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## Editorial

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This special issue focuses on the different aspects and contexts of teaching and learning entrepreneurship, which today cross-culturally and multidisciplinary occupies the minds of researchers and teachers. The articles of researchers, who also work as teachers in Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland and France open new paths into this landscape. Their articles reflect the cross-culturally shared concern of our ability to enhance entrepreneurship in our educational practices and structures.

The intensifying increase in entrepreneurship courses in higher education and the current state of research in this field have increased our awareness of the need to find new angles and deeper understanding of the different dimensions of entrepreneurial and enterprising teaching and learning (the increase in entrepreneurship studies Menzies, 2005; Vesper and Gartner, 1999; Twaalhoven and Wilson, 2005, the need of deeper understanding, *e.g.*, Fayolle and Klandt, 2006; Fiet, 2000; Gibb, 2005; DeTienne and Chandler, 2004; Kirby, 2002; Saks and Gaglio, 2002). Besides teaching and learning practices, this need also involves cultural changes of societies, their educational systems, curriculum development, organisational culture and university structures. This special issue aims to provide some insights into these contexts and their complex processes.

The expanded understanding of entrepreneurship education also requires a broad and flexible conceptual approach to both entrepreneurship and education. The need to focus on basic concepts and pedagogy as Scott *et al.* recommended earlier in 1998 is, in many respects, still valid today. Gibb (2005) argues that a lot of changes have contributed effectively to making a world of much greater uncertainty and complexity, one demanding entrepreneurial behaviour at all levels: global, societal, organisational and individual. This challenges researchers and educators to broaden their conceptual understanding of entrepreneurship education, since education is society's medium for

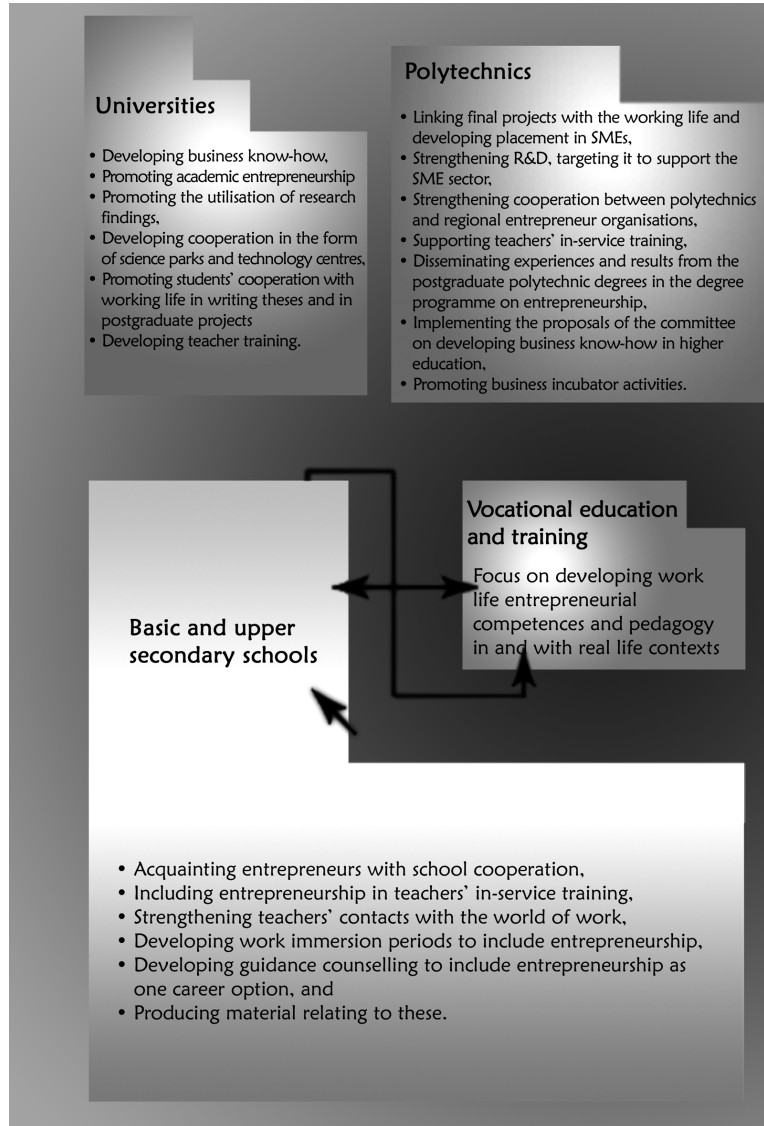
adopting its ideas of a good life, as well as being a process of preparation for the students of the future (Bowen, 1981; Stuart, 1996). Already, Schumpeter (1934) proclaimed that entrepreneurship is concerned with the way that individuals and economies create and implement new ideas and ways of doing things. Von Mises (1981; 1996), at the beginning of the 20th century highlighted this proactive behaviour as interactive, referring to how actors anticipate, react, and adjust to each other's wants, abilities, knowledge and plans. Thus, teaching entrepreneurship is not an autonomous process between a student and a teacher, but a collective and an interactive process in the environment that people live in, for and with.

The extended conceptual understanding emerges in the higher-education course supply. Even though the focus in Europe is still on the start-up phase, courses have also expanded towards the pre-intention phase and have extended students' awareness of entrepreneurship. This reflects the aim of implementing entrepreneurship education throughout the educational system and curricula (Menzies, 2005; Twaalhoven and Wilson, 2005).

The European Union has considered these aspects and has prioritised entrepreneurship as one of the key factors for enhancing the prosperity of its member countries. Enhancing entrepreneurial and enterprising competences and capabilities is equally a challenge to its old members and the transition economies of its new and future members. The EU Proposal for Employment Guidelines (2005) also gives entrepreneurship priority in the education system. The report identifying the current situation of entrepreneurship education in the European Union school system was published in 2002 (European Commission, 2002). Even though the report indicated considerable differences between countries concerning the position of entrepreneurship education in their national educational systems, ten out of 16 member countries had recognised a considerable national policy commitment to promote entrepreneurship in education. Finland is one example of the societies that have taken this challenge seriously. It has a policy programme and implementation plan that cover all levels of education aiming to mainstream entrepreneurial behaviour throughout its educational system. Figure 1 explicates these actions.

It has become obvious that this kind of reform assumes that we can offer education for teachers in this field. The current state of entrepreneurship education research reflects that this need is a shared concern both in Anglo-American and in continental educational contexts. During the short history of entrepreneurship education research, we have already undergone several phases. Towards the end of the 1980s, we realised that trait theories are not the answer to enhancing entrepreneurial practices in society and started to believe that actually it might be possible to foster entrepreneurship through education. In the second phase towards the end of the 1990s, the focus started to turn to pedagogical and conceptual problems of entrepreneurship education (*e.g.*, Scott *et al.*, 1998). Now we have turned our attention to the challenge of how to teach entrepreneurship and entrepreneurially (Béchar and Grégoire, 2005; Fiet, 2000; Saks and Gaglio, 2002). Consequently we are expecting more research and practices that focus on how to enhance the competences of entrepreneurial and enterprising teachers and how to develop teaching environments. As Carrier (2005) summarises it: "The question of whether entrepreneurship can be taught has become obsolete, and the more relevant question regarding entrepreneurial education is rather what should be taught and how should it be taught?" The dynamics of these processes and their conceptual understanding are still rather unexplored dimensions in entrepreneurship education research.

**Figure 1** Entrepreneurship education in the Finnish education system



Source: Modified from The National Board of Education (2000)

The articles chosen for this special issue reflect on those challenges our educational system, teachers and societies are confronting at the moment, and thus might offer some ideas to researchers, practitioners and even to politicians.

Degeorge and Fayolle's empirical research, *Is entrepreneurial intention stable through time?* First insights from a sample of French students' focuses on new business start-up intentions of students after an entrepreneurial awareness course. By applying Ajzen's intention model, their results indicate the stability of students' intention level over a long period of time. This article gives us an example of the importance of university-level

awareness courses and their potential for enhancing the entrepreneurial spirit and awareness of new ventures. The authors argue that understanding the intention and its antecedents better helps us to improve awareness courses by explaining how and why individuals chose the entrepreneurial path.

In the second article, 'The prospective map: a new method for helping future entrepreneurs in expanding their initial business ideas', Carrier argues that even though we should be able to better introduce students to the exploration of business ideas as a crucial step in the opportunity identification process, we still lack the appropriate teaching tools for this purpose. Her exploratory study gives us a concrete example of how we could improve our teaching practices in this respect. More generally, her experiment provides a good example of collaborative, innovative learning, an approach that would have much to offer to entrepreneurship education. Considering that business planning is still one of the most popular way to teach entrepreneurship in higher education, this article opens new paths for reflecting and improving its teaching practices.

Danish authors Blenker *et al.*, in their article 'A framework for developing entrepreneurship education in a university context', move forward from the two previous course-level articles to the whole university structure. Their critical article claims that the educational system in universities at present is not capable of developing students' motivation, competences and skills in innovation and entrepreneurship. They argue that a broader focus on both learning and enterprising behaviour is necessary if the aim is to improve alertness and the ability to deal with opportunities among students, teachers and central actors in the university environment. By presenting four different cases from The Netherlands, the UK, Sweden and Germany, the authors highlight that it is crucial for the entrepreneurial university to integrate knowledge of opportunities in a continuous learning process in order to create reflexive action.

The authors touch upon an important debate of renewing the educational structures and learning environments in order to better enhance entrepreneurship. Several studies indeed indicate that we have problems in adopting entrepreneurship education in traditional university structures. The emergence of new independent centres in Europe reflects this problem. The latest European survey identified that rather than inside the traditional faculties, entrepreneurship education is organised in more or less independent centres in higher education (Twaalhoven and Wilson, 2005).

The article of Torokoff and Mets from Estonia 'Organisational learning: a concept for improving teachers' competences in the school' expands our horizon from university to the school context. By further developing Senge's model of organisational learning, the results of their survey indicate how important it is to get school management more involved in the leadership processes, and encourage teachers besides developing their individual competences to address more attention to collaboration. These results give an important message to those with an aim to develop enterprising school culture, but are even more crucial to the transition economies, such as Estonia.

The article of Aaltio, 'Management education as an identity construction: the case of Estonia and its transition economy background' suggests that entrepreneurial qualities sometimes conflict with the content of management education in universities, and that actually university education is a way of shaping and reshaping both the individual and organisational identities. Actors of business life also transform and reconstruct ways of doing business, whether in established organisations or in new ventures. Transition economies especially face questions of how to build new entrepreneurial and managerial identities. The author introduces empirical studies of Estonian and Finnish business

students. By identifying their differences, she concludes that Estonian students are transforming their values and understanding about what it means to be an entrepreneur and work as a private business manager. The author ends up with more general suggestions on how business education could help in this identity construction process.

All together, these five articles introduce the cross-cultural challenges that the educational institutions face in their way towards entrepreneurial and enterprising culture. They also provide examples from teaching practices to institutional processes for enhancing this development. These examples, however, also indicate that we still are at the very beginning with our research efforts in understanding the dynamics of these complex processes. To continue this dialogue remains a challenge to all of us. I hope that this special issue encourages us both to deepen our understanding by research and to reflect our current teaching practices.

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