

EDUCATION FOR CREATING AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

Mustafa Zülküf Altan¹⁶

Erciyes University, Faculty of Education

Department of Foreign Languages Education, Kayseri/Turkey

altanmz@erciyes.edu.tr

Abstract: *We live in a time of unrivaled social, economic, technological and environmental problems and desperately are in need of change and improvement in many different areas on a global scale. It is obvious that current educational models, assumptions about learning and approaches to learning and teaching are unable to equip individuals for these new and unexpected challenges since present education systems all over the world are almost exclusively based on a world of yesterday. The globe needs more creative and innovative individuals who can come up with solutions to both present and future concerns in every sector of the societies they live in. In order to build and initiate at least a functional entrepreneurial ecosystem, an effective collaboration between all types of entrepreneurs and educational sciences specialists is a must. What is education for? What kind of people do we wish to develop? Why do we need more innovation and innovative individuals? How can this vision be accomplished? Who can bring this vision to come true? This paper highlights the importance of implementing an entrepreneurial education carried out by entrepreneurial teachers to foster the right mindset to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem in order to live in a better and peaceful world.*

Key Words: *Education; Entrepreneurial teaching; Entrepreneurial teacher; Entrepreneurship; Innovation;*

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is not a new idea but it has never been more important than it is today in this time of financial, societal, educational crisis and massive challenges both at local and global scale. On the one hand, innovation and entrepreneurship are possible potential instruments to provide solutions for both local and the global challenges of the 21st century and onward by building sustainable development, creating jobs, generating renewed economic growth and advancing human welfare. On the other hand, education has the potential to develop the skills to generate the entrepreneurial mind-set needed to prepare future leaders in all sectors, entrepreneurs, to solve more complex, interlinked and rapidly changing social and economic problems of the world. Therefore, education systems across the world are facing profound challenges.

We live in a time of unrivaled social, economic, technological and environmental problems and desperately are in need of change and improvement in many different areas first locally then on a global scale. Our time calls for new ways of thinking, teaching and learning in school, business and professions. These concerns and ever-increasing need of change are placing pressure on education systems and calling into question many of the traditional models, content and processes of education leading to new thinking about the nature of education, what learners should know and what they should be able to do as a result

¹⁶ altanmz@erciyes.edu.tr

of their education in order to be able to come up with innovative solutions to these concerns and meet the needs of nations specifically and the globe in general.

Considerable advances, even astonishing breakthroughs, are created throughout the last decades in our understanding of the connection among learning and development on one hand, and business and development on the other hand. Additionally, significant understanding have likewise been gained on with respect to how business, development and learning are interrelated. However, a complete comprehension is as yet missing concerning the interface of those factors: knowledge, development, enterprise, innovation, creativity and development.

With the above picture in mind, educating young people becomes the key to future innovation and entrepreneurship. So it is a good and critical idea to ask ourselves if we are on the right track or not? Innovation and entrepreneurial initiatives start with the power of human thought. Ideas, inspiration and creativity all come from humans, not from machines. Since the technology is the product of human innovation, the greatest technology cannot reproduce what the human mind can do.

It is obvious that current educational models, assumptions about learning and approaches to learning and teaching are unable to equip individuals for these new and unexpected challenges since present education systems all over the world are almost exclusively based on a world of yesterday! Therefore, as educators we need to create alternatives. That is, we desperately need for an educational paradigm shift to educate more individuals with entrepreneurial mindset to create innovation in each and every area of life.

Entrepreneurship and innovation are usually thought as a notion of business, capital, commerce and growth and as a result, this way of thinking usually misleads us drastically to understand the real power of entrepreneurship and innovation and their vital relationship with education.

The globe needs individuals who are more creative, innovative, and able to come up with solutions to both present and future concerns in every sector of the societies they live in. What is education for? What kind of people do we wish to raise? Why do we need more innovation and innovative individuals? How can this vision be accomplished? Who can bring this vision to come true?

So in this paper, I will try to emphasize my philosophy and highlight the importance of implementing an entrepreneurial education carried out by entrepreneurial teachers to foster the right mindset to create an entrepreneurial and innovative ecosystem in order to live in a better and peaceful world.

Entrepreneurship is perceived to be the core source of innovation, creativity and growth and generally recognized as a measure of a country's economic condition. The way countries establish their educational systems can lead people to develop qualities that are considered to be vital for entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity. To build an entrepreneurial society, it is important to change traditional ways of educational systems and teaching methods so that learning takes on new meanings for the whole society. Without changing the predominant culture it is impossible to create the desired change. Therefore, culture is considered to be the biggest barrier in front of the desired change!

Although entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial development is seen the main engine for the prosperity of most nations, education is still the main precondition and indispensable element in bringing this vision to come true.

Education is not only about the present, it is also about building and shaping the future. If main enterprising determinants like risk taking, confidence, initiative taking, creativity, social responsibility that is entrepreneurial mindset lacks, is absent and/or not enforced in general education systems at all levels, it becomes highly critical and difficult to

create an ecosystem to grow enterprising individuals ready to manage economic growth and prosperity and solve ever increasing local and global problems.

Education and Entrepreneurship

Teachers play a significant role to the success of any educational system for a positive societal change. Qualified and well-equipped teachers can lead the education to the highest quality. Therefore, teacher education plays the main role for preparing teachers for both present and the future of educational organizations.

Entrepreneurial education, implemented by entrepreneurial teacher educators and/or teachers has a potential power to help the world to create economic growth, jobs, innovation and to raise happy citizens capable of finding solutions for many long lasting and ever growing local and global issues and bring both prosperity and peace.

Current educational models, assumptions and approaches about learning and teaching are unable to equip individuals for new and unexpected challenges and the dramatic changes brought about by globalization. So it becomes obvious that we need for an educational paradigm shift.

Although entrepreneurship education is considered as a lifelong learning process, teaching entrepreneurship as a method concept lacks a very important part and seems unable to explain of how this method could help students to know more about themselves so that we could be away from the monolithic personality of entrepreneur.

Current education practices

Present education systems are fundamentally based on verbal/linguistic and mathematical/logical intelligences (IQ) and as a result they focus mainly on the functions of the left brain and left brain focused skills. Such systems force all individuals to put on the same size and never help them to question, think, take risks, think critically, ethically, morally, be creative, patient, conscientious and merciful. Therefore, we need to prepare our children to become locally and globally aware in order to become better citizens and humans and live in a better society and globe.

So called standardized (standardizing) local and international assessments, like PISA or TIMSS cause abandonment of local identities and traditions, disregarding of local needs and disrespect for student differences. No customization, personalization and/or diversity of talents that is, sources of true entrepreneurial mindset. International assessment programs, internationally benchmarked curriculum standards, internationally organized educational policies, etc. both lead and help global homogenization.

Such standardized (standardizing) local/international assessments do not help our children to be aware of the global nature of ever increasing societal issues. Tests measure only what test-makers put on them.

Neo-liberal political theory increasingly influences education policies. Recent reforms systematically transform curricula, pedagogy, and assessment as a whole. Neo-liberalism provides the rationale for reforming school curriculum and pedagogy to focus on teaching students the skills and knowledge they need to be productive workers in workplaces. STEM and coding movements should also be analyzed and critiqued from this perspective.

Current education practices kill individuals' entrepreneurial potentials. Most left brain focused test-driven curricula and local/international assessments DO NOT include creativity, diversity of talents, critical thinking skills, entrepreneurship, global competences, morality, ethics, compassion, humanity that is right brain focused skills.

Proposition

It is obvious that we desperately need entrepreneurial education, teacher educators and teachers who are trained are entrepreneurial themselves. Entrepreneurial education

implemented by entrepreneurial teachers has a potential power to help the world to create economic growth, jobs, innovation and to raise happy, socially responsible citizens capable of finding solutions for many long lasting and ever growing local and global issues.

Entrepreneurship Education through Individual Differences and Alternative Assessment Systems

Entrepreneurial education taking individual differences into account and based on alternative assessment systems have the power to be the ultimate solution to overcome the present obstacles and to achieve improvements for the future of the nations. Awareness on individual differences will have a great impact in raising more individuals with entrepreneurial spirit. The emphasis should be on entrepreneurial education rather than teaching entrepreneurship which is presently seen and practiced in many educational contexts.

Individual differences such as motivation, intelligence profiles, gender, attitude, self-esteem, learning strategies, brain dominance, learning styles, personality, field dependence/field independence, tolerance of ambiguity, anxiety level and beliefs about learning should be taken into account during all these activities and nurtured equally and definitely performance based/alternative assessment techniques should be implemented to prepare enterprising individuals who are creative, risk takers, critical thinkers and practice the language freely language with one another and with people in the community in order to reach an effective level of proficiency.

Alternative assessment refers to procedures and techniques which can be used within the context of instruction and can be easily incorporated into daily activities of both the school and the classroom. Education systems need to shift from traditional assessment to alternative Assessment. The current movement calling for a shift from traditional assessment to alternative assessment practices (McLaughlin and Vogt, 1996; Perrone, 1991). Such a shift involves a reconceptualization of how learning occurs and what learners are supposed to do with the things they have learned. Specifically, this type of reconceptualization targets; firstly, the overuse of lecture as a primary teaching method and paper-pencil exams and so called objective and/or standardizing tests as the primary way of assessment, secondly, the increasingly diverse student population in classrooms at all levels, and thirdly, constructivist learning theory (Piaget, 1970; Bruner, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978 and Bandura, 2000). For example, Brooks and Brooks (1993) offer define constructivism as “Drawing on a synthesis of current work in cognitive psychology, philosophy, and anthropology, it defines knowledge as temporary, developmental, socially and culturally mediated, and thus, non-objective. Learning from this perspective is understood as a self-regulated process of resolving inner cognitive conflicts that often become apparent through concrete experience, collaborative discourse, and reflection” (p. vii). These are vital for entrepreneurial teaching.

Some of the alternative assessment techniques can be listed as; Exhibitions and demonstrations, Interviews, Essays, Anecdote logs, Audio and visual, Take home exams, Minute papers, Fact maps, Graphic organizers, Dramatic readings, Dramatic performances, Debates, Contracts, Observations, Reports, Simulations.

By taking individual differences into account and implementing performance based/alternative assessment techniques, entrepreneurial education aims to prepare enterprising individuals who are creative, risk takers, critical thinkers, responsible for the society they live in and who have the attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary to achieve the goals they set for themselves to live a fulfilled life in the global world.

Entrepreneurial Teaching

If we can take entrepreneurship as a teaching/education philosophy, we can help individuals to understand, develop, and practice the skills, techniques needed for productive entrepreneurship at all levels and areas.

Education should be implemented entrepreneurially instead of adding entrepreneurship as an add-on in certain classes or as elective courses as it is the case of today's practices. Teacher education programs should be designed providing entrepreneurial pedagogy so that prospective teachers could easily implement it in classrooms. Therefore, we definitely need entrepreneurial teacher educators.

Entrepreneurs are no longer only those who start a business and try to maximize profits. We are talking about many different types of entrepreneurs. We need people with entrepreneurial spirit (entrepreneurs) in every single profession and sector of industry. Everyone needs to be entrepreneurial in the 21st century and onward.

With this expanded definition of entrepreneurship, it will be much easier for people with entrepreneurial spirit to have more power to solve the ever increasing complex problems facing human beings and bring both prosperity and happiness to humanity. It will also be the answer to ever asked question "Why don't we have enough entrepreneurs for every sector?"

Conclusions

To prepare locally-thinking, globally-acting, creative, risk taking, critically thinking and socially responsible entrepreneurial individuals for the future, education systems should not harm individuals' brain of the heart, curiosity, imagination, desire to be different by imposing out dated practices and evaluate them with local and international standardized (standardizing) tests designed for one size fits all philosophy.

Education should be able to enhance human curiosity creativity, morality and responsibility, encourage risk taking, and cultivate the entrepreneurial spirit. Industry, schools, colleges, universities, professional organizations and local governments should co-operate closely and strictly into making it physically, economically and most importantly culturally and philosophically appropriate place to nurture and create sustained entrepreneurship and innovation.

To have a better future where people can live happily, successfully and peacefully, we need to develop appropriate education systems and train teachers to serve for this system. This vision could be accomplished by an educational philosophy taking individual differences into account and focusing on performance based assessment instead of standardized curriculum and testing. That is, through entrepreneurial teaching and teachers.

The globe needs more creative and innovative individuals who can come up with solutions to both present and future concerns in every sector of the societies they live in. In order to build and initiate at least a functional entrepreneurial ecosystem, an effective collaboration between all types of entrepreneurs and educational sciences specialists is a must. Industry, schools, colleges, universities, professional organizations and local governments should co-operate closely and strictly into making it physically, economically and most importantly culturally & philosophically appropriate place to nurture and create sustained entrepreneurship and innovation.

Creativity and innovation take courage. Therefore, we need more courageous individuals and as a result more courage in the halls of governments, and conferences, in company meeting rooms, at university classrooms, in school boards and in our hearts and minds.

References

- Altan M.Z., Mcmurtry D., Mcmurtry S. (2014). Effective Teachers as Effective Entrepreneurs: Results of A Tri-Nation Professional Development Project. *International Journal of Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, vol.3, pp.230-244.
- Altan M.Z. (2015). Entrepreneurial teaching and entrepreneurial teachers. *journal for educators, teachers and trainers*, vol.6, pp.35-50.
- Altan M.Z. (2017). Pre-Service ELT Teachers as Future Enterprising Teachers. *Journal of Asia Entrepreneurship and Sustainability*, vol.13, pp.108-137.
- Altan M.Z. (2018). An Eye to the Future. *English Teaching Professional*, pp.21-23.
- Bandura, A. (2000). Cultivate self-efficacy for personal and organizational effectiveness. In E. A. Locke (Ed.), *Handbook of principles of organization behavior* (pp. 120-136). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Brooks, J. G., and Brooks, M. G. (1993). *In Search of Understanding: The Case for Constructivist Classrooms*. Alexandria, Va.: ASCD, 1993.
- McLaughlin, M., and Vogt, M. (1996). *Portfolios in Teacher Education*. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association.
- Perrone, V. (1991). *Expanding Student Assessment*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Piaget, J. (1970). *The Science of Education and the Psychology of the Child*. New York: Basic Books.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.