altered. Since the learning process is governed by the students, the educator is no longer in control, but must act as a supporter of the learning process and create resources and context for it (Kyrö, 2015; Löbler, 2006). Hence, instead of the educator transmitting knowledge or imposing their own beliefs and values onto the students, they are to take the role as process facilitators or coaches, guiding the students to find their own way and construct their own learning freely and independently (Higgins, et al., 2013).

On the basis of an empirical study, Anderson and Mueller (2014, p. 505) introduce the term “responsibility” as an important driving force for learning entrepreneurship in education. They stress that the students participating in their study all expressed a wish to actively take responsibility for their learning. They wanted to contribute to, and influence learning processes instead of “being passive consumers of knowledge input” (Mueller & Anderson, 2014, p. 505). Therefore, the researchers argue
that when educators emphasise student responsibility, it helps learners engage actively in the learning process and in “an entrepreneurial way of living” (Mueller & Anderson, 2014, p. 509). According to van Gelderen, enterprise students should learn to take a leading role in an enterprising life and not be “docile followers” who leave the responsibility to others (van Gelderen, 2010, p. 712). Then they lose their capacity for autonomous action and that does not prepare them well for the perceived inevitability of an entrepreneurial way of life that graduates are supposed to lead whether self-employed or not.

2.4.3.3 Risk and emotional exposure
Entrepreneurship is associated with risk, uncertainty of outcomes and possible failure. In fact, the ability to make decisions under conditions of uncertainty is noted as a defining characteristic of entrepreneurial expertise (McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Sarasvathy, 2008). Risk and uncertainty are therefore aspects regarded as inherent to an entrepreneurial learning experience and thus important in the education context (Pittaway & Cope, 2007b). Students must learn by doing and learn under the pressure of development and survival (Gibb 1993). This increases their tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity (Lackéus, 2014) and helps them to thrive in the “unstructured and uncertain nature of entrepreneurial environments” (Löbler, 2006, p. 22). Robinson et al. (2016) emphasise that entrepreneurial education must represent something radically different from traditional educational forms, since this intensifies the entrepreneurial learning experiences of students. This act of breaking student habits provides existential challenges, which makes it necessary for students to reinterpret aspects of their reality and to change mindsets. Hence, the creation of an uncertain and ambiguous context will encourage students to confront taken-for-granted assumptions (Pittaway & Cope, 2007b). As Pittaway and Cope (2007b) argue it will heighten emotional exposure and thus intensify a significant investment of self necessary when learning to become entrepreneurial.

2.4.3.4 Idiosyncrasy
Strongly connected to the assertions of a heightened autonomy and responsibilization of students, the literature emphasizes the idiosyncrasy of entrepreneurial learning. It is acknowledged that entrepreneurial learning cannot easily be assembled into a generic curriculum and transmitted to students (Blenker, et al., 2012). Instead, scholars propose a need for a “personalised pedagogy”, which
put individual learners and subjective experiences at the centre of educational purpose and activity (Blenker, et al., 2012; Kyrö, 2008; Löbler, 2006). Education must allow students to work with their own opportunities and projects solidly founded in their own prior knowledge, interests, beliefs and everyday practices (Thrane, et al., 2016). Hence, students are no longer required to fit into a box of pre-defined entrepreneurship, but are allowed to construct their own understandings and process of becoming entrepreneurial (Blenker, et al., 2012; Hytti & Heinonen, 2013). Blenker et al. (2008, p. 57) argue that the learner in entrepreneurship education ought to be positioned as an “active and equal partner in the learning”. Kyrö (2008, p. 40) asserts “a learner’s right, ability and freedom to decide, make choices and act in a learning process in keeping with his, or her, individual characteristics”. Following this line of argumentation, entrepreneurship in education is not a “one-size-fits-all” activity (Blenker, et al., 2012), but learners have to define their own unique learning process and goals. Aligned with the constructivist perspective, this also means that learning outcomes never are predictable, since each learner may construct knowledge differently according to their individual past (Kyrö, 2008). Löbler (2006) argues that when students develop their own learning goals, they also feel more responsible and motivated for reaching these goals. He therefore highlights the need for entrepreneurship education to be characterized by a process driven pedagogy with an open learning process. Consequently, the learning process of students is as important as any prescribed learning outcome (Draycott & Rae, 2011; Löbler, 2006).

2.4.4 Theorizing the entrepreneurial learner

The literature reviewed in this section discusses necessary particularities of an entrepreneurial learning environment in a student-learner context. The discussion highlights general understandings of how and under what conditions an entrepreneur learns and how it explains the development of entrepreneurial competence. This understanding is then transferred onto the formal learning environment, where entrepreneurship learners must train themselves by operating in and tolerating environments that may stimulate entrepreneurial competence (Löbler, 2006; Pittaway & Cope, 2007b). Even though the literature is primarily concerned with how to induce entrepreneurial learning, it involves an implicit theorization of the entrepreneurial learner, who is able to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered by this kind of learning environment. It relates to the foregrounded contrast between traditional
and entrepreneurial education and constructs a conflict between traditional “docile” student identities and entrepreneurial identities. In fact, Robinson et al. (2016, p. 662) are concerned with how enterprise education may actually combine “being a good student” with “becoming an entrepreneurial individual” in enterprise education. Still, there is little questioning of these rationalities and the potential consequences of constructing learner identities and requirements in the image of the entrepreneur.

When the entrepreneurial learner in the constructivist perspective is constituted as free to construct his or her own learning (Kyrö, 2005, 2008), it echoes with an identification of the entrepreneur, as a “unique, risk-taking, creative, and innovative, free, and responsible actor” (Kyrö, 2008, p. 43). Hence, what is considered key definitions of an entrepreneurial identity thus translates fairly well into an identification of an entrepreneurial learner. Kyrö (2005) argues that constructivism has exposed the human being as unique knowers. Hence, when employing a constructivist perspective it is fairly straightforward to turn a widespread cultural model of the entrepreneur into a “model of” as well as a “model for” the entrepreneurial learner. However, by doing that, the education literature may run the risk of actually confirming entrepreneur stereotypes and the heroism that it ought to reject in order to make entrepreneurial learning accessible to a wider range of people (Gibb, 2002). Moreover, formal learning environments normally evaluate and reward student learning in terms of it being successful or not. Therefore, such inherent theories of the entrepreneurial learner and its consequences for practice should be clarified further. Jones and Iredale (2010) note that students in enterprise education need to adapt to this particular approach to teaching and learning as it requires interaction and independent thinking. Anderson and Mueller (2014) suggest that the responsibilization of students can be differentiated and that the transition into becoming an entrepreneurial learner therefore may be gradual. However, the literature shows little concern with how this implicit theorization of the entrepreneurial learner is taken up and experienced by learners in a context defined by its learning opportunity and purpose, and populated by people in the roles of educators and learners. That is, how entrepreneurial learning settings in practice generate entrepreneurial learners, along with learning and subjects to be learnt.

Anderson and Mueller (2014) shortly note that the students who participated in their study clearly assigned any limitations of the education to themselves. Hence, the students identified any failures or sense of non-learning as their own fault. This indicates that when given responsibility, students also
carry the risk of failure to take advantage of the learning opportunity offered to them. How students operate and manage such risks and double identities as student-learner and entrepreneur surely is a matter of interest, if we are to inquire into the workings of enterprise education. Certainly, it is a matter of concern when entrepreneurship education is embedded as mandatory modules within larger programmes and the students therefore have not self-selected into these courses. However, there are few empirical studies on micro-level participant interaction in entrepreneurial learning contexts and thus little knowledge of the social practices that such learning environments actually generate, how educational settings offer identities and how opportunities to learn can in fact be accessed. Yet, in order to engage with such questions it is necessary to adopt a problematizing stance towards the established theoretical field. However, this kind of critical work is scarce in the field of enterprise education research (Fayolle, 2013). In the next sections, I examine the reasons for that, and I suggest ways to form an alternative lens for analyses in order to offer “fresh insights” to central assumptions in the field.
2.5 Developing Critical Perspectives on Entrepreneurship in Education

In the field of management learning, it is possible to find critical empirical research on the purposeful development of specific identities in leadership and management development programmes (cf. Gagnon, 2008; Nicholson & Carroll, 2013). Scholars argue that if identity is indeed a target of leadership development, then researchers need to bring more critical scrutiny to it as a construct (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013). Yet, this kind of scrutiny of constructs and practices is still rare in the field of enterprise education. (Fayolle, 2013). In a recent comment, Fayolle et al. (2016, p. 896) argue that research often takes form as educator narratives of pedagogy with little reflection on assumptions and approaches. Hence they seldom take a critical stance towards generally shared and taken-for-granted beliefs and values in the field. Fayolle et al. stress that this practice seriously influences the legitimacy and positive development of enterprise education scholarship as well as the justification of learning activities and evaluation processes (Fayolle, et al., 2016). In an earlier statement, Fayolle (2013) called for a more critical approach in the development of scholarship in the field. Consequently, studies that direct a critical lens on general convictions and practices constitute an avenue for future research in enterprise education.

This absence of critical research in entrepreneurship education may be due to of the complexities of its study. Fayolle et al. (2016, p. 900) notes that it never is simple to do reflexive work in education because it requires an “increased level of consciousness” about the education practice. The authors refer to the fact that research in this field most often are conducted by educators, who must find ways to construe a reflexive and analytical distance to their own practice as a research subject and object (Blenker, et al., 2014). Yet, scholars portray enterprise education as a golden opportunity for doing something new and radical to engage students (Robinson, et al., 2016). Since, the societal discourse on entrepreneurship is dominated by the idea that entrepreneurship is “inherently good” (Bill, et al., 2010, p. 4), this agreement on the necessity and benefits of entrepreneurship education is difficult to challenge (Berglund & Johansson, 2007). Fayolle’s (2013) call comes out of a heartfelt need to advance the theoretical and methodological quality of enterprise education research in order to legitimize the education practice as a science and evidence-based practice (Fayolle & Gailly, 2008). A recent review of empirical studies in enterprise education divides the purposes of the conducted research into two broad categories (Blenker, et al., 2014). The first and most prevalent purpose includes
measuring the effects and consequences of entrepreneurship education, to ensure and test its relevance and legitimacy. The second category seeks insights into the dynamics and mechanisms of learning and contributes to the dissemination of various practices and experiences of entrepreneurship education courses and programmes (Blenker, et al., 2014, p. 699). Hence, research in this field confirms the importance and relevance of enterprise education and is highly concerned with the development, legitimization and execution of entrepreneurship modules and programmes. Focus is on output validation and the discussion of “what works”, “how does it work” or “what does not work”. Hence, scholars in enterprise education tend to produce research, which provides suggestions or prescriptions that educators should follow and the overall purpose of research is to suggest a variety of “do’s” and “don’ts” that educators ought to be aware of in their practice. This resembles what Hammersley calls “the engineering model” in education research (Hammersley, 1992, p. 128). Yet, this “what works” agenda makes it difficult, if not impossible to ask questions of what it should work for (Farnsworth & Solomon, 2013). Hence, the absence of reflexive and critical scrutiny of pedagogical processes and constructs in enterprise education may be a result of this conceived requisite to contribute directly to the techniques and practice of education.

In education research in general, there is severe critique of the conceptions of a direct contribution of research to policy and practice. In a critique of this “what works” agenda in education research, Biesta (2007) argues that research defined in terms of its obligations to finding the most effective ways to achieve certain ends, restricts the overall discussion since it leaves out questions about the desirability of the ends themselves. Moreover, he argues that research in education must always ask about the “quality of our means”. Hence, what students actually will learn from the use of particular pedagogical means or strategies in education (Biesta, 2007). Further, Hammersley (1992) argues that an “enlightenment model” is a more realistic and appropriate conception of the role of ethnographic research in education. Compared to the engineering model, it implies a less direct relationship between the knowledge produced and the policies and practices to be adopted. To believe that ethnographic research in education immediately can provide some solid guidelines for practice, is to

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14 Along with Hammersley, I agree that the term “enlightenment model” is problematic, since it implies that practitioners are in the dark and therefore in need of “research light” before they can see where they are and where they should be going (Hammersley, 1992, p. 128). However, as an opposition to the “engineering model” is works well in getting the point across that research not only has relevance and legitimacy if it is directed towards a practitioner audience and provides information that is of immediate and acknowledged use to that audience.
neglect the differences between the sorts of knowledge that research can produce and those required for practice (Hammersley, 1992, p. 129). This is not to say that research can make no contribution to practice at all. However, this contribution may be more of an indirect character, since research findings must always be assessed by practitioners in the light of their experience and used in relation to their contextual knowledge and practical judgement (Farnsworth & Solomon, 2013; Hammersley, 1992, p. 133). Hence, it is important to acknowledge that critical scrutiny of “taken-for-granted assumptions” in enterprise education research and practice may not contribute directly to solving practical problems, but rather contribute to instilling reflexivity on the quality of the means and the desirability of the ends of education (Biesta, 2007).

Yet, how is it possible to establish a position to engage reflexively and critically with enterprise education theory and practice? Certainly, it is important to emphasise that a critical stance never should be the sole analytical purpose. Even though, there is great value in questioning assumptions and convictions in the field of enterprise education, critique can never be a goal in itself. Alvesson and Sandberg (2013) argues that studies which aim at problematizing the exiting knowledgebase often ends in deconstruction and disruption with no constructive build up as a result. Yet, the purpose of critique and an unsettling of convictions should always be to create space for more emancipatory and social relationships (Jones & Spicer, 2009). In the field of enterprise education the purpose of a critical research must still be to improve education in practice, but through contributing to heightened reflexivity. However, to heighten reflexivity it is necessary to cross disciplinary silos and look towards research in other fields and to be inspired by other processes of questioning and alternative analytical constructs (Fayolle, et al., 2016). In the next section, I present research critical of entrepreneurship in education found outside the field of enterprise education research conducted by entrepreneurship researchers and educators. This is helpful in the process of creating reflexivity, establishing an analytical and critical stance and asking interesting research questions.

2.5.1 Critical research on enterprise education

Beyond the community of entrepreneurship researchers and educators concerned with the theorization and actual delivery of entrepreneurship in education, you find studies in the academic fields of
sociology and education, which critically addresses enterprise education. However, these studies are conducted with a different level of analysis. They are concerned about entrepreneurship as a specific rhetoric in education policy and how the proliferation of an entrepreneurship discourse affects education cultures and learner subjectivities. Researchers highlight how an ideal of the enterprising self has launched itself into political agendas and into discourses on societal progress and competitiveness as part of a wider political restructuring of society and culture (du Gay, 1996; Keat, 1991; Peters, 2001; Rose, 1989; Smyth, 1999). Governments tend to promote a “culture of enterprise” and transform people’s attitudes, values, self-understandings, and behaviours, promoting new forms of individualism based on greater self-responsibility and choice (du Gay 1996). The “enterprise culture” has in the words of Peters (2001, p. 68) become a “meta-narrative, a totalizing and unifying story about the prospect of economic growth and development based on the triumvirate of science, technology, and education.” He highlights how enterprise education is strongly linked to political visions and goals of economic resurrection as well as a cultural endorsement of enterprise. Consequently, the entrepreneur symbolizes an ideological manifestation of beliefs and values. These ideological and political agendas are co-opted into education programmes (Holmgren & From, 2005; Styhre, 2005). Hence, enterprise education represents the way in which enterprise as a form of knowledge/ideology is institutionalized in society.¹⁵

This scholarship stresses how enterprise as a set of ideas, practices and/or discourses, ascribes positive value and moral imperative to being enterprising (du Gay, 1996). From being an economic innovator in classical economic theory (Schumpeter, 2008 [1934]), the entrepreneur is now constituted as a general role model for subjectivity (Marttila, 2013) against whom individuals are judged, and judge themselves (Berglund, 2013). The characteristics of “being enterprising”: e.g. self-reliance, personal responsibility, boldness, and a willingness to take risks in the pursuit of goals, become human virtues. In that way, enterprise education gains importance as an instrument to cultivate “autonomous, self-regulating, productive, responsible individuals” and partakes to disseminate and construct those entrepreneurial characteristics as exactly human virtues (du Gay & Salaman, 1992, p. 626). However, Bröckling (2005,

¹⁵ For example, Smyth (1999, p. 436) asserts how enterprise education is an “ideological hook” to make us believe that a universal “youth crisis” where young people leave school unable to secure jobs, can be solved by having them develop enterprising skills and behaviours, and their associated values and dispositions. He argues that enterprise as an ideology in education personalizes and individualizes complex problems which in fact require more complex solutions.
p. 11) argues that “[t]he enterprising self has neither name nor an address” and you “will not find an exemplar of this species in the offices of start-up companies or anywhere else”. Rather, the enterprising self always marks the direction in which individuals are to change and be changed. Hence, an enterprising self is an ideology and therefore not an empirically identifiable entity or a descriptive category. It is an interpellation, transforming individuals into enterprising subjects (Bröckling, 2005). Hence, enterprise is an ideal for how individuals should conduct themselves, applauded by major social and political institutions and affecting peoples’ actions, feelings and self-understandings (du Gay, 1996; Jones & Spicer, 2009; Peters, 2001).

2.5.1.1 Governmentality and policy studies
A large part of this literature connects the notion of the enterprising self to the dynamics of control in neoliberal societies and the Foucauldian notion of “governmentality” (du Gay & Salaman, 1992; McNay, 2009; Miller & Rose, 1990; Ong, 2006; Rose, 1989). Governmentality denotes a specific form of modern political rule, which does not operate through state sanction, but through the indirect shaping of social practice. Hence, the promotion of the enterprising individual is part of subtle governance, which takes place through the individual’s own self-regulation (Miller & Rose, 1990; Rose, 1992). Neoliberal governance does not take place through the imposition of social conformity, but through the proliferation of individual difference and the delimitation of individual freedoms (McNay, 2009). In this sense individual autonomy is not an obstacle to social control, but one of its central techniques (McNay, 2009; Rose, 1992). Individuals are encouraged to know their lives and identities as enterprises understood as a relation to the self, based on a notion of economic interest (McNay, 2009). They must become entrepreneurs of the self (Rose, 1998), who relates to their own being as a form of human capital and therefore are to invest in themselves accordingly and strive for fulfilment, excellence and achievement (McNay, 2009, p. 63). Dahlstedt and Herzberg (2012) stress that enterprise education develops human capital in the form of entrepreneurial features such as creativity, flexibility and self-reliance, due to its presumed utility on a labour market. Therefore, entrepreneurial pedagogy constitutes a particular kind of governmentality as it connects students and their subjectivity to the rationality of the market (Dahlstedt & Hertzberg, 2012). Additionally, Berglund (2013) criticizes how enterprise education involves an ethic of constant self-improvement in the name of employability. Hence,
students are not only in search of knowledge, but are encouraged to search for and develop enterprising selves in order to be attractive on the labour market. Yet this process of becoming entrepreneurial and becoming employable is ongoing and has no limits (Costea, Amiridis, & Crump, 2012). Therefore, there is a flip-side to this ethic of self-improvement, because when constantly encouraged to change and become better it becomes more difficult to be satisfied with who one is, and student learners may find themselves “fighting against all odds” (Berglund, 2013). Scholars in that way question the notions of autonomy and empowerment inherent to the discourse on the enterprising self. They argue that the autonomy of people in fact becomes a matter of being educated in how to speak, act and life plan according to what is expected (Siivonen & Brunila, 2014). Holmgren and From (2005) argue that since entrepreneurship education is about changing the attitudes and motivations of students, it makes more of the student’s thoughts, feelings and values available for control. Therefore, they consider entrepreneurship education to be an “intrusive form of socialization” and a “symbolic ruler” of thought and consciousness since it regulates the thinkable and unthinkable (Holmgren & From, 2005, p. 387). Hence, education becomes a “Taylorism of the mind”, that is a standardization and symbolic control of human thought and identity. Consequently, studies in this stream of literature suggest that students in enterprise education actually reproduce power and their own subjugation through the entrepreneurial language of emancipation. In this view, higher education therefore has become less about human enlightenment and more about the reproduction of neoliberal and capitalist ideology (da Costa & Saraiva, 2012).

Overall, this stream of literature calls for research, which presents solid empirical tracings of the complex everyday interactions of people, objects, spaces and meanings, analysing the production and reproduction of enterprise culture in specific movements and moments as well as its multiple potential effects (Fenwick, 2008, p. 331). Yet, this kind of research is still rare in the enterprise education field. There is an overall scarcity of a nuanced and empirically based research that explores how the enterprising subject is understood, valued, interpreted and deployed in educational institutions (Fenwick, 2008; Komulainen, et al., 2011). The critique of enterprise in education typically starts with concerns about how enterprise education policy and its discourse on enterprise impacts on local education settings. Research argues that the identities provided and constituted by the ethos of the enterprising self, have potentially destructive effects on some identities, which do not readily fit into a
hegemonic masculinity and a market orientation. Hence, the emancipation in enterprise education involves processes of exclusion (Jones, 2014; Komulainen, et al., 2011). Nevertheless the ethos of enterprise is offered to an ever larger and wider student population in educational settings. Therefore, research needs to challenge the uncontested settlement of entrepreneurship discourses that increasingly urge students in higher education to inculcate a particular entrepreneurial mindset (Jones, 2014, p. 249). Hence, it is important to study the formation of subjectivities and the potential processes of inclusion and exclusion, which takes place in local educational settings.

Even so, research also stresses that there are problems with inferring a simple alignment between macro-level discourse and micro-level practice. Even though we may accept that enterprise teaching and learning in Higher Education is constituted by an enterprise discourse underpinning the enterprise culture, policies never determine local educational activities and can never be said to fully control the experiences and practices of individuals (Reveley & Down, 2009; Robinson & Blenker, 2014; Shore & Wright, 2013). Instead, the political ideals manifested in policies may be placed under compliance, scrutiny and negotiation in schools and they have intended as well as unintended effects (Komulainen, et al., 2011). Studies highlight how enterprise education is a site of “discursive battle” deriving from the juxtaposition between economic and educational discourses (Komulainen, et al., 2011; Leffler, 2009; Robinson & Blenker, 2014). From the viewpoint of the day-to-day practices on entrepreneurship education, a few empirical studies seek to unravel how the theories of entrepreneurship and the enterprising individual actually inform practices and produces subject positions/identities in education settings. They look into how teachers as active agents implement or challenge policy discourses on entrepreneurship in education (Komulainen, et al., 2011; Robinson & Blenker, 2014). Other studies look into the question of how students operate within hegemonic discourses of the entrepreneur (Hytti & Heinonen, 2013; Siivonen & Brunila, 2014). Komulainen et al. (2013, p. 1081) argue that policy documents treat students as passive targets of enterprise education without an urge or readiness to resist its ideals and they point out that there is a lack of research exploring the ways students negotiate what and who is an entrepreneur in the context of school.

This strand of research investigates the workings of a discourse on enterprise found in policy and research texts. It offers an understanding of enterprise education as a contested field and creates awareness of a “dark-side” to enterprise in education and its embeddedness into larger systems of
power. Moreover, it offers ways to understand the enterprising individual in education in ways that bridges macro- and micro-level processes. Hence, it offers a thought provoking complement to the micro-level analyses of individual students’ identity work found in enterprise education research (Donnellon, et al., 2014; Hytti & Heinonen, 2013) to produce a more nuanced picture of entrepreneurial becoming in education. I sympathize with its critique of the enterprising self as a gendered cultural figure promoted and fostered through educational interventions. However, I also find this literature to be incomplete. Privileging governmentality as the analytical lens means that the research focus and analysis is locked into specific preunderstandings regarding the enterprising subject and enterprise education as an enactment of a neoliberal discourse and rationality. As a consequence, this form of research always produces confirmative results as it places neoliberalism simultaneously as reason, explanation and conclusion of the inquiry. Yet, critical scholarship must be “uncomfortable with complacency about or fixation on, any particular position, idea, theory and method” (Tedmanson, Verduyn, Essers, & Gartner, 2012, p. 537) and this kind of one-sided analysis may blind you to other important nuances in the field. Consequently, there is a need for alternative approaches through which it is possible to inquire into the central constructs in the field of enterprise education and how they generate practices in these educational environments that are supposed to transform and support the entrepreneurial becoming of student learners.

Understanding processes of entrepreneurial learning and becoming in an entrepreneurship education setting seriously challenges the traditional context-based definitions of entrepreneurship relating to the establishment and management of small businesses. First of all, the majority of participants in this setting have not started businesses or are in the process of doing so. They may well never start a business. Still, the curricula in the field are informed by theories of entrepreneurial thinking and decision-making frequently derived from studies of “real” entrepreneurs in the post-founding phase. Those theories initiating and informing the activities do not necessarily make us able to understand and explain the actual processes set in motion by educational interventions or their outcomes. As a consequence, theories of entrepreneurship developed from studies in non-educational contexts are not always applicable without understanding the key and distinguishing qualities of the educational context and the processes of entrepreneurial learning and acting in this pre-founding phase. Greater care and creativity in contextualizing can therefore enrich scholarship in the field (Zahra, 2007). Hence, there
are promising prospects for a critical research to actually trace what happens in everyday life in enterprise education through qualitative empirical research. To advance discussions in the field of enterprise education research, I follow Fayolle et al.’s (2016, p. 897) suggestions to cross the disciplinary boundaries of entrepreneurship and employ theoretical and methodological stances from the community of education research. Particularly, I draw on situated learning theory, which defines learning in terms of changing participation in social practice and as processes of identification, i.e. becoming somebody through participation in the activities of a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This theory provides a framework for understanding learning as identity development in and through situated practice. Hence, it actually encompasses focal themes highlighted in the enterprise education literature and it explains their intersection. At the same time, this sociocultural account of learning offers an alternative perspective on this intersection of identity, context and learning which opens the field of entrepreneurship in education to new questions and explanations. I elaborate further on this in the next section.
2.6 A Social Practice Perspective on Enterprise Education

In order to create positions for critical reflection, I draw on ideas of learning developed within social practice theory (Holland, et al., 1998; Lachicotte, 2009; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000) especially the conceptual framework of situated learning theory (Lave, 1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991). The appeal of this account rests in the ways that it “situates” learning as social practice in contexts and connects it to processes of identification e.g. a becoming of persons (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

2.6.1 A social practice perspective on learning

In their seminal book on situated learning, Lave and Wenger (1991), challenged a conventional “acquisition view” of learning, where knowledge was regarded as an object to be transmitted from teachers to students changing their ways of thinking and acting. Moreover, they also deliver a critique of formal education where learners through instruction are trusted to build less context bound knowledge through abstraction and generalization. Knowledge is not simply internalized and unproblematically transferred to other times and places (Lave, 1996b). Lave and Wenger (1991) present an alternative by arguing that the individual cannot acquire knowledge isolated from a social practice. In that way, the theory also proposes an alternative view on the practice of learning, which breaks down conventional distinctions between learning and doing, identity and knowledge, education and occupation, between form and content (Lave, 1996b, p. 153). Hence, learning is defined in terms of changing participation and an evolving sense of belonging to a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

In that way, situated learning theory accords with several of the convictions found in enterprise education research, which advocates activity, experience and reflection and where learning is defined in terms of engagement with entrepreneurial practice and identity construction processes (Donnellon, et al., 2014; Kyrö, 2005). Still, there are also important differences between the constructivist stance advocated by entrepreneurship education scholars and the social practice stance (Cobb, 1994; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). Informed by the work of Piaget, Kolb and von Glaserfeld, scholars adhering to a constructivist learning paradigm highlight how individual learners interpret the world actively and construct their own knowledge through different processes of reflection and as a result of the learners’
actions and interactions in the world (Kyrö, 2008; Mueller & Anderson, 2014). As a process of individual construction, learning is understood in terms of a cognitive reorganization (Cobb, 1994) and a problem of overcoming a distinction between the self/mind and the world (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). In social practice theory person and world are mutually constituted. Therefore, social practice accounts abandon the definition of the learner as an individual constructor of meaning, as well as the interest in the learner’s mind and cognitive processes. Instead, they define learning socially and relationally in terms of participation in social practice and in terms of membership in social communities. Hence, learner identity is viewed as embedded in the context in which the individual is “co-participating” (Fuller, Hodkinson, Hodkinson, & Unwin, 2005). This alerts us to the processes of learning as part of larger social systems of activity. Yet, it does not mean that the individual disappears from the analysis. But the individual is understood in relation to practice and to context and the social relations and experiences of participation that this infers. Hence, the unit of analysis shifts from the individual to the individual-in-context (Gresalfi, 2009) and persons-in-practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

2.6.2 Situated learning theory in enterprise education

The theory of situated learning was originally developed in informal learning settings and it employs a metaphor of apprenticeship learning (Boylan, 2010; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Hence, the individual learns through participation in social practices, mimicking the activities of others and gradually gaining mastery of ways of doing, knowing and being in a community of practice. This notion of apprenticeship adaptation and replication of practice, severely contradicts the cultural figure of the entrepreneur as an innovative and creative agent with a paradigm-shifting mentality (Chia, 1996; Kyrö, 2008). Consequently, the representation of the learner as an apprentice does not fit well as a model of and for the entrepreneurial learner in the same way as the constructivist learner does. This apparent non-fit may explain why research in entrepreneurship education gives little attention to situated learning theory, even though research acknowledges the social and contextual dimensions to entrepreneurial learning (Cope, 2005; Taylor & Thorpe, 2004) and entrepreneurs are understood to operate in and across social communities of practice (Hamilton, 2011).
Still, a number of studies do employ concepts from situated learning theory, when explaining the designs of educational programmes and their specific approach to teaching (Gibb, 2002; Howorth, Smith, & Parkinson, 2012; Pittaway & Cope, 2007b; Robinson, et al., 2016). Howorth et al (2012, p. 371) report from an educational programme designed with an emphasis on “peer learning, communities of practice, situated learning and reflection”. Gibb (2002, p. 253) highlights how learning emerges as a result of participation in communities of practice and he uses this understanding to point to the importance of involving students in communities of practice with relevant stakeholders, which then may lead to the “formation of identity, access to wider knowledge, to social practice and familiarization with relevant values and feelings”. Pittaway and Cope (2007b) argue that it is possible to foster socially situated learning environments in formal education contexts. They recognize that learning is engendered through a social process of co-participation (Taylor & Thorpe, 2004) located in situations and contexts (Cope, 2005). Group-work in self-selected teams are therefore a way to instil important collaboration with others making it possible for students to construct their understanding from a wide range of resources in the social and physical circumstances, and the relations to other people involved (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Pittaway & Cope, 2007b). A recent study employs situated learning theory to emphasize the importance of encouraging students’ “lived experience” with entrepreneurship in education settings (Robinson, et al., 2016). Moreover, this study highlights that learning not alone concerns the acquisition of knowledge and skill, but also involves identity formation as a “coming into being”, and the authors suggest how this process can be supported through various teaching elements (Robinson, et al., 2016).

These studies all relate to situated learning as an advocated educational model for how to construct better and more efficient learning environments, instigated by teachers in order to transform students and prime them to enterprising behaviour. I do not employ the theoretical perspective in the same manner. In this thesis, the social practice account of learning is first and foremost descriptive and analytic rather than prescriptive (Penuel, 2014). Hence, I use the theory as a conceptual tool; a “heuristic” (Lea, 2005), to critically examine what people do. This means that I regard a community of practice as a lens - a way of looking - and not something to look for (Lave, 2013, p. 84). This theoretical framework invites new analysis, novel analytic units and new questions, and I suggest it has the potential to open new pathways to knowledge of entrepreneurship in education.
2.7 An Analytical Framework for Studying Enterprise Education

Above, I argued that the scholarly debate on entrepreneurship education shows diversity with regards to the conceptualization of entrepreneurship in education, and it reflects areas of uniformity when emphasising important elements for simulating and stimulating processes of entrepreneurial becoming in education. In the broad view of entrepreneurship in education, areas of consensus are found in regarding entrepreneurship as a process with transformative qualities both in terms of the environment and the individual. As a process of becoming, enterprise education also includes notions of identity and the educational environment must involve elements of reflective identity work. Moreover, entrepreneurial learning can best be stimulated in particular environments, which entails particular requirements for student participation. Together, these elements with regards to process, identity, and learning make up the theoretical underpinnings of enterprise education in local contexts. They come together in education context and are enacted in education practice. In the following I suggest how a social practice view on learning is helpful to inquire into this enactment and the practices that actually unfold as result of this theoretical field.

2.7.1 Learning as a process of participation

A focal point in the social practice view is the notion of participation as it showcases the processual, social and relational emphasis of this theoretical perspective. Hence, learning is considered a process of changing participation in social practice. More precisely, Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 40) introduce the term “legitimate peripheral participation” to explain the process through which a newcomer gradually learns to participate more adequately in practices valued by a community. They present us with an image of the newcomer who is accepted into a community and who starts a centripetal journey towards becoming a fully capable participant and member at the centre of that community of practice. In that way, learning is an aspect of social practice. It implies a relation to specific activities, but also a relation to social communities as a process of becoming a full participant, a member and a certain kind of person. Learning involves “enculturation” in form of “picking up the jargon, behaviour, and norms of a new social group; adopting belief systems to become a member of the culture (Brown, et al., 1989;

A situated learning perspective is powerful in the ways it conceptualizes the mutual constitution of learning, practice, and identification through legitimate peripheral participation. This constitution makes it possible to discuss how practices unfold in the learning contexts and thus how educational practices actually offers identities and access to participation to students. Hence through a situated perspective the analytic lens moves beyond the individual learner to the learning environment and the mutual constitution of agent, activity and social world (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 33). It addresses a concern with the ongoing production of social life, persons, and practices (Lave, 2012, p. 157). Hence, this view supports an understanding of education as social production rather than re-production of stable and decontextualized practices and identities. Hence focus is on entrepreneurship education in practice and the experiences of learners as participants and co-constructers of meaning in context.

2.7.2 Learning as a process of becoming

In the social practice view, processes of identity construction are integral to all learning. Learning is defined as a change not only to what we know (epistemology), but also to who we are (ontology) (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). Therefore, identity construction should not be understood as an outcome of learning, but rather as an integrated element in what it means to learn (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As Wenger (1998, p. 215) writes: “because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity. It is not just an accumulation of skills and information, but a process of becoming”. This notion of identity is closely linked to identification with practice, an ongoing negotiation of participation, and a developing sense of membership of a community of practice. As Holland and Lave (2009, p. 5) writes: “Persons are historically produced in practice in relation to the identities, cultural genres and artifacts that are central to the cultural activities in which they engage”. It implies that identity is something people do rather than something that they are. Hence it involves identity work where participants are positioned by practices or others and where they also are active in positioning themselves and the community provides opportunities as well as limitations for this identity work (Holland, et al., 1998).
Every context offers a range of participatory stances and trajectories that individuals are invited to take up. Learning in that way always entails processes of becoming with respect to the possibilities enabled by the community (Faircloth, 2012). Consequently, processes of identification are associated with legitimacy and access to participation. Lack of access to participation may lead to marginalization and a lack of identification with a community’s practices and participants may reject identities connected with practice and reconstruct identification in terms of conflict and exclusion (Hodges, 1998). In Lave and Wenger’s original model from 1991, the trajectory of identity is towards becoming a full participant of a community of practice as the apprentice who aspires to become a master of the practices valued in a community and who works along with more skilled participants to accomplish this mastery. However, this may be different in formal education settings (Boylan, 2010). For example, it is recognized that students in an entrepreneurship module may not participate to become entrepreneurs in the classical understanding of the term (Hytti & Heinonen, 2013). Therefore, to understand processes of identification in education settings, it is necessary to understand how participants are positioned in the learning community as well as the identities that the context affords and invites participants to take up, and how they may lead to inclusion or marginalization. In that way, a situated perspective on enterprise education opens for a consideration of identification with learning practices and the learner identities made available in context.

2.7.3 Learning in context

Entrepreneurship education research concerns the contextualization of entrepreneurship in education i.e. the meaning of entrepreneurship in education and how learning and becoming entrepreneurial is possible within formal education settings. Consequently, the literature often treats context in terms of the learning environment, which has to be specifically organized to facilitate entrepreneurial learning and identity construction (Blenker, et al., 2012; Donnellon, et al., 2014; Smith & Woodworth, 2012; Thrane, et al., 2016). Scholars emphasise that entrepreneurial learning can take place and be of use in contexts other than commercial business (Gibb, 2002; Steyaert & Katz, 2004) and that learning for entrepreneurship takes place beyond the “classroom” context (Kyrö, 2008; Rae, 2010). Still, the literature shows little attention to how education in fact contextualizes practices such as identity work and the process of becoming entrepreneurial. However, a study of entrepreneurship education in
practice must consider how this education context matters for practice. With a set of roles and anticipated behaviours as students and educators, “the classroom”, “school” or “education” are important directive and sensegiving contextual factors, when seeking to understand entrepreneurship education in practice and to theorise on formalised entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial identity construction. With that, context does not simply refer to the physical place such as a classroom, the education institution, or outside the education institution. It is a social space inhabited by agents who engage in acts deemed meaningful by particular values in this world, and it is an interpretive realm which grants meaning to activities taking place, and identities enacted and recognized and particular outcomes are valued over others (Holland, et al., 1998, p. 52).

In the situated perspective, people not only learn in a context. They also learn what it is meaningful and valuable to learn within a context. Newcomers into a community not only learn “from talk”. More accurately they learn “to talk” and importantly how not to talk (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 109). Therefore, even though learning in formal school systems often is qualified by its abstract nature and high level of transferability, no learning can be considered theoretically by its “de-contextualisation” (Lave, 1996b, p. 155). A situated perspective places processes of becoming in context with the term community of practice. Wenger (1998) defines a community of practice by the mutual engagement of participants, in a joint enterprise, as well as a shared repertoire e.g. resources for negotiating meaning. The repertoire of a community includes “routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence and which have become part of its practice” (Wenger, 1998, p. 83). Hence, a community of practice is not merely a source of technical knowledge and skills. Lave and Wenger suggest that it is an “an intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge, not least because it provides the interpretive support necessary for the making sense of its heritage” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98). Consequently, full membership of a community is accomplished and granted to someone, who through his or her membership has become a full participant in the cultural practice of the community and not only someone who can apply the necessary knowledge (Fuller, et al., 2005).

Certainly a higher education classroom has little in common with the communities of practice exemplified by Lave and Wenger where people with varying expertise are mutually involved in a joint practice. Therefore, a shift into formal education or school learning requires thorough consideration of
what in fact makes up the community of practice and its resources, as well as what constitutes participation (Boylan, 2010). However, since situated learning theory “situates” learning and identity construction in contextual practice, it still directs attention to the actual practices in class and to what possibly constitutes full participation (Morton, 2012) and thus how “the classroom” and the “teaching curriculum” are important for creating access to participation and to opportunities to learn – also in enterprise education.
3 THE STUDY: DESIGN AND CONDUCT

“Every subject we study has already been studied by lots of people with lots of ideas of their own, and is further the domain of the people who actually inhabit that world, who have ideas of their own about what it’s about and what the objects and events in it mean. These experts by profession or group membership usually have an unsuspected and unchallenged monopoly of ideas on their subject” (Becker, 1998, p. 7).

Howard Becker points to a central predicament facing me with relation to the design and the act of positioning myself as a researcher in the field of enterprise education. As I was thinking about how to ask questions and how to collect data, I needed to clarify the characteristics of this field and the conditions for research that it represents.

The field of enterprise education research is inhabited by people who are simultaneously “experts by profession and group membership”. Empirical studies of entrepreneurship education are often conducted by researchers who themselves are enterprise educators and they often report from the courses they teach (Blenker, et al., 2014). If not an “unchallenged monopoly of ideas on their subject”, at least researchers have some convictions on what constitutes enterprise education and what characterizes an enterprising student. These convictions are based on experiences with this subject in both theory and practice. Becker (1998, p. 7) warns that newcomers into a field of research easily can be seduced into adopting convictions as “uninspected premises of their research” and he stresses the necessity of being alert to what else we could be thinking and asking. Hence, new researchers in a field should be reflective of how they see things in order not to be “unknowing carriers of the conventional world’s thoughts” (Becker, 1998, p. 8). Becker’s assertions made me conscious of how to establish a research position for myself, where I will not automatically reproduce the logics of the taught courses (and in the research field in general), but instead seek to understand and explain it, while considering the social practices which unfold as results in the education setting. However, I also seek to be reflective of the convictions I myself bring to the field affecting the questions asked, methods applied and the interpretations rendered. Therefore, this chapter extends the clarification of my understandings regarding “the field” in which I did fieldwork, the methodological approach, research design and methods, more in depths than what is possible in the essays.
3.1 Theorizing the Field

Becker (1998) points to the importance of reflexivity with regards to the convictions established in the field by researchers and practitioners. To continue, Becker also points to how our imagery of a certain subject determines the direction of our research, the ideas we start out with, the questions we ask and the answers we find plausible (Becker, 1998, p. 13). He suggests a set of “tricks” to challenge such pitfalls in the endeavour to push boundaries for knowledge. One important trick is to be careful about how you treat people as analytic categories. He argues that social scientists have a habit of making typologies of people and treat “the kind of person” analytically as though that is what he or she is. A “kind of person” is then turned into a basic unit of analysis and what that person does, comes to make sense and is explained by the kind of person they are (Becker, 1998, p. 44). In general, education settings – classrooms – are peopled by types, who we all have some set imageries about. Educational researchers readily refer to the young people in the classroom as “students,” perhaps without considering how this word is connected to other words and thus more easily leads to specific understandings (Biesta, 2010).

In entrepreneurship and enterprise education research, there is a strong desire to unveil best ways to teach entrepreneurship and start processes of learning and becoming entrepreneurial amongst students. Inherent to this motive are images of types of people such as “the entrepreneur”, “the enterprising person”, the educator, and what it means to be an “enterprise student”, as seen above. In fact, entrepreneurship and enterprise education finds its purpose through a theorization of the entrepreneur and of the world in which the entrepreneur is supposed to operate (Farny, Frederiksen, Hannibal, & Jones, 2016). Processes of defining, constructing and training the sort of people who can act entrepreneurially are outplayed. Consequently, the field is populated by “kinds of persons”. Jones (2014) touches upon this in her study of how entrepreneurship education policy and practice in higher education builds on a masculinized imagery of entrepreneurship and creates a “fictive entrepreneur” who students should strive to become, and a “fictive student” who will benefit from entrepreneurship education. Hence, entrepreneurship education produces and reproduces an imagery of the enterprising person endowed with an entrepreneurial mindset. It also produces an imagery of the student to which the curriculum is addressed: “the student in the head of the educator” (Jones, 2014, p. 239), which is potentially damaging to real life students. Following Becker (1998), this means that there is a tendency
to understand and explain behaviours and outcomes of education in terms of this pre-settled (and idealized) imagery of people as fixed entities with an inherent character, rather than in terms of the actual activities and behaviours of the people present. For example, entrepreneurship educators are described as mostly focused on instruction, while students are mostly concerned with assessment (Macht & Ball, 2016, p. 929) or entrepreneurship students are expected to have “elevated autonomy needs and to cry out for independent action” (van Gelderen, 2010, p. 711). In that way, pre-conceptions of what is taking place in the setting (entrepreneurship teaching and learning) and who is participating (students and teachers) direct our concerns, questions, observations, when the researcher assumes that behaviours are results of this typification. Then, the pre-identified typology comes to explain observations, and interpretations and we come to understand activities as determined by empirically unfounded assumptions (Becker, 1998, p. 45). Therefore, it is necessary to turn to the situations in which the activities occur rather than the pre-set typology of persons (Becker, 1998, p. 44). In that way, I take a step away from the questions of how best to induct participants to entrepreneurial skills and attributes and what education, educators, and students should be doing. Instead, I seek to understand enterprise education by foregrounding the everyday practices in enterprise learning settings and what participants actually do.

3.2 An Ethnographic Study

Practices only acquire meaning when understood in context. Therefore, to understand activities, it is necessary to employ an approach to research, which enables an in-depth sense of the setting as well as the people under study, and which gives access to the meanings that guide their practices (Delamont, 2014; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Consequently, in order to understand what takes place in enterprise education processes, the researcher must engage with the actual educational events and the peoples interacting in them (Alvesson, 2003; Watson, 2011). Additionally, since learning in educational institutions consists of various time specific activities, it required a flexible method since it was necessary to go to different places and engage in various situations with different peoples (Marcus, 1995; Walford, 2008). Ethnography represents such an approach to research. An ethnographic approach challenges any research that begins with a priori “typification” of what counts as good
education and a good student. Rather, it involves asking questions about the kinds of people produced in and by school (Carlone, 2012). This study is therefore aligned with ethnographic research in education, which gives attention to teachers’ and students’ perspectives as well as classroom strategies and how these play a central role in shaping the environments in which students’ behaviours and learning takes form (Hammersley, 1999).

Education research has a strong ethnographic tradition (Delamont, 2014; Hammersley, 2006; Levinson & Holland, 1996; Spindler, 1982; Willis, 2000 [1977]), and it is considered a fruitful approach for exploring the complex and multifaceted world of higher education (Hasse, 2008; Lucas, 2012). In entrepreneurship research, the method has been employed when researching the “becoming” of entrepreneurs and their processes of entrepreneurial identity construction (Bruni, Gherardi, & Poggio, 2004; Down, 2006). Yet, in the field of enterprise education, the value of this research approach has only recently been highlighted (Robinson & Blenker, 2014; Robinson & Shumar, 2014). In that way, the decision to engage ethnographically with the field of enterprise education was relatively straightforward. Not only did it support the aim of the study. It suited my prior education in anthropology, and the methodological stance of ethnography would in itself be a contribution to the field of enterprise education research (Blenker, et al., 2014).

Ethnography involves a strong focus on documenting the lifeways of people or groups of people. Ideally, researchers do fieldwork where they enter into the activities and lives of those they are studying for a longer period of time. Hence, they immerse themselves in a community or an institution and participate in the activities of that community or institution, while they attempt to interpret patterns of behaviour and eventually understand the “natives’” points of view (Flick, 2009; Geertz, 1983; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). The essentials of ethnography is therefore the concern with the meaning of actions and events to the people we seek to understand (Spradley, 1979). Central aspects in this process are: what people do, what people know and the things people make and use (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). This means that an ethnographic approach to research in enterprise education must involve an effort to understand the processes and responses to education from the perspectives of the people involved. Hence, it involves an open-ended and descriptive investigation of what these participants know and believe about entrepreneurship, as well as the endeavour to emulate those responses, activities, and experiences of these people (Eisenhart, 1988). Certainly, this also includes the
meanings encoded in the language of enterprise, the way it is used and the way it is presented to and practiced by learners. In that way, educational ethnographers ask different questions than those traditionally posed in education research, which tend to be derivatives of how teaching and learning in this specific field can be improved (Eisenhart, 1988).

3.2.1 Enterprise education as cultural production and reproduction

Ethnography is often defined as a social practice concerned with the study and representation of culture (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Van Maanen, 2011, 2011(1988)). Consequently, the details of individual lives must be placed within wider social and cultural structures (Van Maanen, 2011(1988)). Van Maanen (2011, p. 221) states that today, ethnography employs the notion of culture as a “loose sensitizing concept” rather than a strict theoretical one. The concept signals a conviction that agency and action rest on social meanings which may be bounded and particularistic as well as institutionalized and broad. Hence, research turns away from an understanding of culture as an integrated shared system of ideas, routines, signs and values (ibid). Hence, the practices of a particular group of people cannot be treated as an indicative of a single cultural logic, which equally compels to all members of a group (Holland, et al., 1998, p. 26). In Van Maanen’s words (2011, p. 221) “[c]ulture simply refers to the meanings and practices produced, sustained and altered through interaction”. Hence, culture is defined as a continuous process of creating meaning in social and material contexts, rather than a static, unchanging body of knowledge, which can be transmitted between generations in educational institutions (Levinson & Holland, 1996).

Around the world, educational institutions are central to the cultural and social shaping of young people as schools serve to instil those skills, subjectivities and disciplines which are considered important and of value to the nation state in specific historical times (Levinson & Holland, 1996). This current study of enterprise education was part of a larger research project called PACE, “Promoting a Culture of Entrepreneurship”.

16 Embedded in this title is an understanding that education is closely related to issues of cultural production and promotion, which is in line with policies in the field (Danish Ministry

16 The PACE project is funded by the Danish Innovation Fund (2012-2016) and aims to develop and evaluate novel teaching interventions to “nurture the enterprising talent of the next generation.” http://mgmt.au.dk/research/innovation-entrepreneurship-and-information-systems/research/icare/pace/)
of Education, 2004; European Commission, 2004). Research points to how notions of “enterprise” have taken cultural status (Heelas & Morris, 1992). In fact, enterprise education itself can be regarded a product and manifestation of enterprise culture (Peters, 2001) and a cultural movement (Rae, 2010). The meaning of the entrepreneur in this setting is never separated and distinguishable from the meaning, function and value of its learning. Consequently, the image of entrepreneurship is closely interwoven with culture, and the classroom makes a setting where this cultural production is encapsulated and condensed. This is where newcomers are introduced if not inducted to a culture of enterprise (Ehrensal, 2001; Peters, 2001). Yet, in policy, enterprise education is regarded as an instrument in a cultural change process (Danish Ministry of Education, 2004; European Commission, 2004). Hence, it makes sense to regard education practices in terms of “cultural production” (Levinson & Holland, 1996). In alignment with a social practice perspective, it makes an interesting setting in which to study how lives, persons and practices are produced and conceived as enterprising in education practice. Levinson and Holland (1996) argues that a concern with education as cultural production makes it possible to become aware of the ways people creatively occupy the space of education and confront the ideological and material conditions represented by schooling (Levinson & Holland, 1996). Hence it acknowledges people’s agency and how it operates under the structural constraints represented by educational institutions. This means that the “the enterprising individual” in education is culturally produced in definite sites, but students in enterprise education settings are not interpellated by discourses of the enterprise culture. They also resist and change them. They produce and reproduce cultural forms through their interpretations and actions. Hence, subjectivities form and agency still develop within structural constraints (Holland, et al., 1998).

3.3 Analytical Outset

Methodological choices always interact with the philosophical presuppositions held by the researcher, which fashion the shaping of questioning, data collection and analyses (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the researcher’s basic beliefs about the nature of reality (ontology) and its knowability (epistemology) (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). In this research project, I align with a social constructionist tradition in the social sciences as an interpretivist researcher (Berger &
Inspired by social practice theory, I draw on a relational ontology, which foregrounds an understanding of human practices as “non-individualistic phenomena” and as “social sites in which events, entities and meaning help compose one another” (Carroll, Levy, & Richmond, 2008, p. 366; Schatzki, 2005, p. 480). In general, a social practice perspective emphasizes the relational interdependency between person and world, activity, meaning, cognition, learning and knowing (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 50). Hence, it seeks to bridge an often theorized divide between actor and world by calling on their mutual constitution. As Lave and Wenger argue, this “view also claims that learning, thinking and knowing are relations among people in activity, in, with, and arising from the socially and culturally structured world” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 51). It questions “how lives, persons and practices are produced in ongoing everyday practice” (Lave, 2012, pp. 157, original italic) in particular times and places (Holland & Lave, 2009). In other words, a social practice perspective emphasizes the negotiation of meaning in interaction and concerns an understanding of “persons-in-practice” where practice integrates notions of actor, world and activity (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Hence, people are shaped by the social world they participate in. At the same time people also help to make this social world what it is, by their participation in it (Holland & Lave, 2009). Following Penuel (2014) this means that the forms of life in which we participate turn us into the people we are, when we make use of the artifacts, and identities that these practices make available for us to take up. At the same time, we assist in organizing these practices as we take them up, resist them, and adapt identities and artifacts available to us.

These notions of production of social life, persons-in-practice and the foregrounding of participation as a crucial process are all central to the study of (and in) enterprise education in this thesis. The perspective highlights the reality construction processes which takes place in and through enterprise education (Farny, et al., 2016), and it underpins the understanding of the enterprising person as a contested social and cultural construct. As the enterprising person (and the entrepreneur) remains an indeterminate concept, its meaning is continuously (re)negotiated in the context of its articulation (Marttila, 2013). Hence, we need to understand, how the meaning of the enterprising individual is

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17 Overall, social science has seen a “turn” towards studying practice and the ongoing production of social life (e.g. Bourdieu, 1977; Ortner, 2006). In this study, I primarily draw on the work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991, 1996) since it specifically focuses on learning and becoming as central aspects of persons’ participation in practice. Lave and Wenger’s contribution was part of an increasing interest in theorizing the meaning and processes of learning as part of social activity (e.g. Brown, et al., 1989; Lave, 1988; Scribner & Cole, 1973).
produced and negotiated in local learning settings. In that sense, the classroom can be regarded as a setting where meanings of entrepreneurship deriving from policy, research and everyday experiences are condensed and negotiated and where realities and subjectivities are created.

In sum, interpretivism carries a range of implications for research as it requires the researcher to adopt an exploratory orientation and to learn to understand perspectives of the people involved in the study as well as how their patterns of action unfold in particular contexts (Hammersley, 2013, p. 29). Consequently, the guiding epistemology of this research implies the understanding that knowledge is available only through the interplay of the investigator and the object of investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As Kondo (1990) elegantly expresses it, the researcher’s “eye/I” cannot be detached. Hence, it is impossible to separate yourself from what you get to know. This means that what makes the empirical material or “data” in a research project is the outcome of interpretation and interaction processes between the researcher and the research object or the research participants. In other words, findings are created along with the investigation and the construction of empirical material (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

3.4 Fieldwork and Settings

The ethnographic fieldwork took place from summer 2011 until the end of the year 2014. As a PhD student, I entered an enterprise education research group at a Danish university. The members of this research group are all active teachers and researchers within the field of enterprise education. Problems of access to fieldwork are well-known in education research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Walford, 2008). Yet, my close affiliation with these entrepreneurship teachers and researchers gave me a unique access to important research settings. I was quickly granted permission to observe in two different courses taught by three teachers from the research group. Both of these courses were embedded as first semester mandatory modules in postgraduate programmes. One was a programme in the faculty of Business and Social Sciences; the other was in the Arts faculty. In that way, the field work was multi-sited involving multiple fields linked together by peoples and concepts (Marcus, 1995).
3.4.1 The teachers

During field work, I kept a strong affiliation with a group of eight entrepreneurship researchers and educators. They all contributed to this study teaching me of their views on enterprise education. However, of special importance for my study are the three researchers, who also acted as teachers in the modules I observed. Two of them Carol and Henry are experienced educators in entrepreneurship. They have both developed their modules over a longer period of time and they continuously work to improve the pedagogical and didactical designs. Furthermore, both of them also use teaching experiences and module developments as cases in research papers on enterprise education. The third teacher Heather is a former student of Henry’s, who has been groomed to take over the teaching role, first as a student instructor and now as a lecturer.

3.4.2 The modules

Both in and outside the classroom, the teachers positioned the two modules as alternatives to mainstream entrepreneurship education symbolized by a focus on business planning. Both modules were designed to work with the genesis of entrepreneurial opportunities based on the everyday life of the students. Therefore, the modules can be said to involve and formally target what Hjorth (2007, p. 713) calls the “opportunity-creative time of the entrepreneurial processes”. In that way, these modules widen the scope and definition of entrepreneurship to highlight the desiring, playful and creative person rather than the economic person (ibid.). Hence, the modules are located within the broad conceptual model of entrepreneurship in education, which seeks to detach the concept from a business and managerial context (Gibb, 2002; Kirby, 2007b; Steyaert & Katz, 2004). With the motto that entrepreneurship can be learnt as an “everyday practice” (Blenker, et al., 2012; Blenker, et al., 2011), these particular entrepreneurship modules extend the interpretation of entrepreneurship to include more general ways of being in the world. Identity work processes are therefore central to both modules as an important element of entrepreneurial opportunity development and entrepreneurial becoming. As one of the teachers explained:
In this particular course [Module 2], the entry is social constructivist. This means that the self must be regarded as changeable. The students need to be made aware of that. Through the entrepreneurial process, through the disclosure of opportunities, they are to create themselves as entrepreneurs. This means that opportunities and the individual are co-created” (Conversation, Henry).

In that way, the entrepreneurial process and the creation of opportunities are encapsulated by processes of identity work. Hence, students are to understand that the self is mouldable and that it can be moulded into an enterprising self through an effectual process of opportunity creation.

Generally, the two modules build upon three main concepts: the individual-opportunity nexus (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), effectuation (Sarasvathy & Dew, 2005), and an interpretation of how opportunities derive from an analytical stance towards disharmonies in an everyday practices, informed by Spinosa, Flores and Dreyfus’ views on disclosing (1997). However, the modules differ in their didactical design and approach to working with this opportunity creation process. Module 1 was a 5 ECTS mandatory module placed in the first year of a graduate management education and considered an “outlier” in the general programme. Students were set to work individually in their own opportunity creation process, discovering their own means, motivations and uniqueness with relation to solving a personal disharmony through entrepreneurial practice. Module 2 was a 10 ECTS module where students worked in groups to create entrepreneurial opportunities from disharmonies shared in the group. In contrast to Module 1, this entrepreneurship class was positioned as an important entry into ways of working in the entire postgraduate programme, as explained by one of the programme educators not teaching the entrepreneurship:

“As years passed I have realized that it is clearly the entrepreneurial that is central. [...] We combine some very strong analytical skills with some quite high ambitions regarding the degree of enterprise that we would like the students to be able to enact. [...] So in my view, it is the entrepreneurial that fully is the focal point in this education. It is simply the nerve in it all.” (Interview, educator February, 2013)

The further specificities of the two modules are explained in the empirical essays, where Essay 1 presents a study in module 1, while Essay 2 presents a study in module 2. Based on the findings and conclusion of these two essays, I will compare and contrast these two modules in the discussion section of the thesis.
3.4.3 The students

The students in the two modules all participated in this study, yet, some of them were involved more extensively as interviewees and as participants in the group work, I observed. All of them were first-year graduate students with a background in various academic disciplines within humanities and the social sciences. Module 1 was located at the Business Faculty and all students in this module came from business education. 20 students in the ages between 23 and 28 were in the class with six students being internationals. Only four of the students were women. A small number of these students already had business start-up experience, but the majority had not and when asked, they said that they had no such intentions or plans. The 45 students who started out in Module 2 were all Danish nationals in the ages between 23 and 36. They came from various educational backgrounds in the humanities and social sciences. During the first lecture, the teacher assigned them into groups of five to six people. These students expressed an interest in entrepreneurship as a method, that is, a way of working. Especially the students from the humanities saw an opportunity in entrepreneurship to approach the labour market and to be able to create your own job through a form of consultancy, project initiation and management.

3.4.4 The University

The university which houses the research group and the enterprise education is a strong supporter of entrepreneurship initiatives, which stimulates and supports enterprising behaviour, entrepreneurship in the form of the business start-ups well as education to increase knowledge about entrepreneurship. Students in this university should gain the capacity and competencies to create value out of their academic professionalism. In fact, it is a strategic vision of the university that all students at some point during their studies will gain access to entrepreneurship education and become acquainted with the kind of entrepreneurship suited to their studies. During the time of the fieldwork, the university actually won a reward as an entrepreneurial university.
3.5 Research Methods

Ethnographic practice involves incorporating multiple methods and sources of data (Walford, 2008). Everything has potential importance and every occurrence has potential value as data (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 240). Therefore ethnography can be regarded as a general research strategy involving several interwoven procedures (Fick 2009). The methods for data construction in this study included observations and an intense following of the educational processes. As a consequence, I produced data through a combination of “in situ” participant observation and first-hand experience of interactions between teachers, teachers and students as well as between student peers; all in different settings. These observations were complemented by informal and formal interviews with students and lecturers as well as analyses of the texts they produce (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Conducting and managing forms of data construction in different sites in various research positions, made the empirical material immense and varied. Table 1 provides an overview of the fieldwork settings and the empirical material.

Table 1: Overview of Data Material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Enterprise Module 1</th>
<th>Enterprise Module 2</th>
<th>Teacher group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observations</strong></td>
<td>Classroom observations (30 hrs.)</td>
<td>Classroom observations (38 hrs.)</td>
<td>Teacher’s meetings, Summer school for entrepreneurship educators, conferences etc. (+100 hrs.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal interviews</strong></td>
<td>18 student interviews (30-120 min.) 1 teacher interview (60 min.)</td>
<td>14 student interviews (pre-study) (90-120 min.) 12 student interviews (90-120 min) 2 module teachers (60-90 min.) 1 programme teacher (60 min.)</td>
<td>5 interviews (60-90 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Documents</strong></td>
<td>4x20 student assignment of app. 3 pages. 20 exam papers of app. 15 pages. Course description and syllabus. Field diary, field notes and memo’s.</td>
<td>5x9 student assignments of app. 2 pages. 9 exam papers of app. 60 pages. Course description and syllabus Field diary, field notes and memo´s</td>
<td>Research papers and books written by the teachers Field diary, field notes and memo’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>Online communication: email, Facebook. Recordings of group meetings, when I was unable to attend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3.5.1 Participant observation

Experiences from diverse forms of participant observation make up the core of this study. Scholars often highlight participant observation as the hallmark of ethnographic fieldwork and how the researcher’s experiences of immersion and her relationships with research participants serve as a vehicle for eliciting findings and insights (Amit, 2000; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). My role as observer varied during the fieldwork from moderate participation in some settings to full participation in other settings. During lectures or in student group work, my participation was moderate, as I was not inscribed as a student and therefore did not hand in assignments or exams (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). However, during teacher’s meetings, at conferences etc., I gradually took a more active participatory role. Towards the end of the fieldwork, I even acted as an educator myself in an entrepreneurship module and thus as full participant.

Fieldwork as a research method is open, explorative and pragmatic in the sense that decisions can be constantly revised (Locke, 2011; Walford, 2008). The first weeks of fieldwork, I spent with the research group, but I quickly started observations in Module 1, where I limited myself to observing in the classroom and focus on teacher-student interactions. I took note of the prevailing descriptions of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs in the class and I let myself be guided by student reactions and behaviours, e.g. how students responded or did not respond to various topics, what questions they asked the lecturer, what they were discussing amongst themselves, and what else would surprise me during the lectures. However, I sensed that I missed important insights into how the students talked and processed information together without a teacher present. I only received reports of what was going on outside the classroom through formal interviews and informal conversations. Interviews are certainly necessary in order to approach the meaning and ideas, which inform the behaviours of the students and teachers (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Still, relying only on interviews makes the research fully dependent on the understandings inherent to the accounts of informants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). This may inhibit discovery of themes or aspects that these informants are not aware of or cannot articulate in words (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). Therefore, when I started observations in Module 2, I ensured that I was allowed to follow a group of students in their group work as well observing lectures. When collecting data in Module 2, I also decided to rely less on formal interviews and start with observations and informal talks, and then later move on to more structured data collection in well-
defined semi-structured interview situations. That was partly due to experiences from Module 1, which I explain below, and partly due to the fact that my access to the course was allowed only on the condition that I would not “disturb” students unnecessarily, since they would be extremely busy during that semester.

3.5.1.1 Something to observe

Fieldwork in a traditional perspective is a process of placing oneself in and gradually gaining knowledge about an unfamiliar world (Geertz, 1973, p. 13). However, it is difficult to study something that you are heavily involved in. There is a risk of “going native” i.e. to become caught in details and local understandings, which results in a loss of analytical distance (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), and therefore the ability to draw conclusions from the study that may have wider theoretical interest (Alvesson, 2003). Fieldwork in familiar fields thus requires particular (self)reflexivity and specific methodological and analytical strategies to make the field strange enough to enable discovery (Delamont, Atkinson, & Pugsley, 2010; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). In general, this sense of being so embedded in a social field, that it becomes a problem to actually spot empirically and theoretically interesting phenomena, is well known in education research (Delamont, et al., 2010; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). As Becker concludes:

“We may have understated a little the difficulty of observing contemporary classrooms. It is not just the survey method of educational testing or any of those things that keeps people from seeing what is going on. I think, instead, that it is first and foremost a matter of it all being so familiar that it becomes impossible to single out events that occur in the classroom as things that have occurred, even when they happen right in front of you. […] it takes a tremendous effort of will and imagination to stop seeing only the things that are conventionally “there” to be seen.” (Becker, 1971, cited in Delamont, et al., 2010, p. 3)

I also found lecture situations challenging to observe, since I had long experiences of participation in this field as both a student and an educator, but no experience with being a participant researcher. It therefore required utmost concentration to actually see and acknowledge what was going on and to record it. I followed Delamont’s (2008) advice that to fend against this blindness caused by familiarity when observing in classrooms a good idea is to take notice of the surroundings, what the room looks
like, counting the number of students etc. noting their interaction in order to continuously remind yourself to stay in the observant role. Therefore, I recorded basic things in my field notes and took a descriptive stance to recording the phenomena. However, I still sometimes found myself jotting down notes as any student in a seminar would do, because I set myself the task (as any student) to understand the educator’s intentions and definitions of entrepreneurship. Consequently, I was simultaneously engaged in learning to understand the rationalities inherent to the teachers’ pedagogical designs, while at the same time learning to understand the reactions and positions of the other participants in the classroom, as well as my own.

In addition to the blindness caused by familiarity, I was challenged by my own expectations of what I “ought” to be observing. After spending some time in the classroom in Module 1, I felt at a loss. I came equipped with various views on entrepreneurship and knowledge of a correlation between identification and enterprising behaviour. Yet, I could not detect anything recognizable in terms of the nodal points that I believed were important for fostering an analysis about identity, such as practice, research participant’s reflections, common language etc. Actually, I got the feeling there was hardly any practice to study. Thereto, I was surprised by the differences between the students’ expressions of excitement and curiosity in interviews and their expressions of anger, confusion or passivity registered in the classroom. These moments of “puzzlement” (Hastrup, 1992) and experiences of “breakdowns” in the encounter between theoretical assumptions and empirical impressions (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011), surely sharpened reflection. I realized my own naivety with some embarrassment, since I unconsciously had expected to be able to observe entrepreneurial behaviour and students “turning entrepreneurial”. Yet, I became seriously aware of the impossibilities inherent to this expectation. First of all, I was confronted with the question of how entrepreneurial identity may be defined empirically, when in fact there is no behaviour that can clearly be identified as “entrepreneurial”. Researchers have previously joined entrepreneurial becoming with the process of founding and running a business (Down, 2006; Hoang & Gimeno, 2010). But in this education setting, none of the participants were in the process of starting a business. In fact, most of them did not even intend to start a business. Moreover, the enterprise course was founded on the broad view of entrepreneurship in education. Hence, entrepreneurial becoming was never defined in terms business founding. This made me realise, just how difficult the concept of entrepreneurial identity is analytically, when it is related to a specific
mindset and ontology of the person, rather than a specific behaviour. As a result of these experiences, I started to consider “the classroom” and its implied notions of “education” as a particular context, which seriously mediates on practice, meaning and identity construction. Therefore, I found it necessary to change my theoretical baseline from conceptualisations of identity found in the entrepreneurship literature, to rely more on identity as theorized in the context of learning and education.

I jotted down field notes in notebooks. During lectures this practice was not uncommon and therefore did not stand out. When I was with the student group, I mostly stayed in the background, but occasionally I asked questions. Especially during work breaks, I found it possible to ask about students’ interpretations of assignments, feelings and plans for how to solve perceived problems. My field notes were largely descriptive, which means that I took notes of what people said verbatim as much as possible and described in detail what they did and where discussions seemed most intense (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Spradley, 1980). Additionally, I recorded my own moods and emotions in the field notes in order to be able to compare the recordings of activities with my own reactions (Delamont, 2008). These jottings were later – preferably on the same day – transcribed and extended on the computer. Often they were followed with analytical memos sparked by interests or “puzzlements” (Hastrup, 1992). I also kept a field diary to be able to track my own learning and development as analyst.

3.5.1.2 Access to observation and information
Participant observation is a method for data collection where the researcher is less in control of the research process as compared to other methods (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). The researcher reacts to and interacts with others in various events and situations. It is therefore impossible to fully anticipate what will be going on, and which situations you will find yourself in as a participant observer. Gaining access to the education settings was fairly easy, but I also discovered limits to my participation. I followed a group of Module 2 students closely. They allowed me to participate in their group meetings to observe how they worked with the course assignments and worked to create an entrepreneurial opportunity and execute it in collaboration with “real world” stakeholders. However, when they finally were to meet with contacts outside class, they decided that they did not want me to come along to those meetings. Their reason was the impression that my participation would leave on the externals. They
argued that my being older and my constant note-taking would make them seem less like entrepreneurial professionals and more like students in the eyes of the stakeholders. Hence, my presence would impact on the seriousness of the project and the legitimacy of the group. Instead, the group agreed to report back to me after meetings and also to record their group conversations after meeting the stakeholders. Even so, this left me feeling that I really lost important access to information about the development of the project and the entrepreneurial identity work of the group. Surely, I felt that my role as participant observer and the quality of my study was at stake, as I had to abandon my planned research design. However, experiences like this also sharpen reflection on the kinds of information that observations may possibly lead to, and how any participant observation is surrounded by realms of non-participation. These access troubles thus left me with vital information on the practice in this education setting of establishing important legitimacy through a distancing to whatever may symbolize “student” or “school”. This ended being a central interest in my continued work and also a theme taken up in Essay 2.

3.5.2 Interviews

To complement my observations, I conducted formal semi-structured interviews with teachers and students following an interview guide on topics, I wanted to cover. I used the interview to gain insights into descriptions and “insider accounts” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) of a particular event in class, and inquire into the activities of the students’ coursework, the teacher’s thoughts and process when grading the students etc. These formal interviews took place in the teacher’s offices or in meeting rooms and offices close to the location of the lecture rooms and they were all recorded and transcribed. I asked open-ended, non-directive and descriptive questions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Spradley, 1979) about situations, activities and events. I did not always follow the interview guide in every interview, and I did not pose the exact same questions to all participants, but allowed discussions of specific interests or concerns. In Module 1, I conducted interviews with students in three rounds. That was done with the expectation that I could follow up on events experienced in the classroom and gain information about their issues of participation and process of entrepreneurial learning. However, I found that overall the student interviews were challenging to conduct. Even though the intention was to keep focus on behaviours and events related to the course work, the interviews often slid towards issues
of evaluation and student analysis of the course and the entrepreneurial learning project per se. The formal interview situation immediately positioned me in front of the students as either an evaluator of the module in general or an evaluator of them and their understandings of the curriculum. The interviews thus became an exercise in avoiding evaluation and “correct answers” with regards to the curriculum or the rationalities of the pedagogical designs of the education. Instead, I interviewed them about their practice and experiences and situations. However, the challenge remained. Below is an excerpt from an interview conducted at the beginning of Module 2, where we talked about this new course and what the student expected from it.

SHF: The self-reflections that you do [in class]. How does that relate to being an entrepreneur? I mean, how do you think that you are being trained in entrepreneurship through these self-reflections?

Amanda: It is the theory of Saravathy that if you know yourself better then you are also better qualified at intervening. Then you kind of know what kind of building blocks you have. I believe you can achieve that through self-reflection, if you think about things. […]. I don’t know whether you are a better entrepreneur, but I believe that you are better at judging and making qualified decisions that you are happier about in your life generally. But, yes, if you follow Saravathy then you are of course a better entrepreneur. And I believe you become more in balance with yourself. Therefore, you are also better at being under pressure and better at handling being in a group and interact. These are human qualities, which makes you a better entrepreneur. […]. Alright, now I just walk out the door and I come back in a little while to receive my grade (laughter)” (Interview, Amanda 1)

This sequence clearly shows just how difficult the practice of interviewing is. It is not a free and symmetrical dialogue (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). The questions I ask as an interviewer lead the student to retell the course curriculum in ways, which makes her feel like being in an exam. As a researcher, I was interested in the local definitions of entrepreneurship and “production” and recognition of the entrepreneurial. I was eager to learn about students definitions and sometimes also desperate, since I found it difficult to recognise anything “entrepreneurial” in the classroom behaviours. Even though I was conscious about avoiding evaluation, “correct answers” or heavily theorized accounts given by the interviewee (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Spradley, 1979), the urge was still there to talk about entrepreneurship and make students define and describe their experiences in ways, I was able to recognize and define as “entrepreneurial”. These experiences made me conscious of the vulnerability of the interview situation. Therefore, I chose to rely less on formal interviews during
Module 2, but concentrated on observations and informal conversations to follow up on events and behaviours observed. However, after the students handed in their final exam, I interviewed members of the group who I had followed, as well as representatives from the other student workgroups. These interviews summed up on experiences of particular events, situations and learnings.

3.5.3 Documents

The course syllabus as well as texts recommended by teachers helped to enlighten me of the particular theorisations underpinning the educational programmes. I read them to in order to understand concepts and their translation into the local environment. Moreover, I got access to and read all student productions such as assignments and exam papers. They worked as a foundation for interview themes and they were read and coded as examples of a manifestation of knowledge of entrepreneurship, use of the specific vocabulary, central reflections, and certainly as impression management towards the evaluators. In Module 2, I observed the students working with the assignments, which triggered discussions and reflections amongst the students, which again informed to me about central conflicts, doubts and uncertainties, learnings and convictions in the group. Post-fieldwork, the assignments and exam-papers were all read or reread and coded. Additionally, the empirical material is made up of policy documents, course descriptions and teachers’ PowerPoint presentations.

3.6 The Process of Analysis

It is well-known, that data analysis in ethnography is not a distinct stage of the research. There is always a continuous interaction between data analysis and data collection (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that all data analysis includes three necessary activities: data reduction, data display and interpretation and verification. This is an iterative process. As Dewalt and Dewalt state (2011, p. 15): “The active, insightful investigator should continually be reviewing field notes and transcripts and continually tossing out old ideas and posing new questions for study during fieldwork and post-fieldwork phases of research”. Certainly, as seen above, the fieldwork involved an ongoing process of analysis, and it intensified towards the end and after leaving the field.
3.6.1 Creating positions for analysis

Ethnography in one’s own culture involves some serious challenges since you cannot avoid “going native”, but you must avoid “staying native” (Alvesson, 2003, p. 189). Since, I was not an entrepreneurship educator myself, I entered the field as an “outsider” (Blenker, et al., 2014). However, since I also acted as a PhD student amongst the same individuals whose practices I was researching, it was a constant challenge to continuously keep an analytical distance and a reflective and curious mind towards those practices and understandings expressed by these individuals in their role as my colleagues in entrepreneurship and enterprise education research, and as my informants and research objects. Ideally, an ethnographer should understand people well enough to become able to understand, explain and describe the activities they engage in and the courses of action they adopt (Hammersley, 2006). Therefore ethnography is usually a slow and demanding method. I constantly struggled to acquire knowledge and skill to be able to participate fully in the field, while still keeping an observational and questioning stance, as well as keeping the field at a level of analytical interest, even though things started to appear as routines, well-known and banal. Therefore, I found it necessary to make a conscious distinction between what Hasse (2015, p. 32) defines as the “empirical field” - a “practiced place” and the researcher’s object of study - and the “analytical field”, the theoretical field of the researcher, where constructs are challenged and new perspectives tried out. I placed the accumulation of theory within enterprise education in the empirical field as “emic” concepts and knowledge and thus not necessarily similar to my analytical research perspective. This distinction underlines the separation between me as the researcher and other participants in the empirical field. However, I constantly worked in and out of these fields. Sometimes I emphasised the well-defined position as PhD. student and member of the research group, contributing to daily work and meetings. At other times, I took a more observant and questioning position to inquire about the common sense-making and consensus around the purpose and execution of proper entrepreneurship education.

3.6.2 Coding

Data reduction refers to the process of “selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10). I read and re-read
through the empirical material in an open-coding process to formulate issues, ideas and themes noticeable in the material (Emerson, et al., 1995). Initially, the codes referred to special activities, such as “preparing assignments,” “establishing common work rules” or “referring to the syllabus”. But they could also be of a more thematic and analytic character encompassing commonly found definitions or emotions e.g. “defining the entrepreneur” or “fear of bad performance” or “process”. To organize these codes I drew several maps and outlines to examine and display possible relations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Gradually, I became aware and interested in a perceived opposition between what I defined to be “student” and an “entrepreneur”, as well as the constitution of entrepreneurship as a learning opportunity to be exploited, and the analysis became more focused with time. While coding in this way, I also engaged in a more focused coding process when reading through the material, in order to fill in on topics that I already identified as interesting. In both cases, emerging patterns and themes from the coding process were triangulated across methods and settings (Flick, 2009). I also traced references to particular events throughout the data material, and sought to find other incidents which resembled it or contradicted any possible explanations (Silverman, 2000).

3.6.3 Engaging with theory

The impossibility of a strict separation between theory and data has been discussed for a long time in the social sciences. As Pring (2010, p. 76) asserts: “Facts do not stare you in the face”. Observations always depend on concepts and theories. They are “filtered” through the understandings, preferences and beliefs of the observer. As Geertz (1983, p. 34) highlights, it is an illusion to distinguish between the “mere fact” and the “idea”. As a consequence, it is important to acknowledge that all empirical material is theory laden (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011; Packer, 2011). Even though research findings are reported as themes that emerged from the data, this data is already an artefact of interpretations and the use of specific vocabularies (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). As Packer (2011, p. 225) notes: “the raw data of ethnography is already cooked”. Additionally, ethnography as a strategy for data collection is not value free. It is closely connected to some underlying assumptions in its focus on the intersubjective and the interest in the sociocultural production of collective worlds (Eisenhart, 1988; Merriam, 1988). Hence, as methodological stance ethnography does not fit well with theoretical
perspectives that are “acontextual, ahistorical and asocial” (Eisenhart, 1988, p. 112). In that way, the research interest and observations were merged with theory from the beginning, and over time, my theoretical understandings developed and I was able to observe new things and ask new questions.

The strive to create a vocabulary of analysis has been a journey of continuous search and with a range of impasses. With research interests in identity, learning and entrepreneurship there are multiple entrance points and the risk of getting lost in a vast interdisciplinary research field is immediate. Delamont (2008) states that the better prepared the ethnographer is, the more literature is read, the more knowledge and insights into a foreshadowed problem, the better. I started field work with building a knowledge base in enterprise education theory, but due to learnings during the fieldwork, I started to search the literature within education and learning research, to better understand the special characteristics of the classroom as a research field, and to find help to explain intersections between identity and learning, as well as theories which consider identity in relation to context and practice. Consequently, while collecting and generating analytical categories from the data, I generated a “conceptual apparatus” that I experienced as useful for questioning the empirical material, to open and challenge it, and make some theoretical sense of the hunches and “puzzlements” I encountered in the field and when reading and rereading the fieldnotes (Hastrup, 1992; Watson & Watson, 2012). This constant interweaving of questioning, explaining and theorizing anew took place throughout the fieldwork as well as in the post-fieldwork phase.

3.6.4 Asking questions

Qualitative studies always involve an ongoing process of questioning (Agee, 2009) and as the study evolved I experienced changes in my thinking about the research problem, the theoretical framing, my methods for data collection and thus my research questions. Ethnographic research questions are typically open ended and invites thick description and contextualized answers (Geertz, 1973). Hence ethnographers start by asking broadly formulated questions such as “who are these people and what are they doing, rather than how can this particular practical problem be solved” (Krause-Jensen, 2010, p. 268). I started fieldwork with an interest in the notions of entrepreneurial identity construction in classrooms, based on the broad conceptual model of entrepreneurship in education. Hence, my outset question was how students were taught and how they learned to construct and present recognizable
entrepreneurial identities in an enterprise education course. Throughout the study, I kept this interest in the conceptualization of an entrepreneurial identity and its development, nurture or even discovery through specific pedagogical treatments. However, I became more aware of how entrepreneurship was constituted as a learning opportunity in these courses, which required something special of the students, if they were to benefit from this opportunity. Hence, instead of a study revolving around a conceptualization of entrepreneurial identity, I became interested in issues of student participation. “What is required of me” was the title of my first conference paper, which later evolved into Essay 1, included in this dissertation.\footnote{The paper was presented at the 35th. ISBE Conference, 7.11. – 9.11.2012, Dublin, Ireland} In that way, I did not construct the research questions of this study a priori through reviewing existing research and a “find-and-fill-the-gap logic” (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013). Instead, I seek to contribute to existing research with a theoretically infused thick description of educational practices. The questions posed in the two empirical essays derive from fieldwork puzzlements. Hence, the questions and contributions in these essays build on the empirical material as I use fieldwork experiences to discuss broadly shared ideas in the enterprise education literature. The third essay is conceptual, but shares the aim of investigating ideas about enterprise education, when it seeks to disclose the normative and cultural curriculum, embedded in its practice.

### 3.6.5 Writing up

Ethnographic studies present readers with “tales of the field” (Van Maanen, 2011(1988)) that is insights into what happens in a particular setting at a particular time of history. Since it is an approach to research, which involves a strong focus on documenting the lifeways of people or groups, there is always a significant descriptive element in ethnographic texts. Geertz (1973) uses the term “thick description” as a way of conceptualising the purpose and outcome of ethnography in anthropology. Thick description is an interpretive endeavour and a way of contextualising and explicating densely textured facts (Geertz, 1973, p. 14). The discussion of how to represent in text the particular world studied is debated strongly by authors of ethnographic texts (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Emerson, et al., 1995; Geertz, 1973; Jarzabkowski, Bednarek, & Lè, 2014; Van Maanen, 2011(1988)). The main idea grows out of the process of coding and selecting field note excerpts, which are the building blocks for constructing and telling the story (Emerson, et al., 1995). Hence the analytic concern in the empirical
chapters of this dissertation is tied to my interpretation of events, which occurred in the setting, yet they are extended in the essays and related to theoretical topics of broader interest.

Writing interesting, coherent and structured stories from a bulk of “unstructured data” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) is not a straightforward task. It is a complex matter which depends on an uncountable number of strategic choices and active constructions with regards to what details to include or omit, how to summarize and present data; what voice to select, what quotations to use etc. (Van Maanen, 2011(1988), p. 73). In that way, writing up the research was an important part of the analysis. Geertz (1988, p. 1) argues it is illusory to consider ethnography as” a matter of sorting strange and irregular facts into familiar and orderly categories”. Rather, it might be “a kind of writing, putting things to paper.” Hence, insights do not alone arise from the ethnographer’s presence in the field, but from communicating and constructing this experience through authorship. In other words, the ethnographic researcher is an author (Geertz, 1988). Van Maanen (2011(1988)) complements that ethnography is a written representation of a social reality. Ethnography, in his view, is the practice of representing one social reality of others through the analysis of one’s own experience in the world of these others. In that way it is highly particular and very personal. Hence, the findings are created by the active construction of a text (Van Maanen, 2011(1988), p. 7) aimed at drawing readers into an unfamiliar world and allow them to see, hear, and feel what the fieldworker saw, heard or felt (Van Maanen 2011, p.103). Hence the parts of the empirical material must be selected, presented and interpreted and turned into a form of evidence (Jarzabkowski, et al., 2014).

In the two empirical essays, I experiment with different ways of presenting the field work data as evidence. In Essay 1, I seek to build evidence with an outset in a vignette, i.e. a focused description of an event in the field, which I use to illustrate and support the theoretical argument presented in the paper (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 81). Jarzabkowski et al. (2014, p. 280) explain that vignettes show “evidentiary power” through the “plausible, vivid and authentic insights into the life-world of the participants”. The particular incident which I present as a vignette “tricked” some early hunches in me, which were later developed into the “research insights” (Locke, 2011). Therefore, I also believed that it was suited to convey the atmosphere and help readers gain a sense of the field and my experiences in it. In Essay 2, I employ a more classical approach to presenting data in qualitative management studies. I
organize the presentation of findings around a visible display of the coded data categories and themes. In that way, I let the readers gain insight to the coding process and the structure of the argument.

3.7 Conclusions: Validity, Limitations and Ethics

In this section I have presented what Van Maanen would call a “confessional tale” (Van Maanen, 2011(1988)) about the methodological foundation and development of the study and the process of fieldwork. It is obvious, that the study is strongly focused on the empirical and situational, and that it relies on a personalised seeing, hearing and experiencing in specific social settings. Looking towards specified criteria whereby it is possible to evaluate the quality of the research and the research findings therefore seem as a difficult task, especially if we are talking about traditional guidelines for replication, transparency and rigour (Silverman, 2000).

It is well known in the qualitative research field, that the task of judging the quality of research cannot be reduced to the application of explicit, concrete and exhaustive indicators. Even though some fundamental common guidelines may be desirable, there are important differences between research paradigms which makes standard evaluation difficult (Hammersley, 2007). Quality can therefore never be a technical matter (Silverman, 2000). Still, it is important to discuss the validity of the findings and the knowledge claims of this study as well as their consistency, that is, how the findings may apply in situations other than those in which they were generated (ibid.).

3.7.1 Questions of Validity

Silverman (2000, p. 176) poses a question with regards to validity, which is of relevance to my work. He asks how qualitative researchers are to convince themselves and their audience that their findings are genuinely based on critical investigation of all their data and not only depends on a few well-chosen examples. Citing Mehan (1979), Silverman suggests that this often is a concern in ethnographic work, which may typically be anecdotal and include a few examples on the a particular behaviour, which the researcher has “culled from fieldnotes” (ibid.). When the researcher does not provide the criteria for
including certain instances and not others, it becomes difficult for an audience to determine the representativeness of these instances and the findings generated from them. According to Silverman (2000, p. 177) typical responses to counter this critique is method and data triangulation and respondent validation. However, triangulation as a base for validity claims does not fit well with more interpretive research models, where reality cannot be separated from how you look at it (ibid.). Therefore, it is not an appropriate response in my work. The same can be said about the validity claim resting on research participant’s validation of findings. It is well known that ethnography involves an important tension between a participant perspective and the analytic perspective provided by the researcher (Hammersley, 2006; Hastrup, 1995). It is important that the researcher come to understand the perspectives of the people participating in the study and their perspectives and practices. However, it is also important to develop an analytic understanding of these perspectives and practices and hence a perspective developed in the analytical field. However, many of the conceptual constructs in the analytical field of this study such as entrepreneurship, learning, identity, and process overlap with concepts employed actively by participants in the empirical field. It was therefore a methodological challenge when interviewing and observing to keep a constant awareness of the differences that could be found beneath surface similarity (Krause-Jensen, 2010). This also means that the understanding derived from the analysis may be different to the understandings resting in the empirical field. In fact, they may even conflict with how people themselves regard their own world and their activities in it (Hammersley, 2006; Hastrup, 1995). Due to my embeddedness with the group of educators as a PhD. researcher this was a concern when developing the analyses, since I found no immediate possibility to withdraw from the empirical field into a befitting analytical field. It has therefore been imperative for me to leave the research group for periods of time and involve others in the process of analysis. Still, I always found it somewhat alarming, that when I was granted access to studying educational programmes as an outside researcher, I would end up with criticizing the observed practices. Therefore it has been imperative for me to discuss my findings with both students and educators in order not to misinterpret reactions and the pedagogical purposes as well as to challenge my findings. However, the findings of this study will always go beyond participant’s perspectives (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011).

Certainly, as this to a high extent is an observational study, the reader has to depend on my representations of what was going on. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1988, p. 5) writes that the
“highly situated nature of ethnographic description – this ethnographer, in this time, in this place with these informants, these commitments, and these experiences, a representative of a particular culture, a member of a certain class – gives to the bulk of what is said a rather take-it-or leave-it quality”. Therefore, scholars also argue that ethnographic work should be validated on the credibility of the text and its ability to convince the readers of the authenticity of the ethnographer being there and grasping the particularities of life in that setting. Hence, readers should determine whether the text is plausible and connect experience with conceptual elements appropriately and consistently, or whether it causes the reader to think about the issues differently (Cunliffe, 2010, p. 231; Van Maanen, 2011).

3.7.2 Limitations

There are clearly limitations to this study and how it was conducted. One is in relation to what to do with the findings of the study and the discussions that it initiates. It is valuable to consider how to establish an “empirical relationship” between the findings generated in specific enterprise education settings and other sites. Hence, it is worth thinking about how the findings of in-depth study may serve as the basis for “grand comparison” and understanding (Van Maanen, 2011(1988), p. 7) and speak to empirical conditions elsewhere (Small 2009). It is of course important that research in education contributes to change and improve education practices for the benefit of students and teachers. Robinson and Shumar (2014) propose that ethnography as a method, which closely looks into the practices of enterprise education, may constructively feed into discussions about how enterprising behaviour is nurtured and supported, and how it evolves into entrepreneurial practices through socially constructed communities (Robinson & Shumar, 2014). I am more wary here. As mentioned in the theory section, the ethnographic method may entail important limitations with regards to this ambition. Voices within education research, actually questions whether ethnography actually should or is able to deliver clear answers, which informs practitioners and policy (Farnsworth & Solomon, 2013; Hammersley, 1992, 1997). The contributions of an ethnographic research design may be more subtle and indirect. Hence, it results in knowledge, which is different from the knowledge practitioners need to conduct class on a weekday. Of course, this does not imply irrelevance and it is certainly my wish that the findings of this study will initiate further research and discussions, which in the long run will
impact on research in enterprise education as well as practice for the benefit of enterprise students and teachers.

3.7.3 Ethics

Research is necessarily a reflective enterprise. As with reflections on research problems, data collection and analysis, it also involves reflections on research ethics. This is of particular importance in a fieldwork design, which depends on close relations to other research participants. Indeed, much of the discussions on ethics concentrate on the behaviours or the researcher. Throughout this study, I have frequently considered questions on ethics. Certainly, it is the responsibility of the researcher to act in ways that are acceptable taking account of the research goals, the situation in which the research is carried out and the values and interests of the people involved (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). In my study, that was first and foremost a matter of assuring an informed consent from the students that they would act as participants and contribute to my study.

All students were informed about the research and my role as a researcher and participation in interviews were voluntary. Hence, students allowed me to contact them with the purpose of planning an interview. In Module 1 this information was carried out orally in class and students contacted me in the break time. In Module 2, I wanted to inform the students more formally and therefore I handed out a one page information sheet in class. Moreover, they were given a piece of paper where they could sign up for interviews and thus consent to additional participation. Some of the students did not sign this consent form, and therefore they were not contacted with the purpose of formal interviews. The student work group allowed me to tag along with them when asked.

In an education setting, there are of course issues of power and of information flows between different groups that must be considered. I decided that I would not pass on any information between the different groups of teachers and students. Interviews were confidential and what I learnt through my participation with the students, I would not pass on to teachers. Therefore, when students complained about a teacher’s behaviour or misunderstandings, I would not take that up as a topic in the teacher interview. Hence, I was aware of not becoming a mediator between these two groups of participants.
Moreover, during conflicts in the student work group, I did my best not to meddle or take sides, but instead to gain information about the conflict from all the conflicting parties.
This thesis contributes to research in enterprise education with new perspectives onto its practice. In three essays, I explore how education seeks to engage students in a process of becoming entrepreneurial. The essays represent independent studies that all address questions of access to an imagined entrepreneurial community and identity, and how the process of becoming entrepreneurial is practiced in enterprise education.

The two empirical studies attend to this question through analyses of how students operate in learning settings organized to facilitate entrepreneurial becoming. The third essay treats the question of access to entrepreneurship through an analysis of how enterprise education is organized to facilitate an initiation into a specific belief system. The empirical findings were derived through a method for inquiry, which is highly legitimised in education research (Delamont, 2014; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), however it is seldom employed in entrepreneurship education research.

In this section, I first present the conclusions of the individual essays and how they relate to the overall research question of the thesis. This leads into a further discussion across the essays suggesting a broader picture of enterprise education in practice. After that, follows a consideration of how these conclusions contribute to the theory and practice of entrepreneurship and enterprise education. Finally, I consider the limitations of the study and how it suggests directions for future research.

### 4.1 Individual Essay Conclusions

*Essay 1* questions how enterprise education is imagined and practiced as an identity workspace, when reflective identity work is used as a pedagogical strategy for entrepreneurial learning. The findings of this study highlights an important dilemma in enterprise education which explicitly targets self-reflective identity work, but still does this in a framework, where students are evaluated by an educator and graded on their performance. This practice pushed students into delivering self-narratives told within a certain “genre” – a “teacher-appropriate” solution – and not the authentic self-reflections,
which the teacher in this module represented as the pathway to entrepreneurial becoming. The practice of grading thus worked against the objective of the module to bridge student and entrepreneur identities. Another important finding of this paper is how the access to an “imagined community” of entrepreneurial practice in this module was constructed to be a question of “self-reflexibility”, that is the ability to gain insight into one’s own authenticity; and as “flexibility”, the ability and willingness to transform. The paper therefore concludes that identity work is not a context free practice and I argue that it is necessary to reconsider the functionalist framing of identity work as something which can be steered towards specific and desirable outcomes in enterprise education.

*Essay 2* directs attention to the constitution of the entrepreneurial process as a transformative agent in education which students were to comply to and “get through” in order to become entrepreneurial. The process of becoming was organised according to specific rules, which should to be followed to meet those promises of transformation. The analyses suggest that participants in enterprise education are invited to take up specific positions for learning made available in context. Students pursued access to learning opportunities through a constant dynamic of participation between three shifting stances: compliance, authenticity and autonomy. However, these stances were contradictory in nature and produced paradoxical situations and a pervasive meta-communication about how to learn and how to be a learner. Hence, even though the entrepreneurial process is imagined to be student governed and open to individual constructions (Blenker, et al., 2008; Löbler, 2006), the findings of my study indicate that the process of becoming a learner and to be granted access to the learning opportunities in process-driven enterprise education is an ambiguous undertaking.

*Essay 3* presents a broader perspective on enterprise education and how it initiates students into an entrepreneurial community in ways that may be compared to religiosity. We apply the “cult” as a metaphor to highlight a hidden curriculum in the form of beliefs and values attached to the process of becoming entrepreneurial which is (re)produced and promoted in entrepreneurship education. Again, “entrepreneurial” not alone refers to a practice or professional activity, but entails a wider range of ideas about how people ought to live their lives at their best. In that sense, enterprise education also becomes a moral education. However, even though education takes place in an academic environment, these beliefs are seldom discussed openly in class and thus make up a hidden curriculum. Hence, the process of entrepreneurial becoming is imagined as a form of salvation and practiced through reverence
of certain personalities (deities) and through distinct pedagogies and activities (rituals). The discussion in this paper contributes to research by an extension of the language we may use to talk about entrepreneurship. Thereto, we highlight some dilemmas that entrepreneurship educators may experience, when they stand as “preachers” in classrooms and we propose ways of solving them.

4.2 Conclusions across the Essays

Altogether, this thesis contributes to enterprise education research by introducing a discussion about access to entrepreneurial becoming and how this access is imagined and produced in education. The study thus points to some consequences of the utilitarian value attached to entrepreneurship in education and its constitution as a transformative agent with the power to yield entrepreneurial experiences that change abilities and self-understandings of students in higher education.

4.2.1 Learning in activity or activity for learning?

In higher education, learning typically organise activity. Hence what you do, you do with a purpose of learning. In contrast, literature on entrepreneurial learning suggests that it is the activity that organizes learning (Cope, 2005; Rae & Carswell, 2001). In process-driven enterprise education this distinction is not clear cut. Scholars argue that students learn to behave as entrepreneurs, when they learn in entrepreneurial ways (Rae, 2010). In this view, activity, experience and reflection organize learning. However, as the empirical essays in this thesis show, engagement in enterprise in education is attributed utilitarian value beyond its immediate practice. Module 1 is a radical representative of this view, as the students construct an imaginary entrepreneurial process in order to access important learning. Hence, the entrepreneurial process becomes a “method” to achieve entrepreneurial becoming and it is valued for the impact it may have on the individual. In Module 2 the students were engaged in creating “real” entrepreneurial interventions. However, the distinction between “school projects” and “entrepreneurial projects” indicates a similar discrimination between learning-in-activity and activity-for-learning. This double connotation inherent to the “learning through enterprise” paradigm may

19 For example, the student reads a book about math, not for the purpose of reading, but for the purpose of learning math.
explain some of the difficulties the students experienced in both modules shifting between or bridging the identities of student-learner and entrepreneur-doer, because, the students were asked to initiate an entrepreneurial intervention (fictive or real) as a way of learning. However, to make the most of this opportunity, they had to pretend to be entrepreneurs and thus act “as if” they did it due to a desire to solve a heartfelt disharmony. In that way, the two empirical papers point towards an inherent unsolved paradox in enterprise education, constituted by conventional organizational structures in Higher Education; as well as by a cultural model of the “authenticity-driven” entrepreneur. Students experience this paradox when performing in opposing roles, trying to respond to conflicting demands in the learning setting.

The identity dilemmas experienced by the students in the two modules also points towards the cultural construction of the entrepreneur in education. Essay 3 highlights how enterprise education entails a hidden curriculum with regards to specific values and beliefs inherent to a cultural model of entrepreneurship. It is also possible to recognise some of these “cult” elements in the empirical studies. In both modules, students were occupied with managing the immediate learning environment chasing access to participation. This participation was structured as a rigid process of opportunity creation built around a number of set assignments. The student-learners did not always know how and why they were supposed to do these assignments. In reality, the students were asked to follow a form, even with an incomplete understanding or sometimes disagreement with its purpose. Yet, it was through this form, that the entrepreneurial becoming was to take place. In that way, the process and method of entrepreneurship in education is ritualised as an agent of transformation. As argued in Essay 3, entrepreneurship education is invested with meaning as a “rite of passage” (Turner, 1967; Van Gennep, 1960). Following the rules and trusting the process as a change agent, promised results in terms of overturning the status quo to create new identities.

Yet, in Essay 3 we argue that enterprise education also involves a “deification” of entrepreneurs as special people, who the enterprise students should strive to resemble. However, in my empirical work, the teachers actively sought to dissociate notions of entrepreneurship from these heroic entrepreneurs who are unattainable to many students. Instead, the students were asked to construct their own idiosyncratic entrepreneurial becoming based on who they “really” are. Hence, there was a strong focus on authenticity and the ability to self-reflect discovering who you are and what you can do in the
process of entrepreneuring. Hence, the notions of transformation inherent to enterprise education were not alone related to becoming something you are not (yet). In fact, the strong emphasis on authenticity in both of the case modules suggests that entrepreneurship may support a process where the students emerge as even more themselves, as suggested by Berglund (2013). Consequently, the two case modules may reveal a possible tendency in education founded on a broad model of entrepreneurship in education, to replace the heroic schumpetarian entrepreneur with a new “hero”. Hence, enterprise education is organised in ways not to facilitate becoming a business venturing entrepreneur, but an authentic, self-directed, autonomous and fulfilled “you” and possibly another cultural model which it is difficult, but necessary to discard in order to open access to enterprise for all, as suggested by Gibb (2002).

### 4.3 Contributions to Theory

First and foremost, this thesis contributes to enterprise education research by applying a lens to entrepreneurship education, conjured by a social practice perspective on learning and its theoretical foci on identity, process, context and learning (Holland, et al., 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Consequently, my study shows enterprise education in a different light, and may therefore provide room for increased reflection on how entrepreneurial becoming is imagined and practiced in enterprise education settings. With the social practice view follows an interest in learning as participation and how organised learning environments grant access to this participation and becoming. The level of analysis shifts from the minds of individuals to include social interaction and context (Lave, 1996a). Consequently, the thesis contributes to the ongoing work that seeks to understand the nature of entrepreneurial identity construction in education (Donnellon, et al., 2014; Hytti & Heinonen, 2013; Robinson, et al., 2016) and the conceptualisation of education as an identity work space (Harmeling, 2011). I suggest that since this literature tends to focus on the potentials of identity work as entrepreneurial learning and on individual agency when tailoring entrepreneurial identities to fit a sense of self (Donnellon, et al., 2014; Hytti & Heinonen, 2013; Smith & Woodworth, 2012) it also tends to disregard how education in fact contextualizes this identity work as a social and interactive practice (Holland, et al., 1998). My research presents an alternative view of identity processes in enterprise education, as it points to the
complexities of becoming a learner, seeking to gain access to the process of becoming entrepreneurial in an education setting

The conclusions of my study suggest that entrepreneurship education falls into a trap of constituting the divide between enterprise and school that it is actually supposed to bridge. To become entrepreneurial required an “un-doing” of a student identity. The fact that a “student identity” inhibits entrepreneurial becoming is also reflected in the literature that emphasise, how effective entrepreneurship education requires a reform of the interaction order in classrooms and a change of student-learners from being passive receivers of knowledge into being active constructors of learning (Blenker, et al., 2008; Kyrö, 2005; Löbler, 2006). The literature presents enterprise learners as autonomous, self-responsible, and self-directed in their learning process (Mueller & Anderson, 2014; van Gelderen, 2010). However, the empirical analyses of this thesis challenge this ideal learner figure. My findings suggest that at least in mandatory education, the conditions for learner’s activities and identities are far more complex. I show that the learning environments created learners who constantly had to shift between various contradicting positions to access learning. In that way, they were not in control as the literature seems to indicate (Kyrö, 2008; Löbler, 2006; Mueller & Anderson, 2014; van Gelderen, 2010). Knowing when to act compliantly or autonomously to access learning was important for success.

Finally, this study answers calls for a critical assessment of general assumptions inherent to enterprise education research and practice (Fayolle, 2013; Fayolle, et al., 2016). My study emphasises the complexity of entrepreneurship education and how its theorisation and practice creates a complex learning environment wherein student-learners must manoeuvre skilfully to meet the promise of entrepreneurial becoming in formal education.

4.4 Contributions to Practice

Even though there are some concerns with regard to the method employed in this study and its ability to deliver solutions to practice (Hammersley, 1992), I still believe that some of the findings presented can be meaningful to enterprise educators, who act in the everyday conundrum of educational practice. The empirical essays suggest a need for caution when it comes to the extant focus on student
authenticity and the personalisation of entrepreneurial pedagogy. To start, there are important ethical concerns when this form of education becomes mandatory within established programmes, and the required identity work therefore is conducted under conditions of coercion. Hence, educators must consider whether the students themselves are likely to invest the education setting with the function of an identity workspace. Additionally, my study indicates that changes to roles and relations between teachers and students in the process-driven education, may still involve implicit control mechanisms and student instruction. Therefore it is relevant to ask how the learning setting provides resources for identity work. Do educators contribute to the (re)production of a genre when it comes to narratives of entrepreneurial becoming?

One way to answer to the findings of my study in entrepreneurship education practice could be to acknowledge student identities as an outset for entrepreneurship and not as something which needs to be “un-done”. Enterprise educators could replace the strong focus on authenticity with a focus on play (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010) in order to make room for feelings and expressions of inauthenticity and pretence, which may in fact be a central to any process of learning and identity transformation (Ibarra, 1999). Education in that way could possibly counter the inherent risk that students are inclined to present the educator’s interpretations and instructions as their own naturally motivated intent, and thus reproduce entrepreneurship theory and pedagogy as truths, in order to succeed as students. Then, the entrepreneurial becoming in class would not depend on whether students reproduce a “genre” or “method” of entrepreneurial becoming. In contrast, a focus on imagination, playfulness, and clichés in entrepreneurial performance could possibly facilitate and allow a weak attachment to building an entrepreneurial identity as suggested by Down and Warren (2008). Hence to loosen the restriction of authenticity and allow a playful “as if” participation may be more in correspondence with what students “really” feel. Moreover, this could possibly strengthen the students’ capabilities to see through the buzz of entrepreneurship and how symbolic worlds are actively used by entrepreneurs in their constructions of legitimacy (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001). Finally, I propose that reflective practice and the focus on playful becoming rather than authentic becoming may in fact work against the unreflective reproduction of the hidden curriculum in enterprise education where becoming an authentic and autonomous entrepreneurial individual is a way to reach salvation.
4.5 Concluding Reflections and Future Research

Research on learning is in itself a learning process. This thesis is the result of surprises, realizations, and choices made along the way. I will use this final section to address reflections on the limitations of this study as well as how to continue research along the paths that it has opened.

The enterprise modules which constitute the research settings are both extreme cases (Flyvbjerg, 2006) in the ways they seek to push the boundaries of enterprise education and explore new territory for how to facilitate entrepreneurial learning. The processes accounted for in my analyses are therefore particular to these learning settings. Still, the empirical material of this thesis should be used to facilitate and encourage critical reflection and to enhance the ability to challenge, rethink and illustrate theory as well as practice in enterprise education (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011). It is up to the readers to do the comparison with practices in other settings.

The study is not able to say anything about the students’ entrepreneurial futures and how education has served them in their lives after graduation. Neither is it possible to theorize about whether enterprise education which works on the level of identity formation of students is more “effective” than traditional education in terms of teaching enterprising behaviours. This was never an objective of my study, but it is a promising theme for research to take up.

4.5.1 Notions of power

Theoretically, this study does not employ any conceptualisation of power. Even though notions of power are inherent to concerns such as access to learning and legitimate participation, I never treat it explicitly as a theme to be analytically developed. The power to grant legitimacy and the existence of unequal relations between teacher and learner and between old-timers and newcomers in a community of practice are all notions integral to the situated perspective (Contu & Willmott, 2003; O’Connor, Peck, & Cafarella, 2015). Moreover, there is always forms of coercion in mandatory education where students are made to participate (Boylan, 2010), and the empirical studies suggests that student resistance and teacher control are issues of some importance. Additionally, since my research is founded in learning environments, which ideally seek to change traditional power relations in class
(Löbler, 2006), it seems even more relevant to be tracing workings of power. Looking towards scholarship in leadership development, studies on power and identity are well represented (cf. Gagnon, 2008; Nicholson & Carroll, 2013), however, in the field of enterprise education this is not a well-developed topic. I believe this may be a promising way to proceed inquiries.

4.5.2 Where is enterprise?

In the study, I exclusively analyse situations inside the learning institution. Critics may therefore stress that I am not able to consider the “real” entrepreneurial activities where students interact with stakeholders and actually show “real” enterprising behaviour. Missing data on student-stakeholder interactions due to a lack of access is certainly a limitation. Yet, it also made me aware that places where students learn and employ the knowledge learnt in an enterprise course cannot be isolated to activities taking place beyond the classroom where individuals act in positions that we associate with entrepreneurship. Classroom activities are to a high extent part of the entrepreneurial learning and also part of the ambiguity that students in both case-studies experienced. The discrimination between school as a place of students and the outside world as a place for entrepreneurship widens the gap between entrepreneurial learner and entrepreneurial performer and thus contradicts what enterprise education is actually trying to achieve. Hence, I seek to address how the process of becoming entrepreneurial is imagined and practiced also in class.

Given the place that “the entrepreneur” holds in political agendas it is essential that we continue to study the phenomenon and its entry and impact in the field of education. Not alone in terms of how to prime student-learners to enterprising behaviour, but also to understand how policy goals are in fact translated and practiced (Komulainen, et al., 2011; Robinson & Blenker, 2014), how higher education becomes a “holding environment” for entrepreneurial identity work (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010) and how enterprise education produces worlds (Peters, 2001).

With this study, I hope to convince the readers of the value of the engagement with learning and education research that does not place the concept of learning solely in the minds of individuals, but involve a broader view on sense making processes and collaboration (Brown, et al., 1989; Holland, et al., 1998; Lave & Wenger, 1991). In my view, this is an exciting path for the future study of
entrepreneurial becoming and the constitution of enterprising agents, not only individually and psychologically, but also socially and culturally. In my research, I have sought to identify more general patterns of participation connected to the institutionalisation of enterprise education. The insights produced by this view certainly should be complemented with first-person perspectives of entrepreneurial becoming and thus on students’ individual learning trajectories and the centripetal or centrifugal processes in entrepreneurship and enterprise education. However, it is challenging to pursue interdisciplinary research and develop “dual expertise” in both entrepreneurship and education research (Béchard & Grégoire, 2005). Even so, it is important to continuously challenge assumptions and constructions in the field. To contrast and compare with other research fields is one way to keep up this analytic pace and “fight familiarity” (Delamont, et al., 2010).

In a final note, I call for an increased research focus on enterprise education in practice and on the consequences of this practice in education settings. I suggest that in order to increase legitimacy in the field (Fayolle, et al., 2016), it may be necessary to momentarily move away from the immediate questions of what to learn and how to learn, and shift towards wider concerns with how educational settings grant access to participation and to learning opportunities as well as how they afford identities. Hence, it is a task for enterprise education research to discuss not only how entrepreneurship education ought to be conducted, but also seek to embrace and conceptualize its complexity and contradictions. Instead of solely asking “how” students are becoming entrepreneurial in and through education, it is enlightening to ask “who” the students are becoming, as well as “who” they are obligated to become in enterprise education.
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Entrepreneurship Education as Identity Workspace.
A Situated Perspective on Identity work in Practice

Abstract Entrepreneurship education theory and practice show increasing interest in identity work as an important part of entrepreneurial learning. Entrepreneurship programs become identity workspaces where pedagogical designs stimulate entrepreneurial identity work and support individuals’ discovery of themselves as entrepreneurs. This article investigates how entrepreneurship education is practiced as an identity workspace, when reflective identity work is turned into a pedagogical strategy for entrepreneurial learning. I present an ethnographic account of an eleven week mandatory entrepreneurship postgraduate module at a Danish university revolved around entrepreneurial identity work. Drawing on situated learning theory, the study shows, how the entrepreneurship module as an identity workspace, evoked two distinct communities of practice, associated with incompatible practices and identities. Exposed to identity work practices in class, learners experienced conflicting demands participating as successful students and participating as potential entrepreneurs. The study draws attention how an education setting contextualises identity work as a social practice. It criticises the functionalist framing of entrepreneurship education as an identity workspace and the one-sided focus on the potentials of identity work and individual strategies for tailoring entrepreneurial identities to fit a sense of self.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial identity, situated learning
Introduction

How to induce effective entrepreneurial learning in Higher Education (HE) is a matter of ongoing debate. Research recognises that traditional ways of lecturing “about” entrepreneurship in Higher Education Institutions (HEI’s) do not sufficiently support and develop entrepreneurial attitudes and skills in students (Hannon, 2005; Kirby, 2007; Kyrö & Carrier, 2005). Entrepreneurship education thus misses the opportunity to properly inspire what is defined as a “key competence” in the global knowledge economy (European Commission, 2012, p. 8). Indeed, the education system is often held responsible for the apparent lack of enterprise in its graduates (Marttila, 2013). Therefore, entrepreneurial learning environments, challenge “orthodox pedagogies” in HE, where objectivity and “detachment” are traditional virtues (Blenker, Korsgaard, Neergaard, & Thrame, 2011; Rae, 2010). Ideally, it is argued that entrepreneurship education should engage students through “personalised pedagogy” (Blenker et al., 2012) and help them recognize themselves as entrepreneurial actors (Hytti & Heinonen, 2013; Smith & Woodworth, 2012). In other words, research suggests that HE learning environments should actively facilitate the construction of entrepreneurial identities (Blenker, et al., 2011; Donnellon, Ollila, & Middleton, 2014; Harmeling, 2011; Hytti & Heinonen, 2013; Smith & Woodworth, 2012).

Becoming an entrepreneur involves construction of a corresponding identity (Down, 2006; Hoang & Gimeno, 2010; Rae, 2005). In the scholarly debate on entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial identity construction is therefore suggested to be a critical part of entrepreneurial competency development (Donnellon, et al., 2014, p. 496). Consequently, it is important for educational designs to facilitate identity construction processes to ensure outcomes in the form of entrepreneurial behaviours (Donnellon, et al., 2014). The entrepreneurial classroom is defined as a “potentially powerful identity workspace” where individuals may identify with entrepreneurs and transform their understandings of themselves and their futures (Harmeling, 2011, p. 744). Hence, the term identity workspace refers to

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20 For convenience in this article, I use the term “entrepreneurship education” as an overall and general term, even though I acknowledge the differences in objectives and pedagogies between entrepreneurship and enterprise education. In general, enterprise education concerns the abilities to generate ideas and the capacity to enact them, while entrepreneurship education concerns the capacity to apply these abilities in the context of setting up a new venture or business (Jones & Iredale, 2010; Jones & Penaluna, 2013).
how entrepreneurship education programs can serve as holding environments for individuals’ entrepreneurial identity constructions (Hytti & Heinonen, 2013; Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010). Moreover, it brings identity to the fore as an important focus for development efforts and identity work translates into a method for realizing entrepreneurial learning outcomes (Blenker, et al., 2012; Donnellon, et al., 2014; Hytti & Heinonen, 2013).

When entrepreneurship education is perceived as an identity workspace, concepts of entrepreneurial learning and identity work are intentionally joined in an education setting (Harmeling, 2011). Even so, the entrepreneurial classroom is still presented as an unrelated and neutral arena for the learning and identity work of free-floating individuals. Research articles about identity work in entrepreneurship education illustrate conceptual rationalities and the supportive pedagogical designs created and taught by the authors themselves (Blenker, et al., 2011; Harmeling, 2011; Smith & Woodworth, 2012). Empirical articles are still few and focus on individual students’ entrepreneurial identity formation processes or identity reflections vis-à-vis various definitions of “the entrepreneur” (Donnellon, et al., 2014; Hytti & Heinonen, 2013). There is little reflection on identity work as an active mechanism for learning, integrated in the education setting. However, when identity work is considered important for entrepreneurship education and deliberately prompted in classrooms, research must provide more critical scrutiny to this construct (Fayolle, 2013). Researchers must turn research towards own assumptions and teaching methods, and seriously consider the social practices that unfold as results, within the education setting (Delamont, Atkinson, & Pugsley, 2010; Lave, 1996b). This article represents such an attempt. I draw attention to how entrepreneurship education is practiced as an identity workspace, when reflective identity work is turned into a pedagogical strategy for entrepreneurial learning. Therefore, I address entrepreneurial identity work with a level of analysis beyond the individual and turn the analytic gaze to examine how entrepreneurial identity work unfolds when situated in a formal education setting, which directs this identity work in practice.

I draw on the conceptual framework of situated learning and a notion of identity which emphasises its relational, and contextual nature (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This theoretical lens explicitly connects a concept of learning to processes of identification and participation in local contexts (Holland, Lachicotte Jr, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Lave, 2013; Lave & Wenger, 1991). It emphasises the inherently socially negotiated quality of meaning and the relational interdependency between activities of persons
acting and the social world of that activity (Lave, 1988, 1996a). Hence, individuals are not treated as free-floating agents, but as participants in social practice in local contexts (Dreier, 1999). As an outset, I employ the twin concepts “legitimate peripheral participation” and “communities of practice” as useful heuristics (Lea, 2005) to illuminate entrepreneurial identity work practices in a formal education setting.

The empirical material for this inquiry was drawn from a qualitative field study of an eleven week mandatory entrepreneurship module at a Danish university revolved around entrepreneurial identity work. Through self-reflective exercises this module intended to strengthen the students’ awareness of their own means, abilities, and opportunities to act entrepreneurially. The module represents an extreme case of innovative pedagogy explicitly targeting identity work. It is therefore well-suited to explore identity work as a learning mechanism, since this case may explicitly reveal activities and behaviours, which may be less detectable in other forms of entrepreneurship pedagogy, where identity work is less in focus (Flyvbjerg, 2006). I do not aim to advocate for this specific approach to entrepreneurial pedagogy or to test its efficacy in achieving individual learning outcomes. The relevance of the inquiry rests in its capacity to generate reflection upon the functionalist approach to entrepreneurship education as an identity workspace, where identity work translates into a method for entrepreneurial learning. The study contributes to research in entrepreneurship education by providing a nuanced interrogation of the complex practices of identity work and entrepreneurial learning which unfold in education.

Findings show how explicit identity work was considered as entrepreneurial learning. Self-awareness and authenticity became central signifiers for entrepreneurial learning and becoming. Exposed to identity work practices in class, students experienced a dilemma between participating as successful students and participating as potential entrepreneurs. In that way, entrepreneurship education as an identity workspace, evoked two distinct communities of practice, associated with characteristic and conflicting behaviours and identities.

In the following, I show how recent literature conceptualizes entrepreneurship education as an identity workspace, and I introduce the theoretical lens to understand identity work as a contextualised social practice. Then, I introduce the research setting and the rationales constituting the structure and syllabus of the specific entrepreneurship module. Next, I explain the strategies applied for data collection and
analysis. With an outset in a particular incident in class, I present the findings, and finally I discuss the theoretical as well as practical implications of the analysis.

Theory

Before delving into discussions about entrepreneurship education as an identity workspace, some conceptual clarification is appropriate. First, identity refers to the meanings people attach to themselves and others in various situations, and how such definitions of self and others guide sense making processes and motivate behaviours (Holland, et al., 1998; Lachicotte, 2009). It has long been suggested, that individuals form identities in relation to social roles, which carry expectations regarding appropriate self-presentations (Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1934). People identify with or against these socially constructed types in various domains in their everyday lives (Holland & Lachicotte Jr., 2007, p. 134). In that way, identity is also a construct that refers to the “frames of meaning in which interpretations of human actions are negotiated” (Holland, et al., 1998, p. 271). When we do things, we place ourselves in social fields in degrees of affiliation with or in opposition to identifiable others (Holland, et al., 1998, p. 271).

Research adhering to a social constructionist tradition emphasises the relational, and contextual nature of identity, as well as the central role of symbolism, discourse and narrativity in its construction (Down & Giazitzoglu, 2015; Holland, et al., 1998; Watson, 2009a). In that way, the notion of identity combines individual agency, choice and self-authoring, with the collective space of cultural forms and social interaction (Holland, et al., 1998; Watson, 2009b). Identities are therefore not purely a matter of individual choice, but neither are they imposed or inscribed onto the individual (Holland, et al., 1998; Nicholson & Carroll, 2013). In other words, to be an entrepreneur and to behave entrepreneurially is to recognise and to be recognised by others as such (Down & Giazitzoglu, 2015, p. 103).

The term identity work directs attention to identity’s multiplicity and dynamism (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010) and encompasses this permanent dialectic between processes of self-authoring and social positioning. It refers to how people are constantly engaged in processes of self-making, forming, revising, and maintaining their identities to shape coherent and distinctive notions of themselves.
Simultaneously, the term refers to how people seek to manage impressions and influence the ways, they are positioned by others (Goffman, 1959; Watson, 2008, p. 129). Hence, identity work involves both the intra-personal identification processes of “feeling” like an entrepreneur, as well as the inter-personal identification processes of “seeming” like an entrepreneur (Bartlett, 2007).

**Entrepreneurship education as identity workspace**

Entrepreneurship education has important transformative effects with regard to participants’ identities (Harmeling, 2011). It is an arena for exploring and constructing an entrepreneurial identity (Hytti & Heinonen, 2013). Students may be motivated to take up an entrepreneurial career if they experience congruence between their own self-concept and their images of an entrepreneur role (Farmer, Yao, & McIntyre, 2011). Hence, entrepreneurs are “role-models” in entrepreneurship education representing a social category for identification (Farmer, et al., 2011; Smith & Woodworth, 2012). Entrepreneurship research argues that the likelihood of entry and perseverance in entrepreneurial practices, increases when identification with a “founder role” is strong (Farmer, et al., 2011; Hoang & Gimeno, 2010). Harmeling (2011, p. 747) argues that when students are exposed to new worlds of entrepreneurship and acquire the tools for operating in these worlds, they will start to create new “re-storied selves” and begin to see themselves as entrepreneurial actors in their own right. Donellon et al. (2014) argue that an entrepreneurial identity is constructed through venture creation practices. It is connected to the lived experiences of a social role as founder. Entrepreneurial identity work involves the development of identities suitable for performing legitimately in a founder role (Donellon, et al., 2014). In that way, identity work is important for easing entry into the world of venture creation.

Hytti and Heinonen (2013) agree that reflective entrepreneurial identity work in entrepreneurship education programmes develops language and the ability of students to assert a position as entrepreneur in front of significant others. However, they show that students may align themselves with entrepreneurship in various ways. They argue that a heroic image of the entrepreneur is an important narrative resource in students’ identity work. However, in their study not all students found this identity acceptable. Instead, they constructed an alternative entrepreneurial identity for themselves (Hytti & Heinonen, 2013). Hence, Hytti and Heinonen stress the creative identity work of individuals and their
agentic use of collective resources. They suggest that the educational environment serve as a “place for reflecting upon and trying to identify an entrepreneurial identity that is authentic and accessible” (Hytti & Heinonen, 2013, p. 894). Entrepreneurship education as an identity workspace thus involves activities of exploring and constructing a sense of belonging to a defined group of entrepreneurs. Hence, even though the variations within the social category of entrepreneurs are highly recognized (Gartner, 2008), students should work to define possible role models and acceptable identities within this diffused social group (Smith & Woodworth, 2012).

Other calls for facilitating identity construction in entrepreneurship education ease the focus on identity work as founder-role identification. Instead, they highlight a broadened scope for entrepreneurship education with a focus on the nature of enterprise in individuals entrepreneurial attitude formation, the creation of self-awareness amongst students, and a general ability to act on opportunities in various contexts as an enterprising citizen (Blenker, et al., 2011; Gibb, 2002; B. Jones & Iredale, 2010; Rae, 2010). Entrepreneurial processes are considered highly idiosyncratic arising from an individual-opportunity nexus (Blenker, et al., 2012; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Education provides a space for students to “organize the resources at their disposal (i.e. knowledges and abilities) into competences that can be mobilized for action” (Béchard & Grégoire, 2005, p. 116). Hence, entrepreneurship commences with individuals becoming aware of themselves, who they are and what they do (Blenker, et al., 2012, p. 428; Sarasvathy, 2001). Consequently, the entrepreneurial identity work proposed by the literature is twofold. Students are to discover and objectify their own particularities and utilize it in an entrepreneurial process of becoming an entrepreneur. Moreover, this form of reflective thinking is considered a relevant and valuable skill central to entrepreneurial learning (Cope, 2005). Through reflective identity work, students may therefore discover “not only who they are, but also who they can become” (Harmeling, 2011, p. 747).

Common to this literature, is the direct or indirect conceptualization of entrepreneurship education as an identity workspace supportive of individuals’ discovery of themselves as entrepreneurs. It turns identity into an educational target and it turns reflective identity work into a practice which strengthens learning outcomes in entrepreneurship education. In that way, the literature tends to show a one-sided focus on the potentials of identity work as entrepreneurial learning and on individual strategies for tailoring social role identities to fit a sense of self (Donnellon, et al., 2014; Hytti & Heinonen, 2013;
Smith & Woodworth, 2012). As a consequence, it may disregard how education in fact contextualizes this identity work as a social and interactive practice, and how identities are something to be struggled over, claimed and allocated within power relations (Jenkins, 2004; Nicholson & Carroll, 2013; Watson, 2008). Therefore, I suggest shifting the inquiry from a documentation of individual students’ experiences and identity work outcomes, to the contingencies of reflective identity work as a social practice, as it is executed in a formal education context under pedagogical instruction. To assist in this endeavour, I turn to a sociocultural perspective on learning with an outset in the conceptual framework of situated learning.

A Situated Learning Perspective

Situated learning theory emphasises the social and contextual nature of learning. It considers learning in terms of changing participation and an evolving sense of belonging to a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In that way, “identity, knowing, and social membership entail one another” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53), since learning always involves crafting identities and “becoming kinds of persons” in specific contexts (Lave, 1996b, p. 157).

Two concepts are central. Legitimate peripheral participation describes the process in which newcomers engage with a social community and gradually acquire the skills to become full or central participants in the sociocultural practices critical for that particular community. Learning as participation thus involves picking up and adopting elements of a shared repertoire characteristic of a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). Legitimate peripheral participation provides opportunities for participants to begin to negotiate new ways of being and to adopt sanctioned ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, and believing (Hull & Greeno, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000).

The community of practice, its social relations, and interactions provide the context for learning and identity work. From their peripheral position in the community, newcomers gain a general idea of what constitutes the practice of the community and thus what they need to learn in order to claim legitimacy as full practitioners. Access to legitimate peripheral participation in a community is therefore a condition for learning. Yet, it is also a constitutive element of learning itself, since learning increases
the ability to participate and the legitimacy of participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 35). People not only learn in a context. They also learn what it is meaningful and valuable to learn within a context. Therefore, even though learning in formal school systems often is qualified by its abstract nature and high level of transferability, no learning can be considered theoretically by its “de-contextualisation” (Lave, 1996b, p. 155). Consequently, an entrepreneurship course is not merely a “holding environment” for individual identity work (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2010). It is also a directive and sensegiving context. This perspective infers that we constantly create identities relative to a particular framework of activity, which involves recognizable figures, storylines and objectives (Lachicotte, 2009).

Lave and Wenger (1991) do not consider practices in HEI’s. The theorization of situated learning is exemplified by a model of apprenticeship where learning a practice takes place through participation in the community, where this actual practice is meaningfully carried out. In formal education, learning activities are structured by pedagogical content and intentions. Teacher and learner do not necessarily co-participate in the practice that is to be learnt, and one cannot assume that the primary motivation for learning is the process of increasing participation in the community targeted by pedagogy (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 112). HEI’s constitute various particular and intersecting communities of practice and therefore make complex learning contexts. Decades ago, Becker et al. (1961) showed how medical students learned how to “do” school. They soon became occupied with learning what faculty wanted them to learn. Hence, there is a difference between the immediate practice community of school, in which students are directly engaged and where they experience direct relationships, and the aspired practice community, which transcends this immediate community, spatially, socially, and temporally. In that way, entrepreneurial identification in entrepreneurship education is directed towards what can be called an “imagined community”. A community is imagined when its members will never know nor meet most of their fellow-members, but still experience affiliation and hold to an image of communion (Anderson, 1991). Every entrepreneurship education programme evokes imagined communities of entrepreneurs, and students learn how to gain access and position themselves as legitimate peripheral participators in these communities. Consequently, it is critical to understand how communities whether immediate or imagined, allow participation, involve recognizable figures, storylines and objectives, and thus constitute contexts for identity work.
Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The arguments developed here, are grounded in empirical material collected in 2011 in an eleven week compulsory entrepreneurship module for postgraduate business students, taught at a Danish University. The study was designed to explore and understand the interactions between pedagogical intentions and participant’s experiences and practices. Ethnography as research strategy calls for in-depth engagement with participants in naturally occurring settings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Watson, 2011). It was employed to generate rich qualitative data, to make sense of how the educator and students give meaning to their actions within specific contexts (Geertz, 1973; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Leitch, Hill, & Harrison, 2010; Spradley, 1980). The study was conducted within an interpretive social science tradition, which acknowledges the constructed and relational nature of fieldwork and research (Alvesson, 2003; Nicholson & Carroll, 2013). Moreover, ethnographic fieldwork has proved well-suited to the study of learning and teaching processes due to its traditions of immersion and description instead of prescription (Lave & Wenger, 1991; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Walford, 2008).

Research setting

20 students (16 men and 4 women) in the ages between 23 and 28 participated in the entrepreneurship module. These students did not self-select into the module, since it was embedded as a mandatory within the first year of a postgraduate management education. Therefore, it should not be inferred that they had specific interests in entrepreneurship. The module was taught by Carol (a pseudonym), a female entrepreneurship professor with years of experience as entrepreneurship educator. The course description stated that the module would make students develop “entrepreneurial thinking and behaviour”. On the first day of lectures, Carol explicitly declared that this module was different from “traditional” entrepreneurship courses, since she did not teach business plans. Instead, she engaged with “the pre-opportunity period – the genesis of enterprising behaviour” (Fieldnotes, lecture 1). Through teaching this module, Carol intended the students to discover and challenge their own habitual self-perceptions and strengthen their capacities to imagine themselves as future entrepreneurs. Participation required the students to reflect upon their own personal histories, idiosyncrasies, and aspirations, and how those affected perceptions, decisions, and behaviors. This self-awareness served
as a platform for entrepreneurial agency (Sarasvathy, 2008). The students were supposed to create opportunities that originated from within themselves and therefore were unique, heartfelt and less imitable (Blenker, et al., 2011). In a later interview, Carol described the module as “an identity journey rather than an entrepreneurship course”. One of the main objectives of the course was to make the students aware of their own unique capacities and make them put themselves in the place of the entrepreneur by playing with possible entrepreneurial identities (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010). Through this re-thinking of their own lives and their own competencies, the students ought to learn an “entrepreneurial approach to life.” (Carol, Interview). The module was taught through a combination of classic university lectures on theories such as effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2001), the individual-opportunity nexus (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), and bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005). The students were also introduced to a role model entrepreneur and participated in cooperative games.

Every week, the students should write assignments reflecting the topic from the lecture. These written assignments were assessed in ways that counted towards a final grade, which also included an exam paper. Consequently, the students were not required to produce “real-world” interventions, but self-reflective essays wherein they presented themselves as entrepreneurs exploiting idiosyncratic opportunities. Hence, identity work processes were central to a conceptualization of entrepreneurship teaching and learning. Therefore, this module was well-suited for investigating identity work practices in a formal education context.

**Data collection**

As research strategy, ethnography involves several interwoven procedures, revolving around participant observation and active engagement with informants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). The empirical material was produced through ‘in situ’ observation and first-hand experiences of classroom actions, complemented by informal and formal interviews with participants, as well as chance conversations, overheard remarks, and a consideration of the texts they used and produced. Gaining access to research in educational fields is always a challenge (Alvesson, 2003; Walford, 2008). In educational research it is therefore common to find researchers studying their own teaching programmes or other courses within their own institutions. This is also true for research in entrepreneurship education (Blenker, Frederiksen, Korsgaard, Trolle, & Wagner, 2014).
collecting data for the study, I affiliated with a group of researchers strongly interested in developing entrepreneurship education. This research group included Carol, who allowed me into her classroom. This affiliation with Carol and the research group allowed shifting between different research positions as researcher and as student, engaging in various activities and observing them (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). Still, it required determination to maintain a reflective stance as participant observer in both the teacher’s group as well as in the student’s group. The students were informed of my role as a researcher when asked to participate in the study. To gain their trust, I made an effort to downplay any belonging to a teacher group. For example, I clearly stated that I could not give advice on the exam. I did not converse with the educator in the classroom, and I made an effort not to pass information between educator and students. Strategies to protect the identities of informants are applied including assigning pseudonyms to their quotes and concealing particularly personal episodes.

**Observations**

During lectures, I assumed the role of moderate participant observer (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). I participated in activities and interacted with the students solving assignments in class. Yet, I was not formally enrolled as a student and I did not hand in any written assignments or the final written exam. Additionally, I acted as a participant observer in several teachers’ meetings and in conference- and workshop presentations, where Carol presented the thoughts and theoretical backdrop of this particular module. Observations were carefully recorded in lengthy fieldnotes and developed in analytical memos (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

**Interviews**

To support an understanding of their learnings and adjustments in class and to gain their trust, students were interviewed formally in three rounds. Participation in interviews was voluntary and confidential and used solely for research purposes. First round of interviews focused on the students’ background, prior education, preconceptions of entrepreneurship and their expectations of learning. Second round of interviews concerned the students’ practices and experiences in the entrepreneurship module and in particular situations in the classroom. They were also used to follow up on themes discussed in the first interview. Interviewing thus gradually became more focused on emerging analytical themes (Spradley,
The third round of interviews, evolved from the students’ recollections of the module. Conversations with the Professor took place throughout the module, but one formal interview was conducted in the middle of the programme. This was used to gain information about the theoretical foundations of the teaching model, thoughts and conduct with regards to the assessment of students as well as reflections about specific interactions in class. The interviews ranged from 25 to 110 minutes. All were recorded with permission and later transcribed.

**Documents**

To understand the students’ experiences with the course work, I read their weekly assignments and final exams to be able to discuss this with them. Moreover, these assignments were read and coded as examples of the entrepreneurial identity work they were to perform in the course. It is important to note, that these assignments were written with the Professor as audience, and with the purpose of completing the module with a passing grade. Consequently, they were also examples of impression management (Goffman, 1959) modelled on discourses deemed valuable in this particular context (Lave & Wenger, 1991). My own production of analytical notes and memos were also used as data. Table 1 provides an overview of this empirical material.

**Table 1. Empirical Material**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data type</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Data format</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>Classroom (30 hours)</td>
<td>Field notes and extended notes written up after observation</td>
<td>Approx. 100 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other settings (10 hours)</td>
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</table>
| Formal interviews | First week: 8 students (4 women, 4 men)  
One week after: 6 students (3 women, 3 men)  
18 months after: 4 students (2 women, 2 men)  
Professor: 1 | Digital sound recordings and transcriptions | Approx. 360 pages |
| Documents      | 4 x 20 assignments of app. 3 pages  
20 written exams of app. 15 pages  
Course description, Syllabus  
Field diary, memo’s | Paper and electronic documents                   | + 600 pages       |
Data analysis

Data analysis took place as an ongoing process throughout the fieldwork. Hence, analytic themes and categories arising from the data, from literature and from my own thoughts, always interacted with the growing empirical material (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Spradley, 1979). After observations in lectures or meetings, I wrote extended field notes and analytic memos and sought to organise the data into themes and clarify what it was, that I had experienced. The first processes of coding expressed interaction themes and practices as well as the general organisation of the classroom (Delamont, 2008). Each round of interviews was also followed by a phase of analysis of the transcripts in order to find and group related statements into themes and tentative categories of related codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These first codes covered definitions of entrepreneurship, personal background, motivation, expectation, etc. Through coding the interview data, I also sought to identify, how participants created and related to images of entrepreneurship and I compared these insights with the data deriving from the classroom observations and in the students’ written reports.

After the end of the course, I continued reading and re-reading the interview transcripts, field notes, memos and student assignments to further “reduce” the large amount of data (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and make it available for analysis and theorization. This involved constant comparison and triangulation across the multiple data sources and across situations and time (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Triangulation showed not only convergence, but also friction. To illustrate, the students expressed excitement for learning and a desire for becoming “entrepreneurial” during the first interviews. But, I did not experience the classroom interactions as buzzing with expressions of such excitement and desire. Students were quiet and seemed hesitant. But especially one incident in class made me aware of some possible paradoxes involved in entrepreneurial identity work as a pedagogical method for entrepreneurial learning. In one lecture, four weeks into the course, heated discussions broke out between the students and the teacher regarding a self-reflective essay and the requirements for performance put on students in class. This display of anger and friction contrary to the displays of excitement and accord I experienced in the interviews was surprising. I experienced it as a “turning point”, since it created awareness of the entrepreneurial identity work in class as something subject to evaluation. I therefore treated this frictional incident as an event prone to further analysis and interpretation (Halquist & Musanti, 2010). Hence, I decided to pursue it further as an entry into
understanding student’s lived-experiences of course-facilitated (and teacher evaluated) learning about oneself as entrepreneurial. Hence, I treated the interchange as a “critical incident” that pointed beyond itself to larger systems of sensemaking in class (Halquist & Musanti, 2010). Consequently, I complemented the open-coding process with a more focused coding (Emerson, et al., 1995), where I traced notions of conflict and student resistance throughout the data. Furthermore, I used the following interviews to document student and teacher interpretations of the incident in particular and of conflicts in general.

After the data collection phase, I re-read the data material with the purpose of selecting data excerpts that related to this incident and I was able to start building evidence of an apparent paradox experienced by students between being positioned as “entrepreneur” and as “student” in class. Consequently, the findings section below is organised around this event. It starts in the classroom and the interchange between teacher and student about the quality of assignments, and how students discussed the assignments that Carol picked as good examples. I use these vignettes as a way to display my data (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and convey a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of how the identity work practice unfolded in class and how this practice enable research insights into sociocultural constructions of the entrepreneur, how access to a community of entrepreneurship is imagined and how it is practiced in identity work exercises in class. To provide evidence of my experiences in the field I seek to knit these selected excerpts together in order to convey my findings in a convincing text (Jarzabkowski, Bednarek, & Lê, 2014; Van Maanen, 2011).

**Findings**

The incident occurred four weeks into the module. Previously, Carol introduced Sarasvathy’s effectuation logic (Sarasvathy, 2001). On the basis of that lecture, the students were given the task to write a two page essay about themselves. The assignment sounded:

“Write an essay about what defines you: who you are, what you know, what you like to do, what you are good at doing and who you know – and what would you most like to achieve with your life”. (Lecture plan, 2011)
According to Sarasvathy’s effectuation logic, expert entrepreneurs clarify and map out their means when they start an entrepreneurial journey (Sarasvathy, 2001, 2008). This objectification of identity acts as a platform for opportunity creation, decision-making, and agency. In the entrepreneurship module, the purpose of this particular assignment was to make the students consider their own means derived from past experiences and everyday practices. The following vignette is an excerpt from field notes on the interactions, which was observed in the lecture, where Carol gave feedback on her assessment of these assignments:

“Carol says that she is disappointed with the quality of the home assignments. “Are you taking this seriously?” she asks out in the class with a loud voice. No one answers, all are silent. Carol continues: “This is not a job-application! This is not to tell me how good you are! The story should be about, how you could use yourself to create your own job.” She looks angry, her fist is clenched. “I don’t know if you lack the capability or skill, or simply just do not take this seriously. If you don’t want to make the effort, then don’t attend.” Student Niall replies that he really needs some advice on how to write these assignments, and that he feels uncomfortable writing them. “I do not want to tell you what defines me the most, he says. Other students are giggling. “You like rules?” Carol asks. Niall agrees. “But here you need to put yourself on the line”, Carol says. “You need that when you are an entrepreneur. I am trying to get you out of your comfort zone. In the assignments, […] I want reflection. How can that backpack of experiences from your life be used in an entrepreneurial life? You should write the assignment in order to reflect on why you act as you do. What in the past has impacted on the person you are now? What has come out of those defining moments? What defines you? What is your lighthouse?” While speaking, Carol draws a lighthouse on the blackboard. “This will help you realize your own unique capacity” (Observations, lecture III, 2011).

This exchange between educator and students exemplifies central themes characterizing the situated enactment of entrepreneurship education as an identity workspace. First, it touches upon the pedagogical facilitation of identity work and how particular self-presentations connect individuals to entrepreneurship. The majority of student assignments did not fulfil the professor’s expectations. Even though Carol emphasized that the students should consider, how they could use themselves to create their own jobs, their essays should differ from “job applications”. Second, students expressed uncertainty regarding performance requirements. Carol clearly stated that the pedagogical instruction meant to bring students out of their “comfort zones”. Students ought to put themselves “on the line”
and not search for performance criteria. However, Carol also showed that there was a possibility of failing, if work did not meet a certain standard. Not only does this point towards identity work given particular value in class. This frictional event draws attention to how practice communities were evoked and associated identities performed. It grants insights to conflicting demands on entrepreneurship learners to claim participation in both a practice community defined as “school”, and one defined in terms of “entrepreneurship”. This will now be considered in more detail.

Identity work as reflexivity and flexibility

The self-presentation assignments were an element of the facilitated entrepreneurial identity work in class. In these assignments, students wrote about their educational backgrounds, family and upbringing, as well as personal experiences such as having a motorbike stolen or unsatisfactory job experiences. They characterised themselves as “dedicated”, “analytical”, “ambitious” or “perfectionist”. “Risk-taking”, “spontaneity”, and the ability to “work alone”, to “take action”, and make “conscious decisions on your own” were directly addressed as strong qualities with reference to entrepreneurship. As shown above, Carol criticised the assignments for their resemblance to “job applications”. Hence, the pedagogical instruction inferred a process in which some assignment solutions were praised more than others. Hence, some self-presentations were recognized as reflective identity work towards entrepreneurship, while others were not. In an interview after the incident, Carol explained her critique:

“When reading these last assignments, I get the impression that some wrote it with their left hand thinking: “I just write my CV […], this is my personality: I am outgoing, I am ambitious, I am this and I am that.” What does that tell me? It doesn’t tell me anything. […]. But they [students] are to apply for their own job. I mean, they should employ themselves in their own company. Not in somebody else’s company. Therefore they need to seriously consider: what do I bring to the table, which means that I can do this. […] I want them to consider where those competences come from. I want them to understand and know themselves.” (Carol, interview)

In the module, students were supposed to create entrepreneurial opportunities that originated from their own means and everyday practices. As Carol expressed in the vignette above: “How can that backpack of experiences from your life be used in an entrepreneurial life?” She expected the self-presentation
assignments to represent sincere introspection and the students’ serious work to “understand and know themselves.” However, Carol noted what she characterised as the students’ lack of effort and dedication, as well as a lack of authenticity defined as the congruence between what one feels and what one communicates (Ibarra, 1999). To be used as a platform for opportunity creation, the self-presentation should not manage impressions and assimilate the individual to discourses on competences, valued by others (e.g. a possible employer or a teacher). It should not “sell” as a traditional CV or job-application. Instead, it should convey self-awareness and integrate past and present identities in an autonomous and truthful self-narrative.

As an educational context, the entrepreneurship module always refers to another social context, the imagined community of entrepreneurial practice. It educates particular modes of participation in this context and gives directives about what should count as qualified modes of participation in this other context (Dreier, 1999, p. 8). In this case, authenticity and self-awareness became important signifiers for access and legitimate peripheral participation in the imagined community of entrepreneurs. However, Carol acknowledged the difficulty in making the students understand:

“My biggest problem is how I can make them [students] do these things I would like them to do, and invest themselves. Because, if you do not invest yourself, you learn nothing” (Carol, interview).

According to Carol, the willingness to “invest yourself” in the instructed exercises was important in order to access learning. Self-investment, authenticity, and thus the willingness to act in one’s own authority, stepping out of a “comfort zone” became important requirements connecting individuals to entrepreneurship in this teaching model. Hence, the students were required to willingly participate in this identity work and to engage in both identity construction as well as “identity undoing” (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013). As Carol said:

“[I]t is a question of giving the students the skills or the opportunities to see themselves in another identity. The ability to re-saddle, - to re-invent themselves [...] So, my purpose [with this module] is really to fine-tune the students’ mindsets. Their abilities to think something else about themselves than what they have always thought. [...] It is about giving them that armour they will need in order to make their way in life. And I do tell them: “This is not about starting your own company. It is about making you think entrepreneurially. And that is a competence you can use everywhere” (Carol, interview)
This module presented entrepreneurial identity work as an opportunity for students to “re-invent” themselves as entrepreneurs. Not necessarily because they should found a business, but in order to instil a “mindset” and to make them “think entrepreneurially”. The module was based on a widened conceptual model of entrepreneurship not reserved for business venturing activities, but defined more broadly in terms of a mindset, considered valuable in a volatile and competitive global labour market (Blenker, et al., 2012; Gibb, 2002, 2005). Hence, the entrepreneur was not “just” an innovative economic agent, but became a general rolemodel of subjectivity (Marttila, 2013).

To engage in entrepreneurial identity work in this educational setting were directed towards several outcomes. It became a method for students to develop “self-reflexibility”; the ability of self-reflection to acquire authentic self-awareness. It became a method for practicing “flexibility” as the ability and willingness to transform. Both were considered vital by the Professor, not alone for venturing activities, but generally for future career self-management.

**Identity work as genre**

Back in the classroom, Carol picked two self-presentation essays and distributed them to the class as examples of “good assignments”. One of the essays told the story of how the author in a critical period of his life acted against the advice from an authority and fulfilled a dream against the odds.

“Beating the odds like that and achieving my ultimate goals is a feeling that I cannot describe. I guess life threw lemons at me and I made lemonade. This experience really gave me a feeling that I can do everything I set my mind to, no matter how hard it may seem”. (Kyle, Assignment 2)

This essay presented a confident, composed, and decisive self, as well as transparency into its origins. By qualifying this narrative as “good”, Carol approved its authenticity and acknowledged the connection between events, experiences, and their outcomes in the form of attitudes or competences valuable for entrepreneurship. Personal experiences gained utilitarian value as entrepreneurial attitudes and competences. Therefore, this representation of self became a legitimate platform for entry into a community of entrepreneurial practice. The narrative showed a good understanding of the module’s curriculum, explicitly referring to Sarasvathy’s “Lemonade Principle”, which teaches entrepreneurs to
embrace and leverage contingencies. In the theory of effectuation, the ability to turn negatives into positives, and the unexpected into the profitable lies at the heart of entrepreneurial expertise (Sarasvathy, 2008, pp. 89-91). The student’s narrative reproduced the curriculum in personalised language and used it to create meaningful statements of the self. In the story, effectuation theory gained a natural occurrence quality. Hence, the identity work validated in class turned entrepreneurship theory into a personal theory.

As seen from the vignette above, not all students were immediately able to invest themselves in the pedagogical exercise and produce convincing self-reflections. The other student, whose assignment was presented as a good example, referred to the essay as a “reflection exercise” about “taking ownership of your life choices” (Linda, interview 3). She suggested it to be a “genre” to be learnt and explained that she was accustomed to this kind of writing, due to experience from student leadership development training (Linda, interview 2 and 3). Identity work towards participation in an entrepreneur community thus involved adherence to a style of self-reflection and presentation of this self-reflexibility. After reading the two assignments of excellence in class, the following interaction took place:

Carol (professor): Why do you think these two assignments were picked as good examples?

Jack (student): I guess, both authors reflect on episodes in their past and how they have impacted on how they behave today.

Carol: What else? How does it make you feel?

Henry (student): I am very impressed with what the authors have done and achieved, but actually, I do not like this kind of self-presentation. It is almost too personal. Somehow, it makes me feel uncomfortable.

Ben (student): I think it would be difficult for me to write this kind of story about myself. I don’t even know myself. If you ask me to write a story about myself next week, it will not be the same.

Paul (student): I think the two stories are too business-like. The authors know what they want and have strong sense of direction. Their choices stand out as clear and reflective choices, […]. Really, I am not sure everybody has the same sense of direction (Fieldnotes, Lecture 3).
The students answer Carol’s questions first by repeating the pedagogical intentions of the identity work. Others were more critical and opposed to the good assignments as “too personal” (also seen in the first vignette). Several students talked about discomfort and reluctance to formally share personal stories with others in the classroom. This self-presentation assignment and its required authenticity challenged the students’ usual practices of academic school work. In interviews, the assignment was deemed “non-academic” and “crazy”. As such it was instantly a matter-out-of-place in HE. The authenticity was also questioned. Ben perceived his identity as mutable and therefore felt unable to freeze it authentically in a narrative as required. Moreover, Paul referred to the essays as “business-like”, adhering to a genre, aimed at a context, and not for everyone to do authentically. The students thus showed concern that the self-presentations considered valuable in class, could not express uncertainty and hesitation. Overall, the students were aware of how these self-presentations adhered to an identity-model and a genre, which not all felt able to self-author with a sense of authenticity. Hence, these students expressed a conflict between a perceived requirement to work identities towards a representation this genre, and the request to display authenticity out of the “comfort zone”.

Identity work as practice in a school setting

For the students the conflict experienced in class related to questions of performance. The students complained that Carol did not properly explain what it was, they were supposed to do in class, or provided any clear guidelines on how to do well. Therefore, the act of writing, handing in assignments, and being graded was the cause of uncertainty, since as a student expressed it: “We need to write it good, even though we don’t know what good is” (Linda, interview 2). This led to a definition of “Carol appropriate” solutions:

“We kind of defined this term in our course, how to make it “Carol appropriate”. So I would say: “Well I don’t know if it is “Carol appropriate” or “If you would be Carol how would you respond to it?”[…] yeah, and I think it was sometimes a bit of a gamble whether we would really hit what she wanted or not” (Linda, interview 2).

In the endeavour to make their writings “Carol appropriate”, the students sought to adapt and to figure out the rules structuring legitimate performance of entrepreneurial identity work in class. Their
concerns and sensemaking was directed towards legitimate participation in the practice community of school. In an interview, a student clearly expressed this stating:

“What is it she [Carol] wants? Or what do I think she wants me to do? That was the way I accessed the assignment” (Julian, interview 3)

The entrepreneurial identity work that students should undertake in class, was considered as idiosyncratic by Carol and as characterized by in-depth self-reflective practices. She said: “I cannot teach them a recipe for doing it, because it is based on who they are and what they can do” (Carol, interview). In retrospect, students suspected Carol of not wanting to tell. A student said that Carol enacted a “blindfolding strategy” to achieve some undefined learning outcomes (Julian, Interview 3). Hence, the non-existence of rules was acknowledged by the students as Carol’s act of constructive provocation, to bring them out of their “comfort zones” and closer to entrepreneurship.

“She (Carol) was quite provocative. She tried to disturb your little world and you had to tell personal things. (...) But I liked that, because it made you reflect, and if you are to be an entrepreneur, you have to get out of your comfort zone and push yourself. This is what it is all about” (Alex, interview 3).

Still, as educator, Carol was in a position to grade and discriminate between “good assignments” and “job-applications”. Assignments and grades were important artefacts evoking a context of school and its characteristic power relations between teacher and students (Holland, et al., 1998). Hence, while the students were required to authentically self-author as possible entrepreneurs in a world of entrepreneurship, they were simultaneously positioned as students in a world of school. As student said:

“I know Carol would say that there is no right or wrong. But it does not help you when you are a student, because you are still graded” (Linda, interview 3)

Even though the students eventually understood the Professor’s intentions, they were challenged by the symbolic evocation of seemingly incompatible contexts and their embedded identities and learning logics.
Identity work connecting and separating identity communities

From student interviews within the first week of the module, it was noticeable that an entrepreneur was defined along two dimensions, which can be analytically distinguished. First, an entrepreneur was identified in terms of a profession; as a certain behaviour and activity. The key characteristics typifying entrepreneurs as professionals were often symbolized by high profile figures, and the condition for participation in that practice community was to found a business. For some students, the conceptualization of entrepreneurs as professionals was contradictory to education.

“If you really are an entrepreneur, then you would not sit in that lecture. If you really had passion, then you would not sit in here reading those books, then you would be out there making your business” (Alex, interview 2)

This student expressed an established oxymoron between academic education and entrepreneurship as profession (Fiet, 2001; Neck & Greene, 2011). In his view just being “in school” seriously questioned possible claims to an entrepreneurial identity. In that way, this student voiced an estrangement of identity contexts, since participation in an imagined community of entrepreneurial practice was conceived as different and immediately unrelated to participation as a student in a practice community of “school”.

Second, the interviewed students also identified entrepreneurs by referring to personal characteristics, which differentiated entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs. The entrepreneur was identified as “positive”, “persistent”, “passionate”, “creative”, “good at generating ideas”, and “risk willing”. These characteristics were presented as attractive attitudes to learn in school. Yet, to the majority, the desire to acquire such attitudes was not necessarily associated with the specific behaviour of founding and running a business.

“I really hope to increase the mindset of seeing things in another perspective and try to see solutions in another way. I don’t think I am going to start my own business, but I think [...] you could use just that mindset in a company [...]. I think that will make my future career more exciting.” (Jennifer, interview 1)

21 Appendix 1 show supporting evidence for these findings.
In this view, possible identification with entrepreneurs extended the boundaries of a founding behaviour to become a personal competence in various contexts. Acquisition of dispositions expressed through the metaphor of a “mindset”, would benefit a “future career” in general. Consequently, the entrepreneur included a wider range of possibilities for identification (Down & Giazitzoglu, 2015). Following this understanding, it is possible to claim, that every social role can be enacted in an entrepreneurial way (Barth, 1963). An entrepreneurial identity is therefore decontextualised to become an ever present part of the individual, if properly learnt. Hence, the entrepreneur is institutionalised as an abstract category, symbolising a certain way of being human in the world.

The desire to learn and connect to a community of entrepreneurial practice through acquisition of an entrepreneurial mindset, seemed to fit well with the purposes of Carol’s teaching. A majority of students addressed those hopes for connection through the learning of “tools”

“I like the idea if I can get some tools for how to think and how to look at things” (Anne, Interview 1).

“Maybe we will get some tools to start seeing problems [...] and come up with an idea, and also how to take that idea into action” (Joe, interview 1).

In these expressions of learning expectations, communities of entrepreneurial practice were evoked as spatially, socially, and temporally detached from a community of school in which the students were directly engaged. The time spent in the classroom was conceived as a period of learning and preparation. As a learning space, it was distanced from spaces where the entrepreneurial tools should be put to use, and entrepreneurial identities could be claimed and validated. To prepare for participation in an aspired entrepreneur community, students agreed that they would have to work on their own dispositions and attain entrepreneurial mindsets. Yet, this attainment was thought to be obtained through acquiring “tools” they could add to their self-understanding. Their immediate thoughts of entrepreneurial learning did not depart from traditional learning strategies in the HE environment, as Carol’s thoughts of entrepreneurial learning did.

In interviews after module conclusion, one message lingered amongst the students: the necessity of self-awareness for entrepreneurial agency.
“We were given all this theory about how to use what we carry with us. It makes you able to see things that the next person cannot see, since you have some unique experiences. I never thought about that before” (Anne, interview 2).

“Perhaps it [the module] made you think a little bit more about what it is you can do and how to use it” (Julian, interview 3).

In that way, the identity work pedagogy left students with an understanding of a utilitarian value of unique personal experiences when initiating professional careers. Identity work as self-reflexivity, turning experiences into entrepreneurial competences itself became a learning outcome.

Discussion

The findings of this study foregrounds the complexity of identity work as it is practiced in an education setting as an instrument for entrepreneurial learning. Shifting the analytic gaze from individual reflections and cognition, to a broader notion of participation, brought visibility to how identity work as a pedagogical activity evoked different communities associated with different modes of legitimate participation and identification. In the entrepreneurship module, an imagined community of entrepreneurial practice was conjured by symbolic markers such as self-awareness, autonomy, authenticity, a willingness to take risks, and take responsibility for your life choices. Hence, legitimate peripheral participation in this community could be granted to individuals who were able to show that they autonomously stood by their own authenticity. However, the students explained how their participation in class also was characterized by a practice of deciphering the Professor’s expectations. Hence, legitimate participation in the immediate school community characterized by a sense of reproduction, assimilation, and compliance. Handing in assignments to be evaluated, grades, homework, lectures, power point presentations were all markers that evoked expectations of certain forms of behaviour, social relations and forms of participation. Even though Carol’s pedagogical intentions were appreciated, the students felt caught in a conflict of performing expected behaviours as students and performing behaviours expected of potential entrepreneurs. Hence, classroom practice still disconnected the worlds it was supposed to bridge, since legitimate participation in the imagined
entrepreneur community required an undoing of legitimate participation in the immediate practice community.

Entrepreneurship education is depicted as a transitional space connecting individuals to the “marketplace” (Harmeling, 2011, p. 741), increasing student’s awareness of a wider “world of work” (Jones & Iredale, 2010, p. 10), and supporting employability (Berglund, 2013; Rae, 2007). However, it is widely recognized that integrating entrepreneurship development themes within the curriculum pose challenges to the structure, system, and culture within HEIs (Kirby, 2004; Kyrö & Carrier, 2005; Rae, 2007). It is argued that it reshapes and renegotiates the terms and conditions of the teaching and learning experience, since the “pace, methods, tools and ways of working are changed for both teacher and learner” (Jones & Iredale, 2010, p. 13). The frictions in class noted in this study can therefore be interpreted as deriving from a general conflict between traditional HE education and entrepreneurship education. Therefore, when new pedagogies are introduced into an institutional context that is left unchanged, students as well as educators experience dilemmas. Even though entrepreneurship education is intended to be personalized and learner-centred, it is still accountable to institutional control, and designed to meet prescribed outcomes (Rae, 2010, p. 524). Relations of power between educator and students still remain and students may resist practices that threaten their “good student” identities (Varelas, 2012). Since the classroom is a social setting which already offers certain identities, it is important that entrepreneurship educators consider their own expectations for modes of legitimate participation, which the students must detect in order to be “good students”. They must be aware of how they themselves imagine a community of entrepreneurial practice and as teachers set the requirements for legitimate peripheral participation, which students must reproduce and display.

In the entrepreneurship module, students were aware that to be successful they should reproduce an identity model in a specific genre of self-presentation. The identity-model noticed by the students bear resemblance to what studies refer to as an “enterprising self”. (du Gay, 1996; Rose, 1998; Siivonen & Brunila, 2014; Wee & Brooks, 2010). The ontology of entrepreneurship informing the teaching model emphasized the importance of self-awareness for entrepreneurial thinking and behaviour. It supported the idea that people can become more enterprising, by searching for authentic selves (Berglund, 2013). Not only should the students work to make their inner selves available to themselves and discover their own idiosyncrasies. Students should also turn these self-understandings into positive competences in a
recognizable entrepreneurial approach to life. Entrepreneurial learning in this context was therefore associated with issues of therapeutization and personal development, since identity work towards greater self-awareness was offered as a condition for shaping an autonomous, self-responsible, enterprising, and flexible self (Siivonen & Brunila, 2014). The module worked on the level of identity-based opportunity creation and did not involve “real-world” interventions. The students were therefore in fact evaluated on their capacity to show a mastery of self-reflexive skills and they were invited to use and internalise new discourses imparted in and by the education setting. They were made to enact a cultural stereotype through performing their own authenticity.

Legitimate peripheral participation in a new community always entails adopting discourses deemed appropriate by this community (Lave and Wenger 1991). Hence, reproducing identity models, attaching oneself to discourses, clichés (Down & Warren, 2008) and other “cultural codes” of entrepreneurship (Aldrich & Yang, 2012) may be a first step in the process of learning new entrepreneurial self-understandings. However, the enterprising self as an identity model of and for entrepreneurship was never openly discussed in the classroom. To the students it became a “hidden curriculum” defined as lessons to be learnt which are not necessarily explicit or consciously intended by educators (Martin, 1974). It involves a reproduction of social norms, values, and beliefs, which remain unarticulated and un-reflected in the education context. Some students recognized this hidden curriculum and resisted it. However, there were no real opportunities for critical participation when constructing entrepreneurial identity work as legitimate peripheral participation in an imagined community of entrepreneurship, while still being a successful student in the community of school. Therefore, it is possible to raise questions whether curricula designed for identity work and to personalize entrepreneurship discourses, in fact constitute a very regulated framework and make settings for “identity control” (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Petriglieri, Wood, & Petriglieri, 2011) by fostering compliance with an ideal of the authenticity driven entrepreneur. Ironically, this module may therefore work to reconfirm the exclusive entrepreneurship discourse of the heroic and self-driven entrepreneur that it in fact seeks to dissolve to make entrepreneurship accessible to all.
Limitations and future research

There are clearly limitations to this study. The findings derive from a single case, which is unique due to its strong focus on entrepreneurial identity work. Such single-case findings may be viewed as characteristic to a certain setting and not generalizable to a broader understanding of entrepreneurship education as an identity workspace. However, since research into identity work practices in entrepreneurship education is still in its infancy, it is necessary to undertake single case studies to construct knowledge. In this particular case, identity work was explicitly exercised, which enabled observations of how identities were negotiated and constructed. Convictions of a close connection between entrepreneurial identity, learning, and behaviour, possibly inform ontological levels of other entrepreneurship education programmes, although less overt. The findings of this study therefore provide material for wider reflections regarding the social practices that follow such ontologies. Hence, the empirical statements of this in-depth study may speak to empirical conditions in other cases (Small, 2009).

The present study is unable to confirm whether course participation had any effects in form of increased enterprising behaviour of the students. Neither, does the study’s scope and empirical material legitimize any claims regarding the further development of participants and their experiences after the module. Studies with a longer timeframe may address this limitation. In this module, the students were not required to engage in any actual entrepreneurial intervention outside the classroom. Therefore, it is impossible to suggest any behavioural changes or inquire about the practical and bodily experiences of entrepreneuring and identity formation.

The entrepreneurship module studied here, was a mandatory in a postgraduate education. This fact is likely to have affected students’ modes of participation. Their willingness to engage and to form entrepreneurial identities cannot be assumed. Yet, under the current circumstances, the students had no other options than to participate as postgraduate students and seek to gain the grades needed for the desired final degree. Perhaps they would react differently and show less resistance, had the course been an elective module. Overall, this raises ethical concerns about introducing personalized pedagogies (Blenker, et al., 2012), which borders on self-development training, in mandatory modules. Hence, educators must consider whether the students themselves are likely to invest the education setting with
the function of an identity workspace. Future research should address this, as well as the long term consequences of stimulating entrepreneurial identities and recognizing oneself as an entrepreneur. Recent, studies suggest that the entrepreneurial identities made available in education are less accessible to women than to men (Hytti & Heinonen, 2013; Jones, 2014). Of an overall concern, it is important to understand, how entrepreneurship pedagogy produce and legitimize particular forms of understanding not alone of the entrepreneur, but how it induce morals concerning (proper) ways of being human (Siivonen & Brunila, 2014). This requires researchers to extend the normative concern for entrepreneurial learning outcomes to the consequences of this normativity and the social practices in education settings. Hence, it suggests the necessity to momentarily move from the “what works agenda” (Farnsworth & Solomon, 2013) to understand how interactions and practice may affect learning experiences and outcomes. Hence, it is a task for entrepreneurship education research not only to discuss how entrepreneurship education ought to be conducted, but also seek to embrace and conceptualize its complexity and contradictions. As yet, there is no tradition in entrepreneurship education research to do this. Therefore, I repeat calls for a greater integration of themes and theoretical anchors found in education and learning research (Béchard & Grégoire, 2005; Fayolle, 2013; Howorth, Smith, & Parkinson, 2012) and to follow up on the insights to how entrepreneurship education allow participation, involve recognizable characters, storylines and objectives, and thus constitute contexts for identity work.

Conclusion

This article draws attention to how entrepreneurship education is practiced as an identity workspace. With an ethnographic approach, I investigated a particular realization of entrepreneurship education, where self-reflective identity work was turned into a pedagogical strategy for entrepreneurial learning. This particular form of entrepreneurship education operated with assumptions of entrepreneurial learning as self-reflexivity and the ability to self-reflect and present the self in accordance with a specific genre. Learning to participate in an entrepreneurship community was realized through presentations of an enterprising self. In their construction of identities acceptable in class, students were concerned with legitimate participation in the practice community of school. The institutionalization of
identity work as a specific pedagogical framework for entrepreneurship education thus evoked two distinctive communities, which involved different and at times conflicting identities and modes of legitimate participation, which posed conflicting demands on the learners. In that way, the study shows that entrepreneurial identity work is not a dis-embedded and context free practice. Structured by pedagogical intentions, entrepreneurial identity work is never is a simple means-ends relation, but a complex process characterized by uncertainty, conflict, and struggle. It is therefore necessary to readdress the functionalist framing of identity work as something which may be steered towards specific outcomes in entrepreneurship education, if the right buttons are pushed with suitable pedagogical methods.
References


Appendix 1

Entrepreneurial Identity Coding Scheme and Illustrative Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exemplary quotations</th>
<th>First-order themes</th>
<th>Second order categories</th>
<th>Theoretical Construct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“When I think about entrepreneurs, they actually started very small, I would say Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, yeah, basically every person who started just as a one or two person company in their garage.” (Student interview 1)</td>
<td>Creator of new firms</td>
<td>Profession (Doings)</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“To make something yourself, be like your own boss”. (Student interview 2)</td>
<td>Self-employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I guess that it’s a person who is a sort of inventor or do things in a new way and then makes a business out of it”. (student interview 1)</td>
<td>Inventor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It is rather a paradox that you attend higher education to train to become an entrepreneur. The people that I know who are entrepreneurs, they are not highly educated. They dropped out of school, and then they did it, you see”. (Student interview 1)</td>
<td>School dropout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You do not necessarily need a degree in engineering to contribute with something” (Student interview 2)</td>
<td>Opportunity for everybody *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think of a person who is good at generating ideas, who is willing to take chance. I think of a person who does things quickly like, ok sounds great, let’s try it.” (Student interview 1)</td>
<td>Idea generating</td>
<td></td>
<td>Personal characteristics (beings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They are very much into their own idea, They stand behind it and would give everything for it”. (Student interview 1)</td>
<td>Passionate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What you should take from this exercise is not to be afraid of changes. That is how entrepreneurs are. They are not afraid” (Classroom observations)</td>
<td>Brave*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Having an idea, it is almost like a fight from day one. So entrepreneurs they have the persistency to go on and on and on” (Student interview 1)</td>
<td>Persistent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“An entrepreneurial person is just the opposite of a very analytical person. If an entrepreneurial person needs to work with one task for longer time, he gets bored”</td>
<td>Seek challenges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I tend to be very causational. That is probably why I am not an entrepreneur”. (Observations in class)</td>
<td>Effectual*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You can train to think differently. You can become aware of several things. For example just to be conscious of thinking of things that you can start up - so seeing the world with other glasses. (student interview 2)</td>
<td>Divergent thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td>Entrepreneurship glasses/mindset*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Meeting the Promise of Process.
Dynamics of Participation in Enterprise Education

Abstract    Entrepreneurial process attracts attention in higher education as an opportunity to learn. Students learn “through” enterprise, when they actively engage in an entrepreneurial process while reflecting on their actions and experiences. This new paradigm for enterprise education puts specific conditions on the learning environment and involves images of a particular learner, who is able to take advantage of this opportunity for learning. In this qualitative field study, I investigate how postgraduate students pursued opportunities to learn learning and become successful entrepreneurial learners in a process-driven entrepreneurship module. Drawing on situated learning theory, I find that students tried to access learning opportunities through a constant dynamic of participation which involved contradictory participatory stances. The findings indicate a contradictory process of becoming a legitimate entrepreneurial learner which is more uncertain than is portrayed in recent work.

Key words: Learning through enterprise, entrepreneurial process, higher education, participation, situated learning
Introduction

It is early morning. In the lecture hall, the first PowerPoint slide already lightens up in front of several rows of tables and chairs slowly filling up with students. The lecturer welcomes all. She explains that since this is a “process-course” many things will be different and new to many of us. However, we should all rest assured. “The process is under control.” It has been tried and tested for several years. “Therefore, the most important learning today is that you all feel at ease when you go home. All will get through the process” (Field notes, Lecture I).

When the lecturer above assures that “all will get through the process,” she refers to a learning “through” enterprise initiative in a context of higher education. Stressing that the process is under control and that it has been “tried and tested”, she seeks to suspend uncertainty and make students “feel at ease” trusting that to “get through the process” is a doable treatment and a legitimate opportunity to learn; even though it differs from conventional teaching and learning practices. This article takes a closer look at the entrepreneurial process constituted as a model of and model for learning in formal education in order to understand how this constitution constructs learners.

Enterprise education (EE) aims to cultivate enterprising individuals. Founded on a “broad” definition of entrepreneurship in education (Ball, 1989), it supports personal development and the improvement of skills, behaviours and attributes deemed important in a variety of contexts in a world of increased uncertainty and complexity (Gibb, 2002; Jones & Iredale, 2010). Yet, there is a growing recognition that to fulfill this aim, it is necessary to employ innovative pedagogies beyond traditional content-driven lecturing and business plan teaching (Draycott & Rae, 2011; Jones & Iredale, 2010; Jones & Penaluna, 2013). An alternative is a process-driven pedagogy, which facilitates an open and personalized learning process (Blenker et al., 2012; Löbler, 2006). Students learn “through” enterprise, when they are exposed to contexts similar to those in which “real” entrepreneurs learn, and they go through their own entrepreneurial process, while reflecting on their actions and experiences (Leitch & Harrison, 1999; Pittaway & Cope, 2007b). This perception is supported by research in the general learning and education field, where a number of studies illustrate that “what” students learn, cannot be separated from “how” they learn it (Boaler & Greeno, 2000; Gresalfi & Cobb, 2006; Lave, 1988).
Entrepreneurs are considered to be “exceptional learners” who “learn from everything” (Smilor, 1997, p. 344) and the learning through enterprise model insists that students learn to behave as entrepreneurs and learn in entrepreneurial ways (Rae, 2010, p. 594). Consequently, formal education constitutes the entrepreneurial process as a model for learning, and constitutes the entrepreneur as a model for the student-learner. A growing scholarship discusses the construction of curricula and learning environments in higher education, particularly suited for entrepreneurial learning. But empirical research shows little attention to how entrepreneurial learning environments actually generate social practices and construct entrepreneurial learners.

Even so, it is important to acknowledge that opportunities to learn do not exist for learners who cannot or do not take advantage of them (Haertel, Moss, Pullin, & Gee, 2008). Hence, it is crucial to understand how the organization of entrepreneurial learning environments in practice offers identities and access to learning. That may be even more so, as EE spreads across the academe to areas outside the business school and is welcomed as mandatory modules within larger educational programmes. Yet, this issue cannot be rightfully addressed by simply looking into the theoretical content or ideal processes of instruction. It is necessary to inquire into the relationships between learners and such aspects of their learning environment (Haertel, et al., 2008). However, empirical studies on participant interaction in “learning through” contexts are scarce and there is little knowledge of the social practices that such learning environments actually generate. With an outset in an in-depth study of a single case, I examine how students manoeuvre to “get through” an entrepreneurial process and take advantage of the opportunities to learn, that it represents as a pedagogical model in EE. The study is therefore motivated by the research question: How does a process driven enterprise education construct learners?

This inquiry is informed by a social practice perspective on learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). I follow Fayolle et al.’s (2016, p. 897) suggestions to cross the disciplinary boundaries of entrepreneurship and employ theoretical and methodological stances from the community of education research. Particularly, I draw on situated learning theory, which defines learning as a social and contextual accomplishment, and as a process of participation, enculturation and becoming (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000; Wenger, 1998). In this perspective, learning is understood in terms of changing participation in social practice and as processes of identification, i.e. becoming somebody through participation in the activities of a community of practice (Lave &
Wenger, 1991). Lave and Wenger’s (1991) concept of “legitimate peripheral participation” (LPP), refers to the process in which newcomers gradually evolve a sense of belonging to a social community, as they acquire the skills to become full participants in practices valued by this community. In that way, LPP stresses the relational character of learning since recognition and legitimacy earned in the social context may grant or impede access to a widened participation (O'Connor, Peck, & Cafarella, 2015). Situated learning theory shifts the inquiry away from students’ minds to the practices they engage in. Subsequently, it privileges social practice rather than the structure of pedagogy as the source of learning. In that way, situated learning theory dissociates learning from pedagogical intentions and opens the possibility of divergence or conflicts in the learning setting (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 114). Hence, it shifts the immediate focus away from the traditional questions in EE research about how to organize effective learning settings (Blenker, Frederiksen, Korsgaard, Trolle, & Wagner, 2014; Pittaway & Cope, 2007a), to questions about how the learning setting produces practices and identities in response to its organization. Hence, I find that LPP is a “useful heuristic” (Lea, 2005) to provide insights into ways of participating in a “learning through enterprise” module and thus for becoming an entrepreneurial learner.

The introductory vignette is an extract of my field notes constructed during fieldwork in an enterprise postgraduate “process module” taught at a Danish University. Founded on a distinct theoretical framework and rules for participation, this module represents an extreme case of process driven EE. Yet, as an extreme case, it may reveal more information than a typical case and is therefore more appropriate for “getting a point across in an especially dramatic way” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229). I employ data from this particular setting, to provide a “thick-description” (Geertz, 1973) of how the entrepreneurial process is constituted as a “carrier” of opportunities for students to become enterprising and how the process driven pedagogy organises learning environments and commands and produces particular learner practices.

I study the entrepreneurial process as a learning process in its own right. Consequently, I do not aim to evaluate this specific approach to EE with respect to its efficiency in creating specific learning outcomes. My account is descriptive and analytic, rather than prescriptive (Geertz, 1973). The relevance of my inquiry therefore rests in its capacity to generate reflection on how legitimate sources
of learning are conjured and pursued by students who seek to activate learning opportunities and become recognizable enterprising subjects and learners, in a specific framework of EE.

The article proceeds as follows. First, I present how the entrepreneurial process is constituted as an opportunity to learn in formal education. Second, I propose how viewing learning as participation contributes to this field. Third, I provide more detailed information about the enterprise module and the methods for data collection and analysis. Fourth, I present the findings of three different participatory stances in class. Last, I provide a more detailed discussion of these dynamics of participation and its contribution to the research and practice of process driven EE.

**Entrepreneurial Process as Opportunity to Learn**

Orientation towards process is increasingly reflected in pedagogical designs, as EE spreads across the academe. Alternative to traditional ways of lecturing “about” entrepreneurship, research recognises that hands-on experiences with the entrepreneurial process more genuinely supports the development of enterprising skills and attributes (Gibb, 1993; Kyrö, 2005; Pittaway & Cope, 2007a, p. 301; Rae, 2010). The learning through enterprise model insists that students learn to behave as entrepreneurs and learn in entrepreneurial ways (Rae, 2010, p. 594). Students should therefore go through an entrepreneurial process facilitated by the education institution (Pittaway & Cope, 2007b; Rae, 2010). Consequently, the entrepreneurial process is organized as a model for activity in order to create certain experiences. Hence, entrepreneurship is considered to be an opportunity to learn and acquire important competency, and it is made into the medium through which learning is possible.

Educational initiatives always involve conceptions of possible and positive learning outcomes as well as of the means to achieve them (Lave, 1996; Lave & Packer, 2008). Hence, there is always a purpose to what goes on in educational settings and judgements about what is considered educationally desirable (Biesta, 2011). Such conceptions of purpose, outcomes and value has expanded considerably in the “learning through” enterprise paradigm. Researchers have called for a conceptual model of EE, which widens the traditional focus on knowledge and skills related to business start-ups, survival and growth (Blenker, Korsgaard, Neergaard, & Thrane, 2011; Gibb, 2002). In this view, going through an
entrepreneurial process in education involves opportunities for learning that is not exclusively related to business venturing activities. It represents opportunities for individuals to learn more general competences in the form of enterprising behaviour, defined by Gibb (1993, p. 14) as opportunity seeking, problem solving and risk taking, as well as the ability to cope with and enjoy uncertainty. Being enterprising thus refers to a set of personal dispositions and competences which transcends venture creation contexts (Caird, 1990; Gibb, 2002). Consequently, in the education setting, the entrepreneurial process becomes a learning process in its own right. Students learn to “think and act in enterprising ways” (Rae, 2007, p. 611). Participation infuses entrepreneurial skills and behaviours and makes way for the development of entrepreneurial identities (Donnellon, Ollila, & Middleton, 2014; Harmeling, 2011) and entrepreneurially effective graduates (Hannon, 2006; Heinonen & Poikkijoki, 2006; Henry, 2013; Kyrö, 2008; Löbler, 2006). Ultimately, the entrepreneurial process itself has become a “carrier” of opportunities to learn and consolidated as a “treatment” that students are to “get through” in order to learn. Since, the process is considered open to student constructions, the entrepreneurial process in education thus promises a range of learning outputs that cannot be predefined by teachers, but has to be defined by the students themselves (Blenker, et al., 2012; Mueller & Anderson, 2014).

The learning through enterprise model in EE connects a concept of entrepreneurial learning with entrepreneurial experiences. Research suggests that experiential learning methods more genuinely supports students’ entrepreneurial competency development (Gibb, 1993; Kyrö, 2005; Pittaway & Cope, 2007a; Rae, 2010). Entrepreneurs learn and construct new knowledge through and from participating in entrepreneurial practice (Mueller & Anderson, 2014). In contrast to a knowledge transmitted from a teacher to a student, scholars argue that a constructivist perspective provide a better explanation of how knowledge is created within the “complex, chaotic and unpredictable context of entrepreneurship” (Mueller & Anderson, 2014, p. 501). Hence, entrepreneurial learning is regarded as an active process of constructing new knowledge by filtering experiences through existing knowledge structures and thereby restructuring cognitive schemes (Kyrö, 2008; Mueller & Anderson, 2014). Therefore it is of utmost importance that the learning environments in EE can stimulate these entrepreneurial experiences (Pittaway & Cope, 2007b). Learning through enterprise encourages learning by doing, experimenting, failing, calculated risk-taking, creative problem-solving and
interaction with the world outside school (Jones & Iredale, 2010, p. 12). Consequently, it reforms traditional terms and conditions of the teaching and learning in higher education. Research discusses how effective learning environments must be specifically organized to generate entrepreneurial learning opportunities and various conditions are put on individuals in the process (Pittaway & Cope, 2007b; Taatila, 2010). It is for example well known that process driven EE alters the ways teachers and students are to participate and interact in class. Educators are to act as process coaches, supportive rather than directive of students’ learning (Blenker, et al., 2012; Hannon, 2005; Mueller & Anderson, 2014). Meanwhile, students should adjust to new ways of learning, where they have to invest themselves more actively as co-creators. They need to be self-directed and to take responsibility of their own learning (Blenker, et al., 2012; Draycott & Rae, 2011; B. Jones & Iredale, 2010; Kyrö, 2005; Löbler, 2006; Mueller & Anderson, 2014). Since individual learners govern their own learning, both pedagogy and the final assessments must focus on ‘how’ students learn, rather than ‘what’ they eventually learn (Béchard & Grégoire, 2005; Kyrö, 2005; Löbler, 2006). Consequently, educators direct control not on content, but on process (Mueller & Anderson, 2014). In the learning through enterprise paradigm, education makes an outset in the student’s inner motivation and the student’s own process of opportunity creation (Blenker, et al., 2012; Kyrö, 2005; Thrane, Blenker, Korsgaard, & Neergaard, 2016). Hence, it represents an open and idiosyncratic learning process, which celebrates learners’ autonomy and personal drives (Blenker, et al., 2012; van Gelderen, 2010) (Löbler, 2006).

Taken together, this work sheds significant light on how entrepreneurial learning can be stimulated in formal learning institutions in ways which demand and construct forms of participation radically different from those typical of conventional education. However, this literature tends to prioritize the overall and ideal establishment of learning environments, while showing less attention to the experiences of the participants, who take on these new practices. Building on the insights outlined above, the aim of this study is to consider how these learning settings create entrepreneurial learners. Therefore, I trace the work involved in producing legitimate participation and access to learning.
Learning as Participation

Like the constructivists, situated learning theory emphasises that learning is never a matter of simple transmission of knowledge or the acquisition of skill (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Yet, where a constructivist perspective prioritise the cognitive and conceptual reorganizations that individual students take away from the classroom, a situated lens focuses on the activity of the classroom, and theorize learning as increasing participation in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000). The community of practice, its social relations and interactions provide the context for learning. Participation in the community of practice not only refers to individuals’ engagement in activities. It involves becoming active participants in the practices of a community, and constructing identities in relation to these communities (Lave, 1996; Wenger, 1998). Hence, focus is on processes of doing and being knowledgeable in ways that are valued and recognized in a community of practice as learners move from the legitimate periphery to the centre of the community (Lave & Packer, 2008; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

I regard the entrepreneurial learning setting of an EE module as the immediate community into which the student-learners aspire access and membership. Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 98) define a community of practice as “a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice”. They do not address learning in formal education institutions, but assert that LPP is an analytic perspective on learning and therefore applicable to all learning situations informal as well as formal (Lave, 2013; Lave & Wenger, 1991). However, there is a difference between the immediate learning community of practice in which students are directly engaged and where they experience direct relationships, and an aspired practice community of enterprising individuals which transcends the immediate community spatially, socially, and perhaps even temporally. Higher education institutions thus constitute various particular and intersecting communities of practice and therefore make complex learning contexts (Boylan, 2010). Consequently, a community of practice does not necessarily imply direct engagement in face-to-face interaction, a well-defined identifiable group, or socially visible boundaries (Hasse, 2008). People may also connect through the power of imagination. In fact, learners may be motivated by participation in “imagined communities” distanced from the communities they are currently and directly engaged in (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). A sense of legitimate participation and membership in the immediate
community may grant access to LPP in an “imagined community” of entrepreneurial practitioners. Hence, a community provides a contextual frame for interpretation (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 51). Still, communities do not impose meaning. Even though a community may develop shared points of reference, participants may still interpret them in various ways, which also points to the understanding of learning as a contested and ever problematic process (Wenger, 1998). Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 35) recognize multiple forms of participation and that there may be no such thing as full participation. Moreover, processes of participation and becoming are not smooth and automatic, but may involve conflict, senses of inauthenticity, marginalization or exclusion (Archer, 2008). Consequently, LPP depends on how the status of “legitimate” is recognised and awarded or denied in the community of practice (O’Connor, et al., 2015). Learning how to participate in an educational setting thus involves learning how to perform e.g. how to talk and behave, to legitimise participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). As an analytical lens, LPP therefore enables a focus on the social practices valued in a community of practice. It enables a questioning of how practice is “practiced”, how it is carried through and what form it is given. Hence, this perspective facilitates a view of EE as a setting in which becoming an entrepreneurial learner is enacted in legitimate and recognizable ways. Consequently, a situated lens privileges how participants in the practice community shape, share, negotiate, and enact participation. Focus here is therefore not normatively on how students become enterprising subjects by “getting through” an entrepreneurial process, but analytically on how this becoming is made possible within the learning environment (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000).

Methods and Data

EE research reflects important methodological challenges since scholars who are also educators often research their own modules and programmes, making it difficult to establish analytical distance in the research position (Blenker, et al., 2014). Education research acknowledges that central features of teaching and learning are so taken for granted that they become invisible to the investigator (Delamont, Atkinson, & Pugsley, 2010). “Fighting familiarity” is therefore important for discovery and for developing both the research field as well as the practices employed in the classroom (Delamont, et al., 2010). In this study, one strategy to fight familiarity has been to step outside established EE literature
and connect to the field of education, conceptually with a social practice view on learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Penuel, 2014) and methodologically through ethnography as a research method.

Ethnographic fieldwork has been proved well-suited to the study of learning and teaching processes due to its traditions of immersion and description instead of prescription (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Walford, 2008). Through first-hand observations and in-depth interviews with those directly involved, it is possible to resist ideal notions of what is assumed to be going on, what ought to happen, according to some prior theoretical perspective, and instead recognize and embrace complexity, diversity, change, potential, and conflict (Hammersley, 1999). It foregrounds the importance of “thick description” i.e. careful accounts of social phenomena in which different layers of meaning are expressed (Geertz, 1973). As research strategy, ethnography involves several interwoven procedures, revolving around participant observation and in-depth engagement with participants in naturally occurring settings, with the purpose of learning from them, how they do things, and how they view reality and give meaning to their actions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Watson, 2011). In this study, I was guided by a general curiosity about participants’ understandings and practices in a specific entrepreneurship course and its particular pedagogical model. Therefore, questions asked were from the outset open-ended to facilitate rich qualitative data production and contextualized answers. Hence, the final research question derives from the field and the observational data in the community of participants (Geertz, 1973).

Learning from the field and through participant observation always involves “the paradox of professional distance and personal involvement” (Agar 1996 p.7, cited in Anteby, 2013, p. 1278). Throughout this study, I have been affiliated with a group of entrepreneurship researchers and educators strongly interested in developing and improving EE. They granted me access to study in this particular course, often highlighted as an innovative and highly focused on processual “learning through” elements. My connection to these educators allowed participant observation in various settings and activities, shifting between different research positions as researcher and educator as well as student. I used these different research positions to constantly balance insider and outsider roles to maintain the analytical distance as participant observer (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011).

A student group allowed me to follow their work throughout the course. When I was with the students, I deliberately sought to distance myself from the educators. I did not converse with them in the
classroom, and I did not convey any information to the educators on specific students gained from my student participation. The students initially saw me as a teacher expert and asked for advice on how to solve problems related to the course. However, it gradually stopped as we got to know each other better. I never gave specific advice, and I decided to participate in a more observant role in the student group to avoid situations that would position me in the role of an authority. The concurrent student and educator participation helped me learn and gain experiences from both positions and thus develop a dual perspective on the interactions in class. Yet, this dual perspective was attained with the cost of being partially distanced and a full participant in neither the group of teacher researchers nor the student group.

**Research settings**

The arguments developed here, are grounded in empirical material collected in the period of 2012-2014 with an outset in a particular entrepreneurship module embedded in an interdisciplinary Master programme taught at the Arts faculty at a Danish university. Each year, around 45 students are accepted from various academic disciplines and faculties. This ten ECTS module is mandatory for all and runs in parallel with two other modules in the first semester from September when the students start their postgraduate education until handing in exam papers in mid-January.

The webpage which introduces the master programme to new students presents entrepreneurship and enterprising behaviour as central to the design and desired outcome of the entire programme:

“As (an A graduate) you learn to create value – symbolic, cultural and economic value – for others through interventions and design solutions. You [...] learn to make use of entrepreneurial tools to create changes with your personal and professional competences as outset. [...] The master degree in A teaches you to be an entrepreneurial and innovative agent [...].” (my translation)

Moreover, the entrepreneurship module is positioned as an important entry into ways of working and learning in the master programme. One of the programme educators who did not teach the enterprise module still explained how the entrepreneurial was “the focal point in this education” and therefore simply “the nerve in it all” (Interview, A-education educator). Hence, access to the learning
opportunities granted by this EE course, seemed important not alone in terms of the final outcomes, but also in terms of further successful participation in the programme.

The EE module encourages experiential learning. Participants are to experience and develop themselves as enterprising individuals who act upon entrepreneurial opportunities which are created from disharmonies identified in their everyday practice. During the time of fieldwork, the teachers responsible for the lectures were a young woman (Heather). She was a graduate from the self-same A-programme and had been through the process some years before. The other teacher (Henry) was an experienced enterprise educator and one of the founders of this particular module. The module draws explicitly on an understanding of the individual-opportunity nexus formulated by Shane and Venkataraman (2000), effectuation (Sarasvathy & Dew, 2005), and an interpretation of how opportunities derive from an analytical stance towards the students’ everyday practices, informed by Spinosa, Flores and Dreyfus’ (1997) views on disclosing. The educators actively positioned this course as an alternative to traditional academic education which compliments objectivity and detachment and to mainstream entrepreneurship education symbolized by a focus on business planning. Instead, participants were divided into nine groups that were invited to engage in a complex and unpredictable process of opportunity creation with an outset in a formulation of the groups’ means and identities (who are we, what do we know, and who do we know). The groups should then develop an opportunities in to an actual intervention which involves other people in the “real” world. This entrepreneurial process progressed through five assignments, which were discussed in feed-back sessions called “café-meetings”. Moreover, to stimulate reflection students were asked to answer questions and upload reflections on an IT-platform; the WIKI. Hence, the traditional lecture was complemented with other practices and learning settings. Students finalize the module with an exam-paper (about 60 pages) which the group writes together, on their practices and experiences of the entrepreneurial process. These exam papers are assessed and graded by the educators.

Data

In collaboration with a colleague, I interviewed 14 students from this programme in early 2012. They just finished the entrepreneurship module and were made to talk about the development of their entrepreneurial projects and experiences with learning through enterprise. Their accounts made me
aware of how students desired to learn through enterprise, but experienced uncertainties operating within the pedagogical design. This made me enquire into the opportunities of following a group of students more intensively throughout the course and to complement interviews with participant observation as research method. I was granted access to participation in the course, which ran from September 2012 to January 2013.

During this period, I specifically followed Y Group. The choice of Y Group was random. In the very first lecture of the course, I sat beside a girl in the classroom. When all participants were told to join in groups set up by the teachers, I tagged along with her. Hence, I had no prior knowledge of the participants, their experiences or qualifications. The choice to primarily follow one student group in a single module is of course limiting. However, ethnographic research in education sets a precedent for this, since it enables the researcher to provide intensive and detailed explorations of students’ learning processes (Nasir & Cooks, 2009; O’Connor, et al., 2015; Wortham, 2004). Throughout the course, I talked to members of other groups to confirm whether the concerns and practices of the Y Group could also be found elsewhere. Consequently, four months of data-collection included participant observation in multiple settings and forums. I observed classroom lectures, supervision meetings, student group work, and educators’ meetings. In addition, I attended entrepreneurship educator’s conferences and workshops where this particular module was presented and discussed as a general model for enterprise education. All observations were recorded in detailed field notes. Guided by these observations, I developed open ended questions and conducted formal semi-structured interviews with students and teachers. These interviews were all recorded and transcribed. I selected participants to sample all student groups in the course. I interviewed educators teaching the course, as well as other courses taught the same semester, to get an understanding not only of the module in itself, but also of its importance within the full programme. In that way, the empirical material was produced through ‘in situ’ observation and first-hand experiences of classroom actions, complemented by informal and formal interviews with participants, as well as chance conversations, overheard remarks, and a consideration of the texts they used and produced. An overview of the data-material is outlined in table 1.
**Table 1: Overview of the data-material**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data type</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Data format</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observation</strong></td>
<td>Classroom (38 hrs) Group work (40 hrs.) Student common room (5 hrs.) Teacher’s meetings (+20 hrs) Conferences (+10 hrs.)</td>
<td>Field notes jotted down during the event and later written up as electronic documents</td>
<td>approx. 400 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formal interviews</strong></td>
<td>14 students (pre-study) (90-120 min.) 12 students (90-120 min.) 2 module educators (60-90 min.) 1 teacher from programme (60 min.)</td>
<td>Digital sound recordings and transcriptions</td>
<td>approx. 700 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Documents</strong></td>
<td>45 student assignments of 2 pages 9 exam papers of approx. 60 pages WIKI uploads Course description and syllabus Field diary and memo’s</td>
<td>Printed and electronic documents</td>
<td>+1000 pages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data analysis**

Since this investigation was exploratory in nature, data analysis was not carried out with a predetermined coding scheme, but in a constantly iterative and comparative process parallel to the data collection (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). I drafted reflective and analytic memos on what emerged as recurring patterns in the field as well as my own curiosities. It is in the encounter between theoretical assumptions and empirical impressions that new questions can be asked. Especially, when these encounters involve breakdowns or simply puzzlement (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007). Making sense of “the process” was an explicit, early and pressing theme in the module. As participant observer, I became puzzled by how the term “process” became central to a language used by students and educators in this particular module. In early field notes, I kept recording this repeated use in various situations and in relation to various explanations of behaviours, feelings, course requirements or learning expectations. Moreover, I noted a pervasive communication about the
pedagogical model throughout the teaching period. This prevalence of “the process” made me pursue it analytically to understand the entrepreneurial process not alone as the process of entrepreneurial intervention in real contexts, but also as an expression of “how to learn” and how to participate to access learning. During fieldwork, I started to pay attention to situations where “the process” was negotiated, and in the post-fieldwork data analysis, I traced these situations throughout the empirical material and sought to compare and group its use into first-order categories. These related to anticipations and experiences of participation in the process e.g. decisions made in the groups, conflicts, statements in class. Following data collection, I compiled all evidence that appeared relevant to the patterns identified and refined them through a process of triangulation across the data material to produce a set of first-order categories. I continued this iterative process of going back and forth between data, memos and theory until I was able to clearly articulate the three participatory stances: compliance, authenticity and autonomy presented in the analysis. Figure 1 illustrates my final data structure. It shows the categories and themes from which I develop my findings and the discussion. Additional supporting evidence for these findings is shown in Table 2. This table contains representative data, which supports the second-order themes.
FIGURE 1
Data structure

First order categories
A. Reassurance of theoretical and academic foundation of the process model
B. Transparency of process
C. Compliance and belief as requirement for learning
D. Course rules should be followed
E. “Real” world engagement as requirement and motivator
F. Manifestation of identities as “doers”
G. Emotional engagement and personal means as outset for opportunity creation
H. Defining projects as “school projects” or “entrepreneurial projects”
I. Constant self-monitoring and reflection to show true emotional drive
J. Experiences of compromise due to time-pressure and loyalty to the group
K. Students skip schoolwork
L. Students experience teacher control
M. Students express mis-fit between the course requirements and personal experiences
N. Students stress academic deficit

Second order themes
1. Trust in the process model
2. Submission to the process
3. Behaviour
4. Sincere investment of self
5. Performance
6. Ownership
7. Resistance

Participatory stances
Compliance
Authenticity
Autonomy
### TABLE 2
Themes, Categories, and Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Second-Order Themes and First-Order Categories</th>
<th>Representative Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMPLIANCE</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. <em>Trust in the process model</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| A. Reassurance of theoretical and academic legitimacy of the process model | A1. “I really try to be in the process. I mean, somebody has really thought about this. It is not just put together in this way for fun.” (Field notes, Conversation, student talking about learning towards exams)  
A2. “In the lecture, it is vital that the teacher is able to create the necessary legitimacy, certainty and meaningfulness to support the student’s own learning process in future assignments” (description of the pedagogic model in Bager et al. 2011: 26, my translation from Danish) |
| B. Transparency of the process                | B1. “Now they (teachers) have a driving directory that we use to drive through and learn something by doing that.” (Interview, Student recounts experiences)  
B2. “Heather introduces the structure of the course. The girl beside me takes the “process book” out of her bag. I observe that she made notes on the pages. In the book. She quickly finds the page showing the same model, which Heather displays on the PowerPoint slide.” (Field notes, Lecture I) |
| 2. *Submission to the process*                |                      |
| C. Compliance and belief as requirement for learning | C1. “It (participation in the process) meant that we accepted to give up our normal patterns of behaviour in a working process and take on this new thinking in order to learn the most” (Exam paper Y Group)  
C2. “I regard it (the process) as a method to push us out into the world. It requires that they use one method to push us. Too much discussion would confuse and hinder this push.”(Interview, Student recounts her experiences) |
| D. Course rules should be followed            | D1. “During the entire process we did not talk about ideas at all. Anytime someone was about to do it, I cut through saying; We are not allowed to do that.” (Interview, Student describing her experiences after the course)  
D2. “We were told: Here there are no make believes. You must transform ideas into action in the real world, otherwise it does not count” (Interview, Student recounts her experiences) |
| **AUTHENTICITY**                              |                      |
| 3. *Behaviour*                                |                      |
| E. “Real” world engagement as requirement and motivator | E1. “To me there is a lot of nourishment in the practical part and in doing it.” (Interview, student recounts his experiences).  
E2. “This education is turned towards the world. It really drew me in” (Interview, Student recounts his experiences) |
### Second-Order Themes and First-Order Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Representative Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F.</td>
<td><strong>Manifestation of identities as “doers”</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>F1.</strong> “We all have this sense of enterprise. We just want to do some real stuff out in the real world” (Interview, Student recounts the group identity in the beginning of the course)&lt;br&gt;<strong>F2.</strong> “When working out a group identity, Y Group agrees that what they have in common is the desire to do something in the world. They agree on a motto for the group: “Entanglement is Development” (Field notes, Group work, Y Group)</td>
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| 2. **Sincere investment of self**<br>**F.** Emotional engagement and personal means as outset for opportunity creation | **G1.** “In entrepreneurship you cannot be objectively distanced from what you are doing. It is about the individual-opportunity nexus.” (Field notes, Teacher explaining the necessity of students’ personal commitment in EE, Teachers’ meeting)  
**G2.** “We tried to think effectually rather than causally. That means we did not have any goal to strive for. We only had ourselves, what we could do and who we knew” (Interview, Student recounts her experiences) |
| H.         | **Defining projects as “school projects” or “entrepreneurial projects”**<br>**H1.** “We made it clear to him that this is a school project. We all have other passions that we want to elaborate later” (Interview, Student recounts a conversation with a stakeholder)  
**H2.** “Is it morally ok to ask others to participate in your project when it is just a school project?” (Field notes, Lecturer addresses students, Lecture 6) |
| 3. **Performance**<br>**I.** Self-monitoring and reflection to show true emotional drive | **I1.** “We have to build on our own means as an outset. This is the effectual. You cannot just adapt it to what we decide to do” (Field notes, students discuss the relation between group identity and entrepreneurial opportunity).  
**I2.** “Albert says that they really need to discuss their own roles in the group. Are they entrepreneurs or are they consultants? Do they solve a stakeholder problem or do they solve their own problem?” (Field notes, Café model IV, Group O) |
| J.         | **Experiences of compromise due to due to time-pressure and loyalty to the group**<br>**J1.** We were told that we should feel it in our guts. It should keep us awake at night. All five of us, we clearly sensed our own disharmonies. But when all of us tried to agree on one it was impossible.” (Interview, Student recounts her experiences)  
**J2.** “We are constantly told that we should devote ourselves to the process. It is fine that you are at the stage you are. It is alright to go back. But then there are suddenly deadlines and there is something you have to achieve at a certain time.” (Interview, Student recounts her experiences) |
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<tr>
<td><strong>AUTONOMY</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5. Ownership</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>K. Students skip schoolwork</td>
<td>K1. “It was only when we took ownership over the process that we started to have an actual process.” (Interview: Student recounts his experiences after the course)</td>
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<td>K2. “About a month into the process, we found that this (the intervention) could no longer fit into the framework of the semester. Then it was just irritating to fill in the WIKI forms. It was just not relevant to our process.” (Interview, Student recounts her experiences)</td>
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<td>L. Students experience teacher control</td>
<td>L1. “We received a lot of criticism from the teachers. Therefore, even though we believed in the idea, we let it go.” (Interview, Student recounts her experiences)</td>
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<td>L2. “We reflect on what we do. But we never reflect on what we are given. We just take that since it is given as a final solution: “This is what you do.” (Interview, Student recount her experiences)</td>
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<td><strong>6. Resistance</strong></td>
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<td>M. Students express misfit between the course requirements and personal experiences</td>
<td>M1. “It was as if the education did not follow us. We followed the education.” (Interview, student recounts her experiences)</td>
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<td>M2. “We were so afraid to do these iterations because there wasn’t any time. It had to be right first time” (Interview, student recounts his experience)</td>
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<tr>
<td>N. Students stress academic deficit</td>
<td>N1. “We go through this driving directory and this is it. This is how we do it. I think it is very one-dimensional if you look at it academically” (Interview, Student recounts her experiences)</td>
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<td>N2. “There are some elements I find quite problematic. Especially to a postgraduate course. I find it really unusual that there is this little self-reflection. You are never presented with possible holes in the theory you work with” (Interview, Student recounts her experiences)</td>
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Dynamics of Participation

Before I entered the classroom, I had some understanding of the intentions and logics of the enterprise module. My knowledge was largely based on theory and what I had learnt from participating in teacher’s meetings. However, my observations made me curious about the practices of students in this mandatory module. I found that uncertainty about how to engage to make good use of “the process” as an opportunity to learn was a constant and pressing theme throughout the course. Students and teachers negotiated access to learning opportunities through notions of participation which I aggregate into three participatory stances: compliance, authenticity, and autonomy. A stance refers to a position from where participation is possible in the community.

An inherent discrepancy between these stances contributed to uncertainties and a constant concern with “how” to participate and become a legitimate enterprise learner in order to take advantage of the opportunities to learn offered by this entrepreneurial process module. Below, I describe these findings in greater detail.

Compliance

The introductory vignette highlights trust as vital for students’ engagement in course activities and for the establishment of an environment supportive of students’ entrepreneurial learning processes. My analysis suggest that student compliance with the pedagogical model was a central condition for course activities and it became a central participatory stance.

Transparency and academic legitimacy

Lectures took place in large classrooms. The educators used slide presentations to introduce the students to theory and to the assignments. One of the educators explained that it was “a primary function of the lecture” to legitimize the educational process and motivate students to participate; that is, to explain what the students should do, and why they had to do it (Field notes, Conference Presentation). The introduction and discussion of research texts were part of establishing legitimacy of “the process” as an opportunity to learn in a Higher Education Institution. The syllabus included a small book, which extensively described the various stages of the pedagogical process, the supportive
theoretical framework, and the purpose of assignments. In lectures it was referred to as “the process book.” Students used this book as an “encyclopaedia” to consult for information on theory or when in doubt of the purpose and requirements of assignments. It made the theoretical scaffold explicit and the pedagogical model of entrepreneurial process academically accountable and trustworthy. In two out of total seven lectures, Heather facilitated short student module evaluations. In these sessions, the students expressed a belief in “the process” since it seemed “solidly anchored theoretically and academically.” It was a reassuring fact that it had been tried on other students. Hence, the strong focus on the theoretical foundation of the pedagogical process met the students’ expectations of an academic course and did not challenge their identities as university students.

However, when the evaluation moved on to issues for improvements, students criticized how the process was presented by the teachers as “the only way to do things”, which made it comparable to “religious activities and mantras” and in essence “un-academic.” A student described how theory was served in “bullet points” and several students showed concern that they uncritically had to trust and rely on this theory.

 Submission to the process

The inconsistency between the academically sound and unsound was countered by Henry. In a lecture, he told the students that the module represented one interpretation of entrepreneurship out of many. He enticed them to remain critical, but he asked them to comply:

“I am not trying to convert you. But this module rests on a specific understanding (of entrepreneurship). If this is to work, you have to believe in it. Then you may say and mean whatever you like afterwards” (Field notes, Lecture IV)

Henry’s statement suggests that there is no guarantee the module will “work” effectively as an opportunity to learn. However, a first step to realize learning was to suspend disbelief. Hence, students should allow themselves at least temporarily to submit to the process and follow its premises. As expressed by a student:

“I chose to subject myself to it all. Then I take what I can use and leave the rest”
(Interview, Vera, X Group)
In this view, the entrepreneurial process is presented as a period of compliance. After this period, students are free to criticize and may decide on the quality of their experiences i.e. what to keep and what to discard. Hence, the process has utilitarian value and being an entrepreneurial learner requires submission to the process and a willingness to be changed by this submission. Students listened carefully to the teachers’ instructions and followed explicit course rules. As a student explained:

“From the start we were told two basic things: We are not allowed to think in solutions and we are not allowed to make any ‘make believes’. [...] No matter what we do, there cannot be any make believes.” (Interview, Simon, R Group)

The rule of “no make believe” referred to the requirements of practice as well as requirements of authenticity. I will return to that below. Another rule was the “creativity taboo” which told the students to refrain from deciding on solutions to the form of their intervention, before it was allowed. Hence, the student groups should work along with the assignments and develop their entrepreneurial opportunities in accordance with the “the process”. Attempts to jump to solutions and make it seem as if they were developed along with the process were regarded as “cheating” by the teachers. They warned the students of what they called “drawer ideas” – ideas conceived in advance, hidden and then later retrieved – and the process of “backwards unravelling” e.g. that identities and opportunities were worked to fit a preconceived idea (Field notes, Lecture III). In that way, the educators sought to “control the process” (Mueller & Anderson, 2014) by conditioning the students’ legitimate participation. The legitimate entrepreneurial learner ought to develop an entrepreneurial intervention in close alignment with the pedagogical structure.

The explicit course rules became central in the communication amongst student peers and their negotiations on how best to participate, learn, and complete the course. The following is an extract from my field notes from a meeting, where Y Group worked to complete an assignment which involved the IT learning platform called the ”WIKI”.
Rose: Why are they (teachers) asking all of these questions? Can’t we just skip them and move on to something more important?

Julie: (Consulting the process book). In the example in the book, they actually skipped a question.

Corina: We cannot just skip a question. I mean, they are there for a reason, so we have to go along with it. The questions are there to make you think about things, so we cannot just skip a question even though they seem dumb. I believe it is important to learn in the process. At least I would like to do that. Let us continue just for a little while. There are only a few questions left.

Emma: But the next question is about Abell’s model\textsuperscript{22} and how it can be applied to possible solutions. We have not even talked about solutions yet.

Rose: I am so ready to start talking about solutions. It makes me really uneasy to keep opening up. All this talking and nonsense with the WIKI it is so annoying. I really don’t get it. What is it that it is supposed to do?

Corina: Really, I don’t think we should be talking about solutions before we are ready for it. We really should follow the process. The reason we are confused is that we made the mistake not collecting enough empirical material. […] Therefore, if you are thinking about solutions now Rose, then please keep them to yourself. I would like to be allowed to just be in the process and learn what I can from that.

Emma: We are so hopelessly behind schedule. But we are not the only group in this situation. (Field notes, Group work, Y Group)

This interaction in the workgroup setting shows some central themes in the students’ situated negotiations on how to participate in order to gain access to learning. Particularly, since the students did not see the immediate purpose of their activities and how it could benefit their entrepreneurial endeavours. To suspend this uncertainty, the question was whether to work autonomously to realize the entrepreneurial project or to do it in ways prescribed by faculty. Especially Rose was concerned with the lack of understanding and wanted to skip school assignments and “move on to something more important”. She often advocated for working more strategically with the group’s intervention and to split the work tasks in between the group members, so that all worked with “what they do best”.

\textsuperscript{22} Reference is made to Derek F. Abell’s “Three vector model” which was introduced as a project development tool in the process book (Bager et al. 2011, p. 82-83). Originally published in Abell, D.F. (1980) \textit{Defining the business: the starting point of strategic planning}. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.
However, this strategy was often countered by Corina and others. Even though Corina’s understanding of the assignment was incomplete, she wanted to “follow the process” to learn. She sought to suspend uncertainty by complying to the rules of the teacher built framework. On other occasions she repeated this participatory stance with a firm belief in the teachers’ authority and knowledge about enterprise. Later, when the group came to unfold their defined entrepreneurial opportunity, Corina was happy that the intervention in fact was a “result of the process” and the methods they were offered to learn (Field notes, Group Work, Y Group). Hence, “following the process” may lead to legitimate results.

These examples above show how particular contexts were constructed to facilitate entrepreneurial learning. Still, learners were uncertain about how to make “proper” use of these spaces. To counter this uncertainty, questions of how to participate legitimately and thus “how to learn” was a constant object of explicit negotiation in lectures, in group work, and in the café-models. Suspension of uncertainty was in that way key to the interaction order of educators and students as well as between student-peers. The students consulting the process book, repeated module evaluations, explanations of the purpose of assignments, and discussions about how to work out the assignments contributed to a constant “meta-communication” about the entrepreneurial process as an opportunity to learn. For a period of time, students should “un-do” their academic criticism and let themselves be open to possible transformations aided by this process. In that way, “the process” was not manifest as something the students created themselves. It was constituted as an independent agent to support students and make them learn and become entrepreneurial. Hence, the process was objectified as something to be believed, trusted or even cheated; something to submit to, and “get through.”

**Authenticity**

In this enterprise module, two basic activities made authenticity a formal condition for LPP. First, the module explicitly required that students acted as entrepreneurial practitioners and engaged with stakeholders in sceneries outside the classroom. Second, students were asked to make themselves a source for opportunity creation, and to engage in the development of an entrepreneurial opportunity,
which was personally relevant to them. Hence, authenticity became central both as behaviour and as sincere self-investment.

**Authenticity as behaviour**

To gain hands-on experience with enterprising behaviour was a condition in this module. The rule of “no make belief” strongly pointed to the importance of authenticity in practice. As part of the “no-make-belief,” students were supposed to “intervene in the world” and set up actual entrepreneurial projects. There was a real-time sense and seriousness to the activities, since they would involve real people and real consequences. Heather introduced the slogan: “*enter into the world and let the world enter you*” (Fieldnotes, Lecture VI). Several students mentioned how the act of making phone calls to possible stakeholders was an anxious experience. In fact, the act of calling was made into an event in a lecture, to “push” the students to act (Field notes, Lecture VI). This seriousness of the “no play” and the emphasis on doing as opposed to theorizing was central to the module’s legitimacy and attraction:

> *It is not something we are playing. It is something we are doing. We cannot just say that we do it. We have to actually do it. I thought that was great, because that is really what entrepreneurship is about. You are not an entrepreneur before you have done something*”

(Interview, Violet, Z Group)

The understanding of the entrepreneur as someone who has “done something” and the enterprise student as a “doer” in “real-world” activities was a participatory stance crucial for LPP. The module was interpreted as a “bridge to the real-world” from a “world built of books”. When planning their intervention, Y Group interpreted their actions as “fantastic CV-work.” Hence, the entrepreneurial process was granted utilitarian value beyond its project outcome. Written into Curriculum Vitae, acting as entrepreneurs, were regarded as a competence building experience, valuable in the communication with future employers.

**Authenticity as the sincere investment of self**

Even though being a “doer” granted access to learning, it soon became clear that LPP was conditioned, not alone by the explicit rule of doing, but also by a more symbolic assessment of the quality and form of doing. As shown above, the entrepreneurial activities should be qualified by an alignment with the
pedagogical structure of the module. Additionally, Heather stressed that the students should never compromise on their individual investments. They should work out entrepreneurial opportunities, which all members of the group could “wholeheartedly” embrace. This individual investment made the difference between “school projects” and “entrepreneurial projects” (Field notes, Lecture III). This distinction between school projects and entrepreneurial projects instated a difference between the qualities of learning while acting as an entrepreneur or while acting as a student. As Heather explained to Y Group:

“You have only intervened in the world and the world has intervened in you, the day that you realize that this is not just a school project” (Field notes, Supervision II, Y Group)

Later, the distinction between the entrepreneurial and school was repeated in the groups to negotiate ambition and quality of their intervention.

“We always had the objective that it should certainly not be a school-project. ... We wanted to make a serious intervention.” (Interview, Vera, X Group)

Acting out entrepreneurial projects was considered “better”. If it was “just a school-project”, you would not learn to become entrepreneurial. Entrepreneurial projects transcended school and were symbolized by the project groups’ sincere investments of themselves. As entrepreneurs, the learners should act due to a common desire to solve a heartfelt problem, and not because they were students in an enterprise module, which commissioned them to do so. They were to honestly define their own competencies and resources to be useful in their enterprise and the project should stand out as natural and identity driven rather than instructed. Consequently, learners were to operate and position themselves within a binary opposition between entrepreneur and student, where the entrepreneur was authentic and driven, while the student was instructed and not sincerely committed to the enterprise. In their exam paper, Y Group reflected on how their identity as a group affected their entrepreneurial behaviours and ambitions:

“Are we a group with a school project or are we a(n entrepreneurial) project group?... Towards stakeholders we wanted to come across as a project group, but our unwillingness to upscale the project, pushed us in the direction of a school project.... We have not been able to take this intervention beyond the course. We intervene due to a school petition and we designed our intervention so that it ceases with the module. As individuals we have not been able to make a sufficient buy-in to our group or into our project so that we could act as entrepreneurs in this project (Exam paper, Y Group)
Hence, enterprise and the ability to act as entrepreneur became a question of devotion and the desire to pursue a defined problem or an intervention beyond the module and beyond the identity as a student-learner.

**Authenticity as performance**

Sometimes students felt pressured by the constant requirement of authenticity and individual investment. In the common room, they often talked about how they were stressed by a lack of time to complete the assignments and thoroughly think things through. As expressed by a student:

> “What really puts pressure on you is that everything must be felt. You have to be passionate about everything. There is nothing you can just learn”. (Field notes, Student conversations in the Common Room after lecture VI)

They also expressed concern with knowing when you were actually authentic enough to succeed in the course:

> “Sometimes while being in the process, I will still think about some of the things we talked about in the other subjects. It lowers my commitment to the process. Of course, this is a bad excuse. Of course we need to be in the process and submit ourselves to it, but it is difficult. When are you in, and when are you not in the process? Is it a gut feeling, which decides whether I am in the process or not? Is it when I dream about it? When am I enough into it? … When is it enough?” (Interview, Amanda, Y Group)

Showing proper commitment to the process was a serious concern, since it was considered a requirement for learning. It resulted in a constant form of self-monitoring performing this commitment in front of teachers, stakeholders, and student peers. In Y Group several of the students experienced being under severe pressure to the extent of crying. They were also affected by experiences of compromise in group collaborations and budding feelings of inauthenticity in their engagement.

> “Constantly you have to rely on your gut feeling. But sometime around November, a taboo emerges: “If anybody cannot agree now, then they just swallow it, since we have no time to change now. Nobody can cope with going back and starting all over again”. So it becomes taboo to ever say, “Well perhaps we could do something else.” (Interview, Emma, Y Group)
In order to make ready for the exam, the students set limits to their emotional investments in formulating the entrepreneurial project, since they sensed there was no time to iterate and change decisions. As Emma explained there was a tendency to subdue emotions invested in the entrepreneurial project in order to be loyal to the group and work towards closure. In that way, the group kept each other in check. Towards the end, several members of Y Group showed signs of weariness and a desire to just finish the “commissioned work” set upon them by stakeholders and by faculty in order to claim a fresh start in the new semester.

**Autonomy**

As shown above, students should be willing to submit to the process and follow its premises in order to learn. However, especially students’ participation in the café-model puzzled the educators. It was as if the students were not able to realize the potentials for improving their projects through participating in these sessions. In the “café-meetings” attended by Y Group, an instructor (a senior student) came into the classroom and asked all to arrange the tables and chairs. Six chairs were put in a circle in front of the tables separated into two groups. This re-arrangement of the classroom made a special scene and the expectations of something particular to happen. The instructor wrote the guidelines for the café on the blackboard, yet, the members of Y Group were unsure of what they were supposed to do. In the second café-meeting, Julie asked the instructor if he could possibly interrupt the session if it derailed. However, he answered:

> I am not an expert. I am only here to support the process. It is you who must create this space and find out how to use it. You have to learn it yourselves from within. You have to dare be in it. Dare throw yourself into it and dare to be in the process with the expectation that it will help you proceed.” (Field notes, Café meeting II, Y Group)

Since the process was conceived as open and learner oriented, teachers were not able to explain to the students how they could capitalize on their participation. In fact, it is suggested that enterprise teachers work best as coaches or guides rather than experts or conventional teachers as they only facilitate processes and set up an environment for learning (Draycott & Rae, 2011; Löbler, 2006). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the students to “find out how to use it”. In a meeting for instructors in the café,
Henry was under the impression that students thought if they just adhered to the form, then they would automatically learn. But, as he said:

“If they only do as the teacher says, they do not learn anything. Without investing themselves, they will not get anything out of it.” (Field notes, Teachers’ meeting)

In this view, compliant participation would not make students able to meet the learning opportunities inherent in these activities. The students were to take responsibility for their own learning. However, participation as an autonomous and responsible learner was not easily performed in ways to be recognized as compatible with other forms of legitimate participation.

**Owning the process**

As seen above, members of Y Group were confused about how to properly take advantage of the café as a learning setting. However, as the module progressed, the demand for self-responsibility led to a discussion of “ownership” and who should decide on how the entrepreneurial project should be carried out. In their case, the performance of autonomy took form as a withdrawal from school work. In the final assignments, they decided to stop working with the WIKI and concentrated on other things to finalize their entrepreneurial project. In an interview just after the submission of the final exam paper, Corina said:

“Sheepbody, in the group suggested that we skipped the WIKI. It was only when we took ownership over the process, that we started to have an actual process” (Interview, Corina, Y Group).

She experienced that when the group let go of the rigid process of assignments, then the group members experienced improved collaboration and a strengthened capability in working towards completing their intervention. This statement was supported by Emma:

“We stopped thinking creatively; well we stopped thinking at all because we followed the WIKI. When we stopped using it, well then we actually moved forward. I mean, we finally started thinking ourselves.” (Interview, Emma, Y Group)

Hence, the sense of “ownership” being in control of the process was often expressed as inconsistent with compliantly solving school assignments. If we recall the qualifying distinction between a “school project” or “entrepreneurial project”. The gap experienced by the students between the theorizing in school and the practice outside school was not easily bridged. As the module progressed and the
students became more engaged in the practical enactment of their projects, most of them chose to rely less on the school work. Yet, at some point a rumour started going round about a café–meeting, where some groups got a “wake-up call” from faculty. Especially one group had been reprimanded for not being far enough advanced in “the process”. In an interview, a student explained this incident:

“He (the café instructor) scolded us and said that it was embarrassing. He was angry that we were in not where we were supposed to be in the process. Yet, all this time we were told that we were allowed to iterate and “you will make it in your own time”... so we thought: “Alright it will work out fine. We do it in this way.” But then he suddenly says that ... “we should have made these assignments” and it was just sloppy what we had done.”

(Interview, Freya, Z Group)

Even though the module was built around five chronological assignments leading towards a final exam, the teachers continuously stressed the need for processual iterations. Hence, the students should expect to “go back” in the process to re-think and redo tasks in connection with previous assignments. Yet, the conduct of iterating, doing things in “your own time” did not fit well with the request to follow and submit to the process and the students experienced a split between the freedom to enact interventions and the necessity of working with the instructed school assignments. In turn, they experienced the importance of performing well, not alone in front of the external project partners, but also in front of the teachers.

Resistance

Even though the students had been “authorized” to learn through enterprise, and they had been enthusiastic about this opportunity, they exhibited mixed emotions towards the end of the term. Sometime after handing in the exam paper, Emma said:

“We had to live inside that process. So in the end it is really strange to stand outside it again, to see what it is that we have been doing. Especially when writing the exam paper ... What is it we fumbled around in? Because we have really tried to follow the process, which was given to us, and we have found out that it does not work. So we reject some of it. But can we really do that and still end up with a good result?” (Interview, Emma, Y Group)

Members of the Y Group complained about what they believed were serious misfits between the learning through model and their own experiences of going through it. As seen above, those critiques delved around time pressure and the schism between working iteratively and working towards an exam
closure. They also objected to the lack of opportunity to “dwell on the process”. Since they had to complete other modules at the same time, it had been necessary too “tune in and tune out” of the process. Such criticisms were also voiced in the other groups where they also sensed that the rigid structure of the semester did not provide the opportunities to actually do what faculty demanded. Additionally, they were angry about the “arrogance” of the teachers, who presented their interpretation of enterprise as the only valid interpretation and they would not listen to any critiques of their methods. Still, as shown above, expressing autonomy in the form of rejecting elements of the process and critiquing the teacher’s authority was still considered risky due to the uncertainty whether such criticisms would affect the grades. This suggests an identity conflict as expressed by a student:

“We were quite frustrated about it all. Are we entrepreneurs or are we students? I mean the “no make believe” sort of suggests that we are entrepreneurs. But still it all ends with an exam and a deadline and then we are students. How do we coordinate these two? I believe around mid-December, we agreed that we were students in this process. We were not entrepreneurs” (Interview, Helen, O Group)

In that way, the learning through enterprise experience was characterised by identity ambiguity and questions of how to perform authentically as an entrepreneur, while being a student-learner. Towards the end, some groups showed signs of weariness. You can say they almost “resigned” to being students with school-projects. As seen above they could not muster proper devotion or they chose to turn away from their entrepreneurial projects and focus on completing the exam. Hence, they were not able to perform as authentically driven and autonomous doers, but ended as instructed and commissioned participants.

Even though the students critiqued an academic deficit deemed unsuitable for a postgraduate module, for some, this critique did not always involve rejection and disappointment in the process as an opportunity to learn. Even though Vera was a strong critic of what she deemed was a lack of critical self-reflection in the module, she acknowledged the process as a legitimate opportunity to learn:

“I have never experienced learning so much in four months as I have done in this enterprise module. I think that is probably because it was something completely different that I learnt, compared to what I am used to” (Interview, Vera, X Group)
She mentioned collaborative skills, active listening, and the capacity to contact stakeholders and create buy-ins as examples of learning that she felt confident in having acquired. She considered this to be “tools to seize the world in an entrepreneurial way” (Interview, Vera, X Group). Hence, the academic deficit was not an obstacle to the sense of entrepreneurial learning effectuated by the process. As an academic course, students questioned its legitimacy and even legality. Yet as an agent for entrepreneurial learning, it was appropriated, accepted and even considered enriching by some participants.

Discussion

In this study, I have sought to augment and extend research in the field of EE by asking how learning through enterprise in higher education constructs learners. I studied students’ participation in a mandatory entrepreneurship process module and I showed that students and teachers were continuously negotiating meanings about how to make use of “the process” as an opportunity to learn. Specifically I found that students accessed learning opportunities via three participatory stances: compliance, authenticity and autonomy. None of these stances could alone meet the promises of learning represented by engagement in an entrepreneurial process in education. Compliance opposed access to participation as identity-driven and autonomous entrepreneurs. However, when student-learners practiced autonomy it often involved a rejection of school work and the doctrines of the pedagogical model. The students had to dynamically shift between these stances in ways that fostered a sense of inauthenticity and uncertainty. This research suggests that a social practice lens on EE can increase our understanding of the “modus operandi” of process driven EE. Hence, it opens the field of EE to new questions and explanations. Therefore, the findings presented in this paper can make distinct contributions to EE research. I outline these contributions below and I suggest avenues for future research.
Contributions to enterprise education theory

One general contribution of my study to EE research is the way it unveils the complexities inherent to being a student learner in this kind of educational programme. In that way, the study complements the image of the entrepreneurial learner produced in the literature. Process oriented EE endorses learning by doing and reflection (Leitch & Harrison, 1999). Recently, it tends to lean towards a constructivist understanding of experiential learning, where learning is considered to be a self-responsible process of the learner (Kyrö, 2008; Löbler, 2006; Mueller & Anderson, 2014). The individual learner is regarded as the primary actor in the process of knowledge construction, and EE research emphasizes how a process driven education sets student-learners free to control and pursue their own learning (Draycott & Rae, 2011; Löbler, 2006; Mueller & Anderson, 2014). While students govern their own learning process, teachers act as facilitators and governors of the educational framework. In that way, the learning through enterprise paradigm operates with a split between teacher facilitated form and student constructed content (Löbler, 2006; Mueller & Anderson, 2014). EE research presents images of an emancipated and self-directed entrepreneurial learner typically defined in opposition to the student-learner in conventional education (Kyrö, 2008; Robinson, Neergaard, Tanggaard, & Krueger, 2016; van Gelderen, 2010). My research highlights that the enactment of this ideal entrepreneurial learner in practice is not a straightforward matter. In fact, the construction of learners in the process driven EE was conflicted, uncertain, and characterised by a constant interaction between shifting learner positions. Moreover, the study shows that individual learners were never fully autonomous and in control of their own learning process as the literature suggests (cf. Löbler, 2006; van Gelderen, 2010). The study highlights how the learning environment only afforded a limited set of positions, which the student learners were invited to take up in order to participate in the learning community of practice. Hence LPP was spurious, contradictory and thus a constant a source of uncertainty.

Uncertainty

The willingness and ability to bear uncertainty is central characteristic of the entrepreneur (McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Sarasvathy, 2008). Therefore, EE research confirms that confusion, ambiguity as well as uncertainty of outcome and possible failure are all important to the entrepreneurial learning experience in a student-learner environment (Draycott & Rae, 2011; Lackéus, 2015; Pittaway & Cope,
In that way, EE prepares students to thrive in the “unstructured and uncertain nature of entrepreneurial environments” (Löbler, 2006, p. 22). In the literature, uncertainty is typically associated with the entrepreneurial project that the students engage in. Hence, it is an uncertainty associated with students acting as entrepreneurs. The uncertainties experienced by the student-learners in my study definitely related to the process of entrepreneurizing, defining opportunities, contacting stakeholders and convincing them to collaborate on an intervention. However, uncertainty was also highly related to the risks of not realizing learning, acquiring attractive skills and be recognized as a legitimate entrepreneurial learner. This uncertainty was to a high extent associated with paradoxical situations inherent to the pedagogical model, which created a constant requirement for “meta-communication”. Bateson (1972) shows how all communication is framed by a “meta-communication” which directs attention to how the messaging should be understood. He exemplifies with the distinction between the bite and the “playful nip”. The playful nip looks like a bite, but means something different. It is not a “real” bite. Hence, it is a bite and it is not a bite at the same time. In the entrepreneurship module, every project was initiated as part of this module, due to the course and by groups of people put together in and by the education setting. Still, the project was not to be qualified as a “school project”. In other words, it was a school project and it was not. Additionally, students were told to submit themselves to the pedagogical process. Hence they should act complacently to learn, but if they did what the teachers told them to, they would not learn. As a consequence, the students found themselves facing conflicting demands and they maneuvered dynamically between sets of contradictions: resistance/compliance; autonomy/submission; authenticity/pretense; entrepreneur/student etc. In that way, they were set to operate simultaneously in dual worlds and therefore very reliant on an ongoing meta-communication clarifying frameworks for interpretation of the “how” and “why” of education.

**Context**

Finally, my study makes a contribution to EE research by bringing context into the analysis. Even though EE research seeks to remedy a depersonalised and decontextualized learning “about” entrepreneurship (Blenker, et al., 2012; Löbler, 2006), “education” as context for learning is still undertheorized in research on entrepreneurial process education. In the literature, learning experiences mainly relates to students’ activities as entrepreneurs who construct entrepreneurial projects, while the
“classroom” may be organized by a set of requirements, but otherwise becomes an unrelated and neutral arena for coaching and reflection (cf. Donnellon, et al., 2014; Löbler, 2006; Pittaway & Cope, 2007b). My analysis suggests that the school setting was never neutral, but that it explicitly as well as implicitly conditioned students’ access to participation as entrepreneurial learners.

**Contributions to enterprise education practice**

My study presents findings from a single case. The significance of the findings may therefore be limited to this specific setting. However, this case may suggest processes of LPP, which may be identical albeit less visible in other forms of entrepreneurial process education. The findings of this study therefore provide material for wider reflections regarding the social practices that follow learning through enterprise in EE (Small, 2009). For example, the findings point towards the importance of a re-inspection of the role of educators in higher education EE. It shows how teachers due to the manifestation of an open learning process, refrained from explicit instruction and preferred to take on a coaching presence as suggested in the literature (Kyrö, 2005; Löbler, 2006). The teachers lectured on the format of the course, that is, the theoretical foundations of the pedagogical model. Students then had to learn and experience themselves within this teacher controlled and legitimised framework. However, the study shows that these changes to roles and relations between teachers and students may leave control mechanisms “unspoken” in the learning setting. Instead of explicit instruction, the student learners were guided through myths and sayings. They understood that there was a quality to participation and that some forms of participation were more legitimate than others. If they produced “school projects” or “drawer ideas” they would miss opportunities to learn. Hence, they were threatened that a certain practice would leave them with a non-authentic entrepreneurial experience and eventually also poor grades. Therefore, students spent much time and energy deciphering teacher talk and consulting the process book for advice about how to perform, and act. This is not ideal, when the intention is to facilitate open and emancipatory learning processes.
Pathways to future research

This study of the dynamics of participation in a “learning through enterprise” module raises some intriguing questions for future research, with regards to the issues of how students perform legitimate participatory practices in EE. The findings of my study are based on research in a mandatory enterprise module in postgraduate education. This fact that students have not explicitly self-selected into the course is likely to have affected the notions uncertainty with regards to participation and the construction of learners. A comparison with the construction of learners and legitimate participation in elective modules would be able to discuss some of these issues. Future research could also usefully examine the centripetal and centrifugal mechanisms in process driven EE and complement this study’s general outlook on LPP with in-depth studies sensitive to individual student’s learning trajectories.

Finally, a full understanding of how various forms of participation are granted recognition and legitimacy in a learning community of practice, certainly needs a reflection on power relations. Scholars noticed this lack of attention to power in the theory of situated learning and to how the status of “legitimate” is awarded or denied (Contu & Willmott, 2003; O’Connor, et al., 2015). An power-sensitive investigation of the construction of identity positions and access to learning could bridge microlevel constitution of entrepreneurial identities in education settings, with macrolevel discourses om the enterprising individual and thus tend to issues such as “identity-regulation” in educational institutions (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Scott, 2011). As EE grows to become more widespread, more people will become learners in enterprise courses. Therefore research needs to pay attention to how the entrepreneurial process is in fact constituted as an opportunity to learn in higher education. This will increase our knowledge of how pedagogical models are informed and informs practices of learners on a micro level and how they contribute to the sociocultural construction of enterprising individuals in education. I hope that my study will inspire others to join me in this endeavour.
References


Abstract    High hopes are invested in a rapid institutionalisation of an enterprise culture in Higher Education. This has heightened the importance of entrepreneurship education (EE) in most Western societies; however, how values and beliefs about entrepreneurship are institutionalised in EE remains relatively unchallenged. This study applies the lens of the cult, in particular three elements Rituals, Deities and the Promise of Salvation, to reflect on the production and reproduction of entrepreneurship in EE. In doing so, the paper addresses uncontested values and beliefs that form a hidden curriculum prevalent in EE. We argue for greater appreciation of reflexive practices to challenge normative promotions of beliefs and values that compare with forms of evangelising, detrimental to objectives of Higher Education. Consequently, we call for a more critical pedagogy to counteract a “cultification” of entrepreneurship in EE.

Keywords: cult, entrepreneurship education, hidden curriculum, enterprise culture, institutionalisation.
Introduction

In recent years, entrepreneurship education (EE) has become a topic of growing interest in Higher Education Institutions (HEI). Policy has positioned EE as a key intervention in the promotion and realization of an enterprise culture (Holmgren and From 2005; EC 2012). Since, “education is society’s media of manifesting fundamental ideas” (Kyrö 2005, p. 75), the policy objective is to embed EE across the curriculum at all levels of education (EC 2012), and dramatically increase the number of university entrepreneurship courses (Blenker et al. 2012; Kuratko 2005) in order to support a cultural shift in Western economies. By advocating this logic, policy has also fed a growing academic interest in supporting these aims through research and education. As a result, entrepreneurship becomes a “cultural movement”, created and reproduced as a cultural ideology through channels such as education (Rae 2010, p. 592).

In spite of a growing interest in exploring the institutionalization of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur in broader society, the institutionalization of entrepreneurship in education has not been through the same kind of deconstruction (Rehn et al. 2013). Still, it is essential to subject EE to critical reflections by challenging its foundations and assumptions if it is to progress as a discipline (Fayolle 2013). We therefore ask: How are values and beliefs about entrepreneurship institutionalized in EE?

To address this issue, we use a religious lens – the “cult” – specifically, its components of deities, rituals and promises of salvation, to critically reflect on the role of EE in reproducing and legitimizing a belief system. This methodological choice is a consequence of the ideological content in entrepreneurship (Nicholson and Anderson 2005; Ogbor 2000) which defies reflexivity in the conventional sense of the term (Styhre 2005). An ideology is a belief system (Jost, Federico, and Napier 2008) and represents a comprehensive normative vision, in the sense that it describes a set of conscious and unconscious ideas that instruct goals, expectation, and motivations. Cascardi (1999, p. 200) argues that ideology consists of “discursive forms through which a society tries to constitute itself as such on the basis of closure, of the fixation of meaning, of the non-recognition of the infinite play of differences.” Ideology is therefore always inherent in ways of thinking and speaking and not a detachable layer, which makes it difficult to isolate and analyze using standard procedures for reflexivity (Styhre 2005). It is important to stress, that we do not argue that entrepreneurship in education is a cult, or that beliefs in entrepreneurship are like religious beliefs. Rather, cult and the
notion of religiosity is our way of “fighting familiarity” (Delamont, Atkinson, and Pugsley 2010), gaining a research position outside normativity by employing a different analytic prism. In this sense, the cult lens acts as our tool to provide analytical distance and reflexivity.

Following a social constructionist ontology (Berger and Luckmann 1966), we position EE as the pedagogical concerns linked to educating about, for, and through entrepreneurship (Blenker et al. 2011; Hannon 2005). Through numerous educational programs, entrepreneurship is offered as a meaningful description of social reality whilst prescribing desirable actions and ways of engaging in this world. This promotion suggests a hidden curriculum that is driven by wider taken-for-granted assumptions of entrepreneurship. Conceptualized as “what schooling does to people” (Martin 1976, p. 135), this particular hidden curriculum underpins mainstream practices in EE. In the concept lies a contrast between what the intent of teaching is and what, although not openly intended, students in fact learn (Martin 1976). It includes transmission of unspoken and unchallenged norms, values, and beliefs linked to particular paradigms, and their socialization function (Gair and Mullins 2001).

In applying the lens of the cult, we contribute to existing research that addresses the institutionalization of entrepreneurship (e.g. Landström and Benner 2013; Landström, Harirchi, and Åström 2012; Watson 2013; Welter and Lasch 2008). Through classroom vignettes, and a discussion of deities, rituals, and ideas of salvation evident in EE, we discuss how the institutionalization of entrepreneurship involves a normative promotion of beliefs and values and therefore compares with forms of evangelizing (Du Gay 1996; Tedmanson et al. 2012). Looking at the specific case of EE, thus, enhances our understanding of the potential for embedded agents – educators in our case – to promote or potentially challenge uncritical reproduction of this belief system.

In the following, we present the political incentives constituting the development of EE. Then we explain in more detail how and why we employ the religious cult as an analytical lens. With a focus on three major elements of a cult (deities, rituals and salvation), we discuss the production and reproduction of entrepreneurship as a belief system in EE. Finally, we present the consequences of our analysis and how to possibly escape cult-like promotions through reflexivity into what we teach and what students potentially learn.
The Rise of Entrepreneurship Education

It is impossible to isolate activities within EE from wider societal understandings of who and what the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship is (Ehrensal 2001; Holmgren and From 2005; Jones 2014). Entrepreneurship is posited as a remedy to some of the fundamental problems of today’s economies, such as unemployment and stagnating economic growth (Rasmussen et al. 2011) and seems to offer a solution to problems associated with the increased pace and turbulence of social and economic change (Anderson and Jack 2008).

Government policy pinpoints the rationales for developing an enterprise culture (Lewis and Llewellyn 2004; OECD 2009). It suggests that EE is an important intervention, since it plays a role in developing and improving entrepreneurial aspirations and abilities, stimulating entrepreneurship and unleashing a “spirit of enterprise”, presented in terms of innovation, creativity, initiative and a tolerance of risk and uncertainty (e.g. EC 2004). These policy interventions frame EE as an entrepreneurial pipeline (Huggins 2008; Kyrö 2006), expected to unleash the transformational powers needed to create economic wealth. The development of EE programmes is therefore suggested as a way to increase the supply of entrepreneurial talent (Henry, Hill, and Leitch 2005). In short, the main rationale to expose students to entrepreneurship education is to contribute to more entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial activities.

Consequently, EE in higher education (HE) aims to transform students’ attitudes, values, and self-understandings (Holmgren and From 2005), creating an imperative for all students to become enterprising (Pittaway and Cope 2007). This transformation manifests as an increased focus on the entrepreneur as a person, identified by certain abilities and practices, which should be stimulated and trained. Hence, the entrepreneur stands out as a driving identity in the new economy, which more individuals are encouraged to take up (Lewis and Llewellyn 2004). Although policy goals are not uniformly translated into EE practices, and educators are not necessarily “victims” of policy discourses (Robinson and Blenker 2014) such glorification risks promoting a deified picture of entrepreneurs that students might feel obliged to aspire to. Therefore, we apply the lens of the cult to reflect on the production and reproduction of entrepreneurship in EE.
The Cult as Analytical Lens

Scholars have emphasized the influence of religious ethics on economic action. For instance, religion has been considered a cultural background for capitalism and the shaping of economic institutions (Weber 2002; Deutschmann 2001). Durkheim (2001) regarded religion as the representation of society’s moral rules and collective existence, with all religions involving a set of symbols and feelings of reverence linked to the rituals and deities of a community of believers (Giddens and Sutton 2009). Geertz (1973) defined religion as a cultural system which gains its strength through formulating correspondence between people’s ethos i.e. “the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood”, and their world view i.e. “the picture they have of the way things in sheer actuality are” (Geertz 1973, p. 89). He argues that sacred symbols formulate this basic congruence between a specific metaphysic and a particular lifestyle, which are both sustained by “the borrowed authority of the other” (Geertz 1973, p. 90). Consequently, there is an alignment and mutual confirmation between the “subjective” qualities of life and what is considered the “objective” realities of the world. Geertz famously stated that religion as a cultural system becomes both a model “of” as well as a model “for” reality (Geertz 1973: 93). As a framework that simultaneously provides descriptions of the world and prescriptions for how to act in it, such belief systems may thus form a “totalising discourse” which presses for a single truth and extinguishes alternative understandings (Robbins 1988).

Religion has also been examined as a variable that influences entrepreneurship (Dodd and Seaman 1998). Recent studies in entrepreneurship have highlighted parallels with religious concepts such as the myth of creation (Sørensen 2008). Ogbor (2000) shows how entrepreneurship theory constructs and promotes mythical figures – the deities – such as “the warrior” (Gomez and Korine 2008) and “the hero” (Dodd and Anderson 2007). Ong (2006) suggests that the enterprise culture can be regarded as a “style of living” that provides guidance through given values in line with a particular ethical goal. Hence enterprise culture compares to religion as it empowers a specific “scheme of virtue fostering particular forms of self-conduct and visions of the good life” (Ong 2006, p. 22).

In fact, the term “cult” has previously been associated with enterprise culture, highlighting the existence of hegemony and ideology in entrepreneurship (Du Gay and Salaman 1992). A cult is a
“mystic collectivity” defined by a distinct system of beliefs (Campbell 1977). It is a group or movement that exhibits great devotion to a person, idea or thing often with a charismatic leader, who increasingly becomes the object of worship (Singer 2003). A cult can also be a secular group e.g. developing around specific brands, events or personalities (Belk and Tumbat 2005).

Gallagher (2007) argues that “cult” is used as an indicator of “otherness”. This implies a classification between what is to be considered conventional or unconventional. By choosing membership of a cult, one chooses not to be part of the mainstream. This choice involves stepping out of social conformity to enact alternatives or deviations from conventional behaviour (Campbell 1977). This “us vs. them” segregation is often accompanied by specific guidance in the form of rituals (Geertz 1973), deities (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956), and explicit descriptions of salvation (Belk and Tumbat 2005).

The cult explains why conventional life is not what it should be and offers utopias where the ills of human kind will be cured (Singer 2003). It provides an account of an alternative perfection and provides the means for salvation (Heelas 1996). Singer (2003) defines cults as thought reform groups, which aim at producing attitudinal changes in individuals and self-improvement. Yet, in academia, the term “cult” is considered to be a pejorative term that stigmatizes certain groups and propagates fear. Cults are also defined by the unethical manipulative or coercive techniques of persuasion and control that they employ (Tobias and Lalich 1994). In cults, people are lured in by manipulative techniques, false promises, and bogus ideology. They are seduced, brainwashed, abused, and controlled in the thought reform process, robbed of their liberty and often their money (Singer 2003).

In research, cult is often replaced with the more neutral term New Religious Movement (Gallagher 2007). Robbins (1988, p. 5) argues that the growth of New Religious Movements is allied with a growth in the “human potential movement” and therapeutic mystiques oriented towards growth and self-actualization. In capitalist, and utilitarian individualistic societies it is perhaps unsurprising that human potential should be closely linked to economic potential and the generation of wealth, power, freedom and status for individuals.

Watson (2012) argues that it is hazardous to “contaminate” scholarly study of entrepreneurial activity with assumptions or ambiguities from popular and political culture. This makes EE a specifically interesting research field, since the boundaries between policy driven research and scholarly research
are not always obvious, even though there is a call for more theory driven and critical research on EE (Fayolle 2013). This does not mean that the conceptualization of entrepreneurship in policy documents is directly translated into pedagogical practices (Robinson and Blenker 2014). However, there is a widespread understanding of the existence and necessary teaching of entrepreneurial mindsets, which transcends from research into policy or perhaps the other way around (Holmgren and From 2005). Berglund and Johansson (2007) argue that entrepreneurship is simply associated with goodness, which delimits the discursive domain in ways that make it difficult if not impossible to challenge. Yet, critical scholarship on entrepreneurship should be “uncomfortable with complacency about or fixation on, any particular position idea, theory and method” (Tedmanson et al. 2012, p. 537). Consequently, in order to investigate how values and beliefs are institutionalized in education, we use the lens of the cult to establish an analysis of EE, which is not readily encapsulated within its own ideology.

Cult Elements of Entrepreneurship Education

As promoted in education, entrepreneurship offers a credible description of the true workings of the world while simultaneously prescribing meaningful and desirable actions and ways of being in this world. Thus, the institutionalization of entrepreneurship in EE is described by social practices, routine-reproduced programmes or rules (Jepperson 1991). Through teaching practices, symbols and beliefs are produced and reproduced, institutionalizing myth and taken-for-granted assumptions (Hallett 2010). In light of this, EE – a societal institution where entrepreneurship is (re)constituted as a “model of”, as well as a “model for” reality – potentially falls victim to being based on automated values and beliefs (Rehn et al. 2013).

By using the cult as a lens we are able to critically reflect on these taken-for-granted beliefs and values. We explore three elements identified in the literature on new religious movements: Deities, Ritual and the Promise of Salvation. Each subsection is introduced by auto-ethnographic vignettes that offer insights into concrete lecture episodes experienced by the authors. The vignettes are intertwined with a review of how each cult element has been used, discussed, employed, etc. in contemporary entrepreneurship research. This review is complemented by illustrations of how these theory developments have been institutionalized in EE. We then discuss the consequences of this
institutionalization of entrepreneurship in EE and how it represents a totalizing discourse that underpins a hidden curriculum. As the hidden curriculum cannot be uncovered directly, we examine what is learned as a result of the practices, procedures, rules, relationships, structures, and physical characteristics employed (Martin 1976) that constitute deities, rituals and the promise of salvation. In doing so, we offer opportunities for a critical and reflective approach to EE.

**Deities**

*In the classroom I challenge the stereotypes of successful entrepreneurs. One exercise involves drawing an entrepreneur and typically students will draw people such as Steve Jobs, Richard Branson and Mark Zuckerberg to illustrate who they see as successful entrepreneur. Indeed, they are eager to learn about such people in class. This creates a tension for me as an educator when I try and highlight other less well-known entrepreneurs, some of whom may be women or involved in more socially focused entrepreneurship. This seems to have little effect on student understanding and they continue to refer to Jobs, Branson, Zuckerberg, etc. as classes continue.*

*(Educator in UK)*

*During an introduction lecture in entrepreneurship at graduate level a student eyes down the lecturer’s CV and questions if the lecturer has ever started a new venture himself? The lecturer admits that the only venturing he has ever undertaken was some cleaning for old people during his many years of study. The student replies with ill-concealed contempt: “how can you then lecture on the topic?” And continues to argue that what is really needed is insight from for example [a well-known local entrepreneur]*

*(Educator in Denmark)*

In line with formal definitions, we conceptualize a “Deity” as a supreme being, one who is exalted as supremely good, or omnipotent and the embodiment of all that is desirable. Authors in the field have noted that societal stereotypical scripts have constrained the metaphor of “the entrepreneur” (Down and Warren 2008). This metaphor sanctions an individual heroic figure that embodies a number of distinct characteristics (Nicholson and Anderson 2005) prescribing social norms for what is expected from the role “entrepreneur”. This involves the deification of the individual entrepreneur (Kaufmann and Dant 1999). Consequently, and seemingly by default, this entrepreneur is closely linked to figures such as
Richard Branson, Steve Jobs etc.; implicitly establishing both the psychological traits of the entrepreneur and also of entrepreneurs as wealth creators and saviours of the economy (Sørensen 2008) and illustrating their commonality with the charismatic leaders or gurus of new religious movements (Robbins 1988). This establishes a figure or a deity that the student should aspire to become. Entrepreneurship events, connected to curriculum activities, fuel this conception and usually include elaborate marketing materials that, to an extent, glamourize entrepreneurship by providing keynote speeches from successful local, alumni and/or nationally recognized entrepreneurs (deities). The foundations of this deified character are inspired by, and evident in, the writings of for example Schumpeter (1934) and involve autonomy, uniqueness and super-human powers. In other words, the entrepreneur is constructed as a charismatic hero – the embodiment of superior agency (Giesen 2005, p. 276). The liturgical components (or public worship) are pushed to the forefront and, as programme managers include successful entrepreneurs as keynote speakers to tell great stories about their experiences, students are impelled towards re-enacting these stories. This deified entrepreneur fulfils a specific role in the EE classroom, with students being primed to put their own agency into action through imitation. In literature this path is often connected to the need for achievement or other psychological characteristics of the entrepreneur (McClelland 1961). This theoretical turn emphasises the individual actor, resulting in a “cult of the individual” (Stevenson and Jarillo 1990, p. 20) linked to specially endowed individuals and implying that not all individuals hold these traits (Shane and Venkataraman 2000). In acting on these thoughts EE often focuses on developing such traits in students, in order for them to become more closely aligned with the template of the supreme entrepreneur (Jones 2014).

Other authors in the entrepreneurship field argue that this image of the heroic entrepreneur actually undermines any attempts to present entrepreneurship as inclusive (Gibb 2002). Indeed, the stereotype of the charismatic – and often lone – hero has been brought into question both in seminal writings (Gartner 1988; Ogbor 2000) and in more recent publications on the subject (Ramoglou 2013). Gartner (1989) argues that there is nothing that distinguishes entrepreneurs from other individuals except their entrepreneurial behaviour; what they do is more important than who they are (Gartner 1988). Hence, Gartner (1989) questions whether a focus on specific characteristics of specific individuals (deities) is a futile research agenda. Employing the same trait centred conceptual basis in EE could be equally
problematic. Indeed, this actively undermines the idea that anyone can learn to become an entrepreneur and that entrepreneurship can be taught. In line with Gartner’s (1989) critique, more recent research questions this lone hero character by analyzing how young Europeans understand entrepreneurship and the “Entrepreneur” (Dodd, Jack, and Anderson 2013). This research suggests that “Entrepreneurs” are value laden social constructs, which carry substantial differences across Europe. In spite of evidence of a core, cross-national discourse that holds strong linkage to the economic contribution of enterprise (Dodd, Jack, and Anderson 2013) students may come to struggle to position themselves in relation to such representations of the deities that inform EE curricula. This highlights a fundamental tension in EE, which educators and students have to grapple with and yet this is rarely acknowledged in the classroom (Jones 2014).

Ritual

In-class evaluations are held as part of a first semester course in entrepreneurship. Evaluating an embedded start-up camp, a young male student argues that the business start-up camp and the simple “Osterwalder”-tools which were provided in a specific sequence during this, along with the final pitch competition has been very useful to him. He goes on to state that: “Now I know exactly how to start my own business”

(Educator in Denmark)

In each student cohort, some students challenge the value of writing a final dissertation to graduate with a Master’s degree from a science university. During the discussion about the dissertation requirements, a student stands up arguing fiercely: “Hands up who thinks that writing a thesis is useless, and instead Business Plans are more important and should be accepted for graduating.”

(Educator in Finland)

A ritual is a formalistic type of behaviour (Goody 1977) and in entrepreneurship this relates to the activities, actions or behaviours regularly and invariably followed by successful entrepreneurs (the deities). In line with commonly held values and beliefs about entrepreneurship, these rituals also suggest societal templates for the accepted and acceptable process of starting up and developing a
successful business (Gibb 2000). Such beliefs are further emphasized in popular culture with popularized television programmes such as Dragons’ Den and The Apprentice emphasizing the path to successful entrepreneurship as being linked to presenting a successful business plan to be judged as worthy of investment (Swail, Down, and Kautonen 2013). The accompanying liturgy creates and supports the belief that business planning is a necessary ritual, which the would-be entrepreneur needs to perform to become successful, with a viable and attractive business plan suggested as a necessity for attracting external investment (Kaplan, Sensoy, and Strömberg 2009). A further strengthening of this tendency to draw on broader business trends is found when educators are pressured to incorporate the latest popularized literature into their teaching. However, these canons such as the Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder and Pigneur 2010), The Lean Startup (Ries 2011) and The Startup Manual (Blank and Dorf 2012) are often conveyed as the (divine) solutions to success by back office managers in the start-up support system. Accordingly, at the managerial and political level, entrepreneurship educators are expected to adopt them and promote their rites to meet the responsibility of delivering results. This legitimizes submitting students to rituals such as business plan competitions, leaving room for the Dragons’ Den thumbs up or down notions.

One of the most prominent elements in the cult concept is the ritual that manifests and re-enforces the values and beliefs embedded in that cult (Geertz 1973). Critical researchers have long documented the role of education generally as a cultural system involving ritual performances and rites of passage, constructing frameworks that extend specific situational meanings further than the context of the classroom (Bernstein, Elvin, and Peters 1966). Ritual is also strongly linked to the act of teaching itself and to classroom activities and pedagogies (McLaren 1999, p. 27) and EE is based upon commonly accepted and legitimatized approaches in this respect. In reviewing 108 articles, Mwasalwiba (2012) found that the most common subjects embedded in entrepreneurship courses were resource management and finance, marketing and sales, idea generation and opportunity discovery, as well as business planning. These practices are indeed recognized as core elements in venture creation.

Gibb (2000) points to these as mythical concepts and rituals that are perpetuated through entrepreneurship research, which arguably underpin and provide rationales for EE. These concepts become ritualized through their embodiment in: “[…] ways of doing things; ways of seeing things;
ways of communicating things and ways of learning things” (Gibb 2000). This in turn, drives the teaching and learning practices (rituals) – enacted and reproduced in the EE curriculum and classroom. EE does indeed attempt to change the way that students do things, how they view the world, how they learn to do this, with an emphasis on experiential and action learning (Rae 2012). These outcomes ultimately crystallize around the present consensus on the goals of EE: “to make changes in society via changes in individual behaviour” (Pittaway and Cope 2007, p. 479). In this way EE can be conceptualized as an “Identity Transformation Organisation”, something that Robbins (1988, p. 83) argues is also true of cults, which “[…] endeavour to create “social cocoons” through patterns of physical and/or social and/or ideological encapsulation”. In this way, EE is positioned as, not only student-transforming, but also world-transforming. EE can therefore be seen as having a purpose that reaches beyond itself – ultimately seeking to have a broader, measurable societal impact through the resulting actions of EE students, which are based upon their acceptance and adherence to the rituals of EE.

Bernstein, Elvin, and Peters (1966) make a distinction between consensual and differentiating rituals in education, with consensual rituals seeking to bind together all individuals within a particular educational institution and differentiating rituals seeking to mark groups from each other within an educational setting. In this context we can argue that EE employs differentiating rituals. This is evident in the ways that entrepreneurship educators are encouraged to use “novel”, “new”, or “creative” approaches to teaching such as live case studies (Hynes 2007), computer simulations (Bellotti et al. 2012) and business plan pitches and competitions (Honig and Karlsson 2004). EE arguably also seeks to move students away from traditional academic or career models towards activities that will help them to think differently and behave differently from those who do not pursue EE (Krueger Jr. 2003). Educators further emphasize this different way of thinking and being by bringing in “real” entrepreneurs (deities) into the classroom to tell their stories and invoke the “myths […] of the community and its gods” (Friedlander 2010, p. 125).

Indeed, entrepreneurship training has previously been defined as a “ritual context” (Hägg 2012) in which students transition from one status (student) to another (nascent entrepreneur). In this way EE has been likened to a “rite of passage” (Turner 1996; Van Gennep 1960). EE thus works instrumentally in overturning the status quo to create new identities and relations. In doing so it supports the
enculturation of students into an enterprise culture through displays of, and engagement with, ritual and (sacred) symbols and signifiers.

Although there is a value in offering inspiring educational programmes that give insights into a given field – in this case entrepreneurship – there seems to be a distinction to be made between this and liturgical “entre-tainment”. Thus, educators (cultists), prepare students to enter the cult through grooming them via rituals in recognized ways of “behaving” (Anderson and Warren 2011) or playing the role (Cornelissen 2004) of an entrepreneur. Such practices bear the scarlet letter of entrepreneurship, branding anyone who successfully performs these rituals and puts these methods into practice as closer to what HEIs and policy-makers want students to become – the successful (deified) entrepreneur.

A Promise of Salvation

In the UK students pay £9000 per year for their degree and over the past decade many more people attend university (up from 10% of the population in the 1980s to nearly 50% today). This means that many more graduates are chasing fewer graduate level jobs. Entrepreneurship is increasingly seen as a way of addressing the gap in graduate, entry-level jobs by encouraging students to create their own jobs. Indeed, in 2013 self-employment/entrepreneurship was recognized as a valid form of graduate level employment. Graduate entrepreneurship is therefore seen as addressing the potential lack of graduate employment opportunities, ensuring that universities are still seen as providing successful and rewarding graduate careers.

(Educator in UK)

In general, religions address themselves to the problems of individuals and the path to salvation (Campbell 1977, p. 380). Therefore, the beliefs and practices of a cult involve the hope of redemption and provide moral sanction and insurance of achieving it (Rey 2004). Employing the cult as a lens demonstrates EE’s connection to notions of transformation and liberation at both an individual and societal level. It has been argued that entrepreneurship is important to humanity, not only as an important source of economic growth – itself a highly contested notion (Johanisova, Crabtree, and
Fraňková 2013) – but also as a wellspring of personal development (Hindle 2007). As a consequence, high hopes are invested in EE as an instrument that delivers outcomes that transcend the teaching and learning situation. It is positioned as a pathway to ensure survival and success in an uncertain world. In order to face the challenges of accelerated globalization, it is considered imperative to improve economies by encouraging the start-up of new businesses as a source of innovation and new job creation (EC 2004). A high level of entrepreneurship is the suggested cure for economic stagnation (Acs and Armington 2006).

Following this established consensus, the goal of EE is to raise awareness of entrepreneurship and self-employment as a career option as well as providing skills and knowledge of how to start and run a company successfully (EC 2012). Still, the benefits of EE are not limited to boosting start-ups, innovative ventures and new jobs. Beyond their application to business activity, entrepreneurial skills and attitudes such as “creativity and a spirit of initiative” are regarded as useful to all in their working activity and daily lives (EC 2012). In fact, European policy recognizes “initiative” and “entrepreneurship” as one of eight “key competences” that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion, and employment (EU 2006). Entrepreneurship thus becomes a non-negotiable, basic skill and competence for every citizen (Komulainen, Räty, and Korhonen 2009).

Consequently, EE not only supports the macro-level strive for economic growth and world-transformation; at a micro-level, it supports individual self-fulfilment and the possibility of breaking down barriers of class, race or gender (Henry, Hill, and Leitch 2003). A recent policy report argues that “[e]ntrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people to be responsible, enterprising individuals who have the attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary to achieve the goals they set for themselves to live a fulfilled life” (EC 2012). In this way, it is clear that the “key competence” that EE cultivates is vital to a range of human endeavours.

In response EE has broadened its scope, with the understanding that an entrepreneurial mindset and its related attitudes and behaviours are life skills and thus beneficial for all students in a variety of situations, including but not limited to business start-ups (Blenker et al. 2011; Hynes and Richardson 2007). It is considered essential for all to develop an entrepreneurial mindset, because of the reality of
portfolio careers, demanded flexibility in jobs, more responsibilities at work, fast advancements in technologies, and a globalized market (Henry, Hill, and Leitch 2003; Gibb 2002). EE is therefore closely linked to issues of employability (Berglund 2013) and career self-management (Bengtsson 2014). It prepares individuals for a world where they will increasingly need to manage their own careers and lives in an entrepreneurial way (Hytti and O’Gorman 2004). It enables students to settle with, or possibly even enjoy, living in a world of increased uncertainty and complexity (Gibb 2002). Consequently, entrepreneurship becomes a vision of empowerment and emancipation, transcending the conformity of waged labour, leading to a way of life where you are in control of your own destiny, reminiscent of the general “human potential movement” identified in the literature as a generative milieu for cults (Robbins 1988). EE does not only offer descriptions of a world in which entrepreneurial skills and mindsets are important. It also offers prescriptions for action within this world and may deliver the means to acquire the ability to act. Hence, EE is constituted as a model of as well as a model for reality and behaviour, which Geertz (1973) emphasized as the basic structures of religion as a cultural system. This can also be seen as a totalizing discourse, as being entrepreneurial and enterprising is not confined to the action of setting up a business but encapsulates a way of being in the world for both organizations and individuals to which there is no alternative, given the demands of globalization.

In entrepreneurship research, scholars highlight how entrepreneurship is an ideological construct concerned with salient attitudes, values, and forms of self-understandings (Peters 2001; Keat 1991; Styhre 2005) and discuss how enterprise as a belief system ascribes positive value and provides a moral imperative to being enterprising (Tedmanson et al. 2012; Du Gay 1996). Individuals must reform themselves and become entrepreneurs of “the self” (Rose 1999). Consequently, EE has become an instrument of transformation and emancipation that facilitates and prepares pathways to satisfaction and self-fulfillment. Following the deification of the entrepreneur, the enterprising self is cast as a character in opposition to modes of self-understandings where the self is assumed to be dependent on others and “weak” (Heelas 1991). Hence, entrepreneurship and EE closely relate to moral virtues, imperatives and qualities of (self) responsible and respectable citizens (Berglund 2013). An important idea in Western culture is that everybody lives at his or her best when we realize and actualize what each of us are (Brinkmann 2005). In this way, EE is strongly related to a discourse and demand of self-
realization. Through learning entrepreneurship and attaining an enterprising self, EE offers a road towards becoming who we “really” are. Therefore, when the entrepreneur is portrayed as a “saviour with no less God-like qualities than earlier saviours” (Sørensen 2008, p. 86), EE provides first of all the possibility for everybody to become saviours, but also the promise that everyone can save themselves.

Entrepreneurship Education and the Totalizing Discourse of the Enterprise Culture

In this paper we use the cult as a lens to explore how the institutionalization of entrepreneurship in EE involves the conveyance and reproduction of supposedly uncontested values, and beliefs. Such values and beliefs construct a monistic worldview, which prescribes not only who the entrepreneur is or can be, but also the world in which the entrepreneur operates, and what it requires to be an economically successful individual. Our consideration of the deities, rituals and salvation of entrepreneurship depicts this dominant institutionalization in EE. First, EE involves the identification and reverence of certain personalities and role models (deities) that students should aspire to become. Second, in EE students are taught to replicate behaviour through the educator’s application of distinct pedagogies and practices (rituals). Third, EE promotes a professional skill set for entrepreneurship, but is also considered a life skill, which is necessary for survival and self-fulfillment (salvation). In this way we argue that EE is a context where entrepreneurship is institutionalized as an uncontested and incontestable belief system or ideological worldview, equaling Geertz’s (1973) model of and model for reality. At the same time, education presumes and simultaneously constructs the world in which the entrepreneur acts. Taken together, we suggest that this forms a monistic totalizing discourse evident in a “set of descriptions, explanations, principles, criteria of acceptability, directives or metatheories that delimit the discursive domain or systematically reduce the array of voices that can speak to any issue or state of affairs” (Gergen 2001, p. 52). In analyzing the impact of belief systems (or ideologies) Cascardi (1999, p. 200) argues that the ideological is “the will to “totality” of any totalizing discourse”. We argue that this dominant and dominating discourse in turn creates a hidden curriculum of lessons learnt, although educators may not consciously intend this. In the following paragraphs, we discuss this hidden
curriculum, and then critically reflect upon the possibilities to counteract it through pedagogical interventions.

As such, EE endorses and reproduces values and beliefs about entrepreneurship, where the deities, rituals and promise of salvation inherent in EE forming the symbolic dimensions of a hidden curriculum (Margolis et al. 2001). This hidden curriculum builds a framework of meaning that extends beyond the classroom or curriculum but is not explicitly articulated (Bernstein, Elvin, and Peters 1966). Thus, the hidden curriculum, underpinning mainstream EE, involves more than (just) lessons learnt in the classroom. It comprises lessons learnt from students’ engagement with wider society or, in other words, off stage (Miller 1998). Following this, the hidden curriculum deals with the “forces by which students are induced to comply with dominant ideologies and social practices related to authority, behaviour and morality” (McLaren 2003, p. 86). Accordingly, the hidden curriculum reflects the “deeply held beliefs” of a society (Bain 1990, p. 29).

Importantly there are different levels of “hiddenness” and degrees of intentionality within the hidden curriculum (Paechter 1999; Margolis 2008). By applying the cult as a lens, we highlighted the more explicit elements of the hidden curriculum in EE. Indeed, one might argue that the emphasis on becoming entrepreneurial and how this might lead to career success in responding to the uncertainties of modern, market driven societies is a very explicit aspect of the EE curriculum. Thus we have illustrated that the hidden curriculum in EE is manifested through predefined deities, carefully orchestrated rituals, and promises of salvation that are reproduced in the classroom. This “cultification” is supported by the curriculum and the encouragement of collaboration with off-stage actors such as business networks, business angels, and the individual entrepreneurs that educators bring into the classroom. Thus, this hidden curriculum stifles consideration of the unspoken values and beliefs that underpin contemporary rationales for entrepreneurship. Such values and beliefs also extend into the public sector, social enterprise and other new areas (Nicholls 2010) to become a totalizing discourse.

Accordingly, little scope is provided for imagining how entrepreneurship can be enacted towards alternative futures or non-economic outcomes. Therefore, at a deeper level of hiddenness, or simply less explicit, the hidden curriculum crystallizes around a totalizing discourse of entrepreneurship. As a totalizing discourse, the hidden curriculum of EE instils taken-for-granted notions about
entrepreneurship as a universal and intrinsic good, which will lead to salvation and the promised land of individual and national success, wealth and status for the chosen. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to question why entrepreneurship is to be promoted. Consequently, there is a risk that educators respond to the accepted and acceptable “rules of the game” (Bourdieu 1977). Hanks (2005, p. 78) suggests that “what is valued is what fits the demands of the field, and the effective producer is the one best attuned to the field”. This increases the likelihood of success and reward for educators who perpetuate established notions and discourses linked to entrepreneurship, particularly when judged against changes in student aspirations for entrepreneurship and the effects on enterprising activities. However, we suggest that such aspirations are not built upon a balanced exposure to entrepreneurship. Instead they are the result of the cult-like pronouncements and framings as suggested above.

The monistic worldview inherent in such a totalizing discourse undermines the importance and values of higher education, as it provides a form of moral education, transmitting a set of expectations and obligations of being in an ever-changing world. Indeed, one of the suggested roles of the hidden curriculum is to send “a silent, but powerful message to students with regard to their intellectual ability, personal traits, and the appropriate occupational choice” (Margolis 2008, p. 440). Warnock (1984) suggests all moral education must be by means of the hidden curriculum, and it is further suggested that moral education can only be taught by example (Portelli 1993). This approach is highly prevalent in EE teaching, which uses case studies, draws upon entrepreneur biographies, characteristics and behaviours (for example those of Richard Branson and Steve Jobs) and brings entrepreneurs into the classroom, all the while encouraging students to learn from, and imitate, their example. Wilson (1985) argues that when we link learning by example with certain disciplines we risk losing the cognitive or intellectual element in more practically orientated disciplines, such as EE, suggesting that critical intellectual engagement is not necessary for entrepreneurial success. This suggests students in EE are studying a discipline that values the practical and experiential over the critical and intellectual, undermining the importance and value of a higher education.

Thus, EE should have an interest in addressing and challenging the hidden curriculum, instilling reflexive practices that increase educators’ and students’ ability and readiness to critically reflect on the very same frameworks of meaning, and the totalizing discourse, they are constrained by. Through this, students could become more active and critical agents, engaging with the underpinning beliefs and
values of entrepreneurship. This could also develop future entrepreneurs who are in the position to locally challenge a belief system that they themselves have become a part of (Martin 1976).

**Escaping a cult: encouraging critical and reflective approaches in EE**

Some criticize the concept of a hidden curriculum as underplaying the agency of both educators and students (Margolis 2008). While the concept of the hidden curriculum can highlight and describe some of the unintended consequences of teaching and learning, scholars could do more to explore means of resistance and challenge that do not position people as passive recipients of such hidden learning. Despite being constrained by institutional expectations to reproduce unspoken values and beliefs, educators occupy a unique position to develop challenging, diverse, accessible, and critical approaches to entrepreneurship in both the classroom and through curricula. Through their practices in a local context, educators can (and sometimes already do) highlight and challenge the hidden curriculum and make way for alternative framings of entrepreneurship (Steyaert and Katz 2004). Considerations of how the student lifeworld might be supported, undermined or ignored by the current cult-like framings of entrepreneurship could support a critical and reflective approach to entrepreneurship and strengthen educators’ agency in confronting the hidden curriculum. However, this requires an approach to teaching and learning as reflexive practice to “examin[e] critically the assumptions underlying our actions, [and] the impact of those actions” (Cunliffe 2004, p. 407). Summarized in Table 1, reflexive practices could assist in counteracting the effects of the hidden curriculum. The columns describe the unfolding of the hidden curriculum (column 1 and 2) and how it could be counteracted by educational interventions (column 3 and 4); the rows describe the cult elements previously outlined.

The dominant belief system that currently drives the institutionalization process could be addressed by strengthening the agency of both educators and the students. At the moment the entrepreneur is privileged in the classroom, even above the teacher and the student. This hierarchy emphasizes the god-like status of the entrepreneur and trumps both student and educator. By inverting this hierarchy and starting with the student, rather than the entrepreneur, we may subvert this tendency to privilege the entrepreneur in the classroom.
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Hidden curriculum:</strong> Belief system underlying the cult in EE suggest that …</th>
<th><strong>Unfolding of hidden curriculum in EE:</strong> Institutionalization of the entrepreneur as a …</th>
<th><strong>A call for reflexive practices:</strong> To counteract the hidden curriculum, educators must develop environments where …</th>
<th><strong>Examples of teaching and learning interventions</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Entrepreneurs are the most important actors in the business world (deities) | societal hero (Omnipotent, Value-Providers for Society). | contextual relevance, and facets of entrepreneurial practices are introduced (the dark side, productive and unproductive, even mundane forms). | Suspending hierarchy between student/teacher and “the entrepreneur”;
Starting with the student life world, not the entrepreneur, in designing learning interventions;
Bring in collective and non-profit forms of enterprising. |
| Successful entrepreneurs show us the behaviour to follow (rituals) | archetype of behaviour. | individual differences in behaviour and personality are appreciated and understood as a value/starting point for entrepreneurship education | Active falsification of normative ideas; create a safe learning environment; encourage students to find cases that differ from the mainstream;
being allowed to fail - emphasise learning rather than ways to reach a specific outcome (e.g. the business plan and idea can be a “failure” without students failing the class). |
| Individuals can reach emancipation, self-realization and find true happiness through enterprise (salvation) | possessor of the right mindset | students are empowered to accept the role of critical agents, questioning beliefs and practices in and about entrepreneurship | Bring student life-worlds into the classroom; honour multiple perspectives and alternate ideologies. |
In encouraging students to consider different types of entrepreneurship, especially those that challenge normative templates of the lone, heroic, profit-focused entrepreneur, we also offer an environment where different approaches can be compared. To move beyond such profit-led and individualistic accounts we might introduce contexts and examples where entrepreneurship is positioned as consensus-based decision-making and the exploitation of opportunities for society. Such alternative constructions and contexts could include collective entrepreneurship, for instance location-based entrepreneurial activities initiated between community members (Somerville and McElwee 2011) or self-managed, politically-motivated workers’ co-ops (Kokkinidis 2015), or contexts such as social entrepreneurship, where wealth creation is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Such approaches could support the development of “more inclusive models of participation and the construction of rule-creating rather than rule-following individuals” (Kokkinidis 2015, p. 847). We therefore do not simply exchange one cult for another but open up possibilities for our students to critically reflect, rather than closing down such opportunities. Students may well choose to pursue and aspire to follow the traditional belief system of entrepreneurship but at least this agency is informed by, and enacted from, a point of critical reflection.

We recognize that we cannot easily escape mainstream values and beliefs and the totalizing discourse of entrepreneurship, as they so firmly underpin teaching in HE. However, we suggest that it is not a case of “either/or” but “both/and” and that educators could offer alternatives and challenges to this dominant belief system. In this way, EE would fulfil the aims of higher education to encourage critical thinking and intellectual agency, which subverts the students’ taken-for-granted world and helps them to see that “things could always be other than they are” (Barnett 1990, p. 155).

Such critical and reflective approaches demand critical and reflective teaching practices. Critical pedagogy provides a vehicle to instil reflective practices as it actively seeks to highlight and address the hidden curriculum (Giroux and Giroux 2006). Critical pedagogy therefore offers a useful point of departure for educators who wish to critically engage – and encourage their students to critically engage – with the political, social, and societal norms that underpin the current drive for EE. It offers the potential to move away from a pedagogy that emphasizes deities, rituals and the promise of salvation of entrepreneurship to one that acknowledges historical and sociopolitical developments and how these have combined to create a vision of the “true entrepreneur” and the “right” way of being.
Critical pedagogy could, therefore, provide opportunities for students and educators to work together, to co-produce knowledge, which highlights and contextualizes the diversity and possibilities of EE and takes account of the student lifeworld. However, as educators we must do this in a way that takes account of the power dynamics of the educator-student relationship and also the potential for us to merely exchange one cult for another.

Critical pedagogy can help educators and students to focus on the possibilities of education to challenge inequality and investigate dominant fictions (Keesing-Styles 2003) rather than encouraging students’ oblivious acceptance of an extant hidden curriculum (Shor & Freire 1987). Critical pedagogy emphasizes that values, beliefs and unspoken social norms are not ahistorical or politically neutral entities and through contesting these further insight may be reached. This can be achieved by bringing the student lifeworld into the classroom and by reflective educators engaging with modes of knowledge production that question whose knowledge is privileged in the classroom.

In calling for reflexive approaches we argue that the current educational environment in which we find ourselves, lends little scope for staff or students to reflect on their own attitudes and positioning. In the apparent rush to produce more entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurial citizens, the acknowledgement of how entrepreneurship is framed, who is suggested as being successful, how this success is manifested and encouraged – indeed worshipped – is rarely discussed. Consequently, there is an important gap in our knowledge, given the suggested imperative to embed entrepreneurship education in all education at all levels (Herrmann 2008). Using the cult as a lens ultimately helps us to articulate and respond reflexively to a fundamental discussion embedded in any given teaching setting: what kind of engagement do we, as teachers want to stimulate? (Kyrö 2006) This encompasses the spoken and unspoken values and beliefs of educators, students and wider society.

Concluding Thoughts

This study provides a critical perspective on the institutionalization of entrepreneurship in EE as a belief system. We make the candid claim, that by using the cult as an analytical lens, we are able to position ourselves outside normativity and expose the unfolding of a hidden curriculum in EE.
However, we recognize that this paper offers one approach to viewing EE through a different lens that could be used to support alternative analyses. Hence, even though notions of enlightenment inform our critique, it should be noted that we neither position educators nor students as unthinking perpetrators or passive victims in this context. Having discussed unchallenged assumptions institutionalized as a belief system in and through education, we encourage future critical engagement with the institutionalization of entrepreneurship within and beyond education. We hope that our paper animates educators, researchers and policy-makers to continued critical examination of the role of EE in perpetuating or challenging the taken-for-granted beliefs that underpin entrepreneurship as a societal phenomenon. The novel method employed in this paper also offers a point of resistance to a “cultification” of entrepreneurship in EE.

Recognizing the risk of being arbiters (and evangelists) and thereby complicit in the enculturation of our students into such uncontested values and beliefs of wider society (Giroux 2011), entrepreneurship educators could locally enact reflective practices to counteract a hidden curriculum. However, we do not intend to replace one approach to EE with another and develop our own cult. Instead we call for developing a number of alternative approaches to “doing” entrepreneurship, through critical reflection on the underpinning system of values and beliefs. Future research could for instance investigate, beyond providing anecdotal evidence through vignettes, whether mainstream EE risks the creation of a conceptual metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980a, b), by promoting a belief system rather than a field of science. Quantitative metaphor analysis (Lachaud 2013) could further our understanding of what students understand by “entrepreneurial” and “entrepreneurship” as in (Dodd, Jack, and Anderson 2013). Likewise, researchers could highlight and explore the values underpinning, for example, social, sustainable, and community entrepreneurship, and in doing so emphasize the diversity of political, social and economic possibilities and their intertwined nature. “In this sense, the act of escaping does not refer to quietism and passivity or a retreat from the economic sphere, but to exploring workable alternatives within capitalism” (Kokkinidis 2015, p. 867).

We recognize the proposed approaches would be implemented locally through individual educators, and there are dangers that it could result in EE not being recognized as such by the larger audience of policy makers, education administrators, industry leaders and community collaborators. In turn this could lead to a crisis of legitimacy, as adopting this eclectic approach means that EE no longer provides
a unified answer to the fundamental societal problems of unemployment and continuous economic growth. Entrepreneurship educators that adopt a critical reflective approach may even run the risk of being penalized, as the curriculum would not conform to the current institutionalization of entrepreneurship. However, what is hidden can rarely be challenged. In exposing and questioning the hidden beliefs and values of EE we propose a starting point for a broader debate about what it is that we are actually teaching when we teach EE. This is an important consideration, not only for educators, but also for policy makers, researchers and related communities. To ignore this is to be complicit in the reproduction of a hidden curriculum that produces conflict and tension for more reflective and critical educators and could ultimately prove counter-productive in developing and promoting the diversity and accessibility of entrepreneurship.
References


APPENDIX

Contains:

- Example of fieldnotes
- Example of interview guides to show how they developed over time
- Co-author statement for Essay 3, The CULTure of Entrepreneurship Education

Example of fieldnotes
INTERVIEWGUIDE

What does it mean to be entrepreneurial?
I would like you to name three entrepreneurial persons?
   (Somebody you consider to be entrepreneurial (no need to be famous) what comes into your mind)
   What characterizes these persons?
   What is it they do that make them entrepreneurs? What do they do?
   What do they have in common? – How do they differ?

What does it take to become an entrepreneur? What does an entrepreneur do?

Last Monday, Carol showed us some videos from YouTube on entrepreneurship?
   What did you think about them? Did they affect you?
   How did it make you feel? How, Why?
   What was the message why, how, important message?
   Was there something you liked - did not like?

Education and self
Can you elaborate a bit on what you expect from this particular course in entrepreneurship?

What do you imagine you will do when you finish university?
Do you think this course in entrepreneurship may have an effect on your future career?

Can you tell me of a course, something you’ve done (education) which have had an influence on what you do and who you are today?
   Form of teaching, substance – why, how was the process? What did you learn?
   How, why did it affect you?

Practical knowledge/experiences with entrepreneurship
Can you tell me about an entrepreneurial experience you’ve had?
   A situation or a process where you or someone you know acted entrepreneurially?

Can you tell me about a situation/process where you or someone you know did not act/think entrepreneurially?

Background and identification
How old are you? Do you have any siblings?
Would you characterize your parents as entrepreneurial? How, Why?
Can you mention some of your heroes – rolemodels? How, why?
What should happen – what should you learn to become like them?
INTERVIEWGUIDE

Tell me what you think about entrepreneurship. To you what does it mean?

Something you especially find interesting?

How do you experience it in your daily life?

Course

How did you experience the course?

How had it been to be a student in the course? Experience, emotion, anticipation, learning

What did you learn, how/where have you used your learning?

Tell me about a situation you remember

Carol tried to make you relate directly to entrepreneurship by making you imagine yourself as an entrepreneur.

How was that? How was it to write about yourself as an entrepreneur?

Can you still make the connection now?

Do you have a feeling that you have become better at something after the course? Why?

Entrepreneurship and self

What do you imagine yourself doing in the future – how will your career form itself?

Education/tools

Can you tell me about your competencies

How do you think about entrepreneurship in relation to yourself?

Something changed?

What have you been occupied with since last we talked?
Interviewguide

(Allan)

Definition of entrepreneurship

What is entrepreneurship to you?

Who do you think about when you think about an entrepreneur?
  • What does that person do?

Entrepreneurship course

How do you best remember the course in entrepreneurship?
Examples – events - emotions – assignments

What do you remember about the purpose of the course?

Relations to other students

Tools
Use of knowledge/theory in life after the course
Something you have been missing

Last time we talked you told me that the course confirmed that you are a person who thinks entrepreneurially.
  How do you think about that now? Examples

How were you graded in the course?

Further education
Theme of the master thesis

Future
How do you imagine you future career?
Earlier you told me about a paradox of learning entrepreneurship in a school. How do you feel about that now?
Interviewguide (student interview)

I am interested in your experiences as an entrepreneurship student. Your experiences, important events, sense of learning from this course. An evaluation of the course – wait for later.
No right or wrong answers. You are free to say whatever you want. This is a confidential conversation and data will be anonymised.

Background – education – value
Where do you come from – how did you get to study here? What would you like to learn? What do you find exciting? How do you see the entrepreneurship course in relation to this masterdegree? Why is it necessary to learn entrepreneurship? Has entrepreneurship been part of your choosing this education?

Practice – development of opportunity
Describe some important event in relation to the development of your idea/opportunity. What do you think you have learnt? Can you describe a particular situation where you learnt something? When did you experience most pressure? When have it been most fun?

Collaboration
Differences – similarities? When did the group work best? Group – identity – how did you use that? What have been your contribution to the group work? Talk about competencies

Knowledge – understanding
What is entrepreneurship? How will you explain entrepreneurship to a friend? Who do you think about, when you think about an entrepreneur? How would you describe an entrepreneurial person? Somebody in the group you will characterize as more entrepreneurial than others? Why? Do you have friends/family that you will characterise as entrepreneurial? What is the most important thing that you have learnt about entrepreneurship in this course? Do you feel more entrepreneurial now than before?

Evaluation
How has it been to participate in this course? Connections between lectures and assignments? Café model Something you have been missing?
Entrepreneurship definitions

What do you think about when you think about entrepreneurship?

Background

How did you get to teach this course?
Teaching experience?
How do you find teaching this course?
What do you remember best from this year’s course?
What do you remember best from when you were a student in this course?
Ownership – have you changed something in the course – why?

Purpose

What would you like the students to learn and take away from this course?
What did you take away?
Can you describe reactions from the students?
Why do you evaluate the course so often?
Process and its presence in the course . why?
”To dare be in the process” what is that about? Where do you see it in the students?

Exam

Describe what it is you notice/and appreciate in the students’ work
How do you evaluate assignments/exams?
Co-Author Statement

The authors have contributed equally to the following publication:

"A CULTure of Entrepreneurship Education"

In 3rd round review in Entrepreneurship & Regional Development

Steffen Hanby

Sigrun H. Frederiksen

Martin Hambot

Sally Jones