ABSTRACT

Does Entrepreneurship Education differ from teaching other Business Administration courses? This is one of the main questions the authors focus on. From the author’s perspective, future Entrepreneurs should be educated with different methods than traditional MBA students, aiming at the special skills potential Entrepreneurs need to successfully found their business. In the author’s point of view, it is not possible through classical lectures to teach how to communicate, lead, or motivate; the so called “soft skills”, which are actually “hard skills” for Entrepreneurs. Therefore, during their research the authors searched for a proper method to educate future Entrepreneurs. We identified the case-study method as one of the best ways to provide Entrepreneurship students with the skills they need to found a business, e.g. the above mentioned “soft / hard skills”, analytical skills as well as a concrete theoretical and practical framework of what it’s like to be an Entrepreneur. The authors ask for increasing the usage of case-study based teaching in Entrepreneurship Education, of course additionally to the classical way of teaching, to increase the number of successful Entrepreneurs in the future. During our research, we focused on Entrepreneurship Education in German-speaking countries.

CASE STUDY BASED TEACHING IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Entrepreneurship teachers face multiple challenges. On the one hand, they have to teach students, what Entrepreneurship is all about, what theories do exist and how one could found a business in general. On the other hand, they have to focus on practical tools, which help the particular Future-Entrepreneur, to found his business in his specific area. But how should Entrepreneurship-Teachers meet these two-sided challenges? The usage of case-studies in Entrepreneurship-classes is one of the best methods to teach Entrepreneurship in a dynamic way so that students could get both, a theoretical and a practical mindset of Entrepreneurship and of how to found a business – through one method! To show why case-study based teaching is one of the best ways to teach Entrepreneurship, we analyzed the following four research questions comparing Entrepreneurship Education in general and the methodology of case-study based teaching in a theoretical, explorative way:

1) What should Entrepreneurship Education facilitate and how, in which context should future Entrepreneurs be educated?

2) How, i.e. with which methods, are future Entrepreneurs usually educated?

3) What can the methodology of case study based teaching facilitate in general?
Finally, research question number four combines our previous three research questions and leads us to the question, if case-studies are able to facilitate both, theory and practice:

4) What can the methodology of case study based teaching facilitate in the special field of Entrepreneurship Education?

On the following pages the authors will present the results of their research which lead them to two main claims: The usage of case study based teaching especially in the German Entrepreneurship Education should increase and more case studies should be written especially for the special topics of German Entrepreneurship Education.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION – A SPECIAL TERM FOR SOMETHING THAT ISN’T SPECIAL?

As already Peter Drucker mentioned in 1985, there is nothing special about teaching Entrepreneurship: “The Entrepreneurial mystique? It’s not magic, it’s not mysterious, and it has nothing to do with the genes. It’s a discipline. And, like any discipline, it can be learned” (Drucker 1985). But is there really nothing special about teaching and learning Entrepreneurship? Why is there an extra term for imparting knowledge for founding a business called “Entrepreneurship Education”? There has to be something special about it, since there is nothing as “Organizational Behavior Education”, “Finance Education” or “Taxes and Accounting Education”.

Teaching Entrepreneurship differs from teaching other classes in functional Business Administration and Economics (Filion 1996). Usually, the classical MBA-way of teaching (mostly in not-English-speaking countries, especially in Germany), is to do lectures in the classical way: The Professor is reading a book or presenting PowerPoint Presentations, based on books. There is no or few interaction, often no practical examples, most of the time everything based on theories - in particular at universities that focus on research rather than technical colleges which rather focus on practice. The target of this classical way of teaching is to prepare students with knowhow for working in the corporate world (Scott et al. 1998). There is nothing wrong about it. But Entrepreneurship Education is different. Teaching Entrepreneurship is about founding a business – not about working in an existing company. It’s about passion, about working hard, about creating; it’s about showing what it’s like to be an Entrepreneur. But why differs teaching Entrepreneurship from teaching other subjects in the field of Business Administration, since Entrepreneurship consists of many different subareas of the traditional, functional Business Administration classes. As Kuratko states, Entrepreneurship Education takes a special position in the field of educating MBAs: “A core objective of entrepreneurship education is that it differentiates from typical business education. Business entry is fundamentally a different activity than managing a business […]; entrepreneurial education must address the equivocal nature of business entry […]. To this end, entrepreneurial education must include skill-building courses in negotiation, leadership, new product development, creative thinking, and exposure to technological innovation […].” (Kuratko 2005). As per Kuratko, the special position of Entrepreneurship results from the necessity of a very broad education of future Entrepreneurs, both, theoretical and practical. Filion verifies Kuratko and the special position of Entrepreneurship: “In education generally, emphasis is placed in knowledge acquisition, whereas in management education it is placed on acquisition of know-how, and in entrepreneurship education, on self-awareness […]” (Filion 1996).

But before it is possible to define Entrepreneurship Education, we have to look at three axioms, which determine the possibility, if Entrepreneurship can beeducated and taught in general: The first axiom describes the assumption that it is possible to teach the topic of Entrepreneurship, i.e. entrepreneurial behavior and entrepreneurial activity. Hence, teaching Entrepreneurship is not immanent. Axiom number two states that entrepreneurial behavior is not only achievable through personal experience, but also through education. The last axiom combines these first two axioms with the declaration that Entrepreneurship can be taught especially through an academic Entrepreneurship Education at Universities (Klandt et al. 2006). These three basic principles look trivial but are important for the following definition of Entrepreneurship Education. Additionally, they confirm Drucker’s point of view.

Table 1 shows further differences between the functional MBA education and the content of Entrepreneurship Education (Filion 1996).
Entrepreneurship Education – What’s that?
The authors found no generally accepted definition on Entrepreneurship Education. In German literature, you can find a definition, which describes very precisely the content of this special topic: Entrepreneurship Education consists of all didactical efforts - principally with ideational content – which sensitize the addressed target group to eventually found a business (rather than working in the corporate world). Entrepreneurship Education aims at providing special knowledge and skills for decision making processes into the field of entrepreneurial acting (Uebelacker 2005).

Regarding the author’s first research question (What should Entrepreneurship Education facilitate?), we differentiated between two facilitation-targets: Learning-target and target-group. In the following we want to discuss which learning-targets Entrepreneurship Education pursues and in a second step, which target-groups are addressed. This approach gives us the basis for answering research question No. 1.

The main intention of Entrepreneurship Education is to provide potential and future Entrepreneurs with knowledge regarding the processes of discovering, creating, evaluating and exploiting opportunities to create future goods and services (Shane & Venkataraman 2000). Further learning-targets are (Ripsas (1998):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning-targets:</th>
<th>Effects:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical basis of values</td>
<td>The economical function of the Entrepreneur is appreciated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economical creativity</td>
<td>Ability to develop and create innovative and economical promising products and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making ability</td>
<td>Ability to make decision – even in uncertain situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific and economical method skills</td>
<td>Analytical skills through economical analysis tools, e.g. “Porter’s Five Forces”, “BCG-Matrix”, or “SWOT-Analysis”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management qualification</td>
<td>Motivation- and communication skills for delegating tasks, especially to inform and manage teams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Entrepreneurship Education Learning-targets
These learning-targets can be achieved in different cohesions including differing target groups. Entrepreneurship can be taught in both, an intra-curricular as well as in an extra-curricular framework. Intra-curricular means Entrepreneurship Education happens at Business Schools in the general syllabus, for example for all MBA students. In contrast, extra-curricular means studying Entrepreneurship outside of the general syllabus, for example in a multidisciplinary framework. Students, who study e.g. engineering, are able to choose – outside their general syllabus – some semester periods per week in Entrepreneurship if they plan on founding their own business. Within this context, students of all university departments are taught in Entrepreneurship and could be motivated to be an Entrepreneur. This extra-curricular approach aims those students, who are intrinsically motivated to get entrepreneurial skills, i.e. students who choose Entrepreneurship courses outside their general syllabus have usually a higher motivation to found a business. Additionally to target group A (students, who study Entrepreneurship in their general syllabus) and target group B (students, who study Entrepreneurship outside their general syllabus) there are two more target groups respective frameworks to distinguish. Entrepreneurship Education can aim two targets or perspectives, which are already indicated in the title of this paper: On the one hand, Entrepreneurship Education could be explicitly for founding a new business, which means just for founding a business. Here, teaching focuses on the practical sides of Entrepreneurship, either in an intra-curricular, or an extra-curricular context. On the other hand, Entrepreneurship Education could be about both, the practical parts of founding a business and about Entrepreneurship research, i.e. the theoretical part of Entrepreneurship. This teaching is basically located at universities whereas the aforementioned perspective of Entrepreneurship Education could be located either at universities, universities of applied sciences, incubators or e.g. state-owned enterprises (Schleinkofer et al. 2009 and Vyakarnam 2005).

These four perspectives regarding the learning-targets and target groups of Entrepreneurship are shown in the following matrix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Context</th>
<th>Intra-curricular</th>
<th>Extra-curricular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching FOR AND ABOUT Entrepreneurship:</td>
<td>Sensitizing and / or educating students for founding research based businesses. Primary for degree programs in which business foundations are likely, e.g. engineering or natural sciences.</td>
<td>Educating and assisting potential Entrepreneurs. Giving knowledge for the practical parts of founding a business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching FOR AND ABOUT Entrepreneurship:</td>
<td>Sensitizing and / or educating students for either founding a business or for recruiting young Entrepreneurship academics.</td>
<td>Rather rare. Mainly for recruiting young Entrepreneurship academics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Primary practical oriented</td>
<td>Primary theoretical oriented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagram 1: Different perspectives of Entrepreneurship Education

What should Entrepreneurship Education facilitate and how, in which context should future Entrepreneurs be educated?

In summary, the aforementioned four perspectives of Entrepreneurship Education shown in Diagram 1 could answer the author’s first research question: Entrepreneurship Education should facilitate in general both, an practical oriented view on Entrepreneurship for those future Entrepreneurs, who already have a business idea or definitely want to become an Entrepreneur and need practical skills to found their business, as well as a theoretical oriented view. Theoretical skills are especially for students important, who either want to attend to Entrepreneurship through a theoretical approach, or for those, who want to become a young academic in the exciting field of Entrepreneurship Research. Additionally, future Entrepreneurs can be educated either in an intra-curricular or in an extra-curricular context.
context, depending on their Education. For example, if students who are studying engineering want to found their business, they usually have to choose an extra-curricular context to study Entrepreneurship, whereas MBA students often get involved with Entrepreneurship within an intra-curricular context.

**METHODOLOGIES OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION**

One of the first thoughts, why Entrepreneurship should be taught in Germany, was the opinion that Entrepreneurs and business foundations are very important for the development of modern economies (Rosa et al. 1996). Therefore, it was regarded as very important to educate potential Entrepreneurs within the Entrepreneurship Education for modernizing national and international economies. One of the first international well known universities who implemented Entrepreneurship courses in their curriculum was Harvard Business School in 1947 as an answer of structural problems within the US economy after WW II (Koch 2002). Entrepreneurship was – like today – a socio-political topic: “From anational economics point of view [...] the possibility of a positive welfare effect is significant. In addition to competitive employment effects, innovation and structural change effects play a decisive role here [...]. As there is an acceleration of social and economic problems which develop in the process of globalisation, a competitive context from which new solutions to problems and innovative organisational structures are motivated is today more than ever before a decisive mechanism for the ‘evolutionary success’ of socio-cultural systems” (Scott et al. 1998). Therefore, Entrepreneurship Education should be taught through practical oriented methodologies so that business foundations are forced, which solve problems and aspire the evolution and success of socio-cultural systems.

But (the German) Entrepreneurship Education is embedded within the traditional education system and is usually not very creative, especially regarding didactics and methods (Braukmann 2001). Often, the German Entrepreneurship Education is characterized by classical lectures and teaching of factual knowledge. An essential problem of these traditional, university based teaching forms is the disregard of two very important components of the so called “method triad” consisting of specialized knowledge, methodological expertise and social competence. These fields of competence are necessary for acting Entrepreneurial so that an Entrepreneurship Education has to train both (Braukmann 2001 and Schleinkofer et al. 2009).

**How, i.e. with which methods are future Entrepreneurs usually educated?**

Future Entrepreneurs are usually educated through classical, traditional methods and didactics, disregarding method- and social fields of competence. This author’s point of view regards primary the German Entrepreneurship Education, which is usually not as case-based as the Anglo-American MBA Education. Entrepreneurship Education is often mostly about theories of founding a business, taught by Professors, which usually (there are exceptions, of course) have a very theoretical background, especially at German State-Universities. Professors and staff teach Entrepreneurship like every other subject at Universities. But there is a main difference between the entrepreneurial learning process and the learning process of other MBA courses as Klandt and Volkmann stated: “[...] the entrepreneurial learning process develops in a situation in which the learners see themselves confronted by practical problem situations and in this way receive their learning impulses” (Klandt & Volkmann 2006). They also provide a comparison of differences between classical MBA didactic and Entrepreneurship Education didactic as table 3 shows (Filion 1996).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classical didactic used in MBA Education</th>
<th>Didactic useful for educating future Entrepreneurs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-centered learning</td>
<td>Dynamic learning through teacher, students, guest lecturer, practitioner etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning through writings: Textbooks, journals, etc.</td>
<td>Learning through exchange of ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student as passive participant: Learning through listening</td>
<td>Student as active participant: Learning through interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning through given contents | Learning through discovery and a flexible environment
---|---
Learning for solving problems which appear in the future | Learning for achieving goals
Imitation unrequested | Learning through imitation
Failure unrequested | Learning through failure; Failure as chance to learn

Table 3: Differences between classical didactic, used in MBA Education and didactic for Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship Education should focus a practical point of view (of course, with a theoretical framework, depending on course and learning target as mentioned in table 2) and give realistic examples of success and failure to give Entrepreneurship students the opportunity to get to know what it’s like to be an Entrepreneur. This is important, because one of the main differences between classical MBA Education and Entrepreneurship Education is that in MBA Education students usually learn about solutions for given problems, whereas in Entrepreneurship nothing like a given solution for given problems exists. Here, it is very important to facilitate synergies between theory and practice. This request leads us to research question number 3: Which method is good for teaching Entrepreneurship and facilitates the aforementioned didactic?

CASE-STUDY BASED TEACHING

Case-study based teaching has its origins in the lawyer casuistic. The first university which applied case-studies for teaching Entrepreneurship and Business Administration was Harvard Business School. (Kaiser 1983). Therefore, one definition for the case-study method you can find in Harvard Business School press: “A business case imitates or simulates a real situation. Cases are verbal representations of reality that put the reader in the role of a participant in the situation.” (Ellet 2007). Hence, case-studies can be about 10 – 50 pages, and about persons, firms, industries or economies. They can provide full information about every single interaction or just some rudimental facts. The only thing all kinds of case-studies have in common is the fact that they reproduce reality.

Another, rather theoretical oriented definition of case-studies is the following: “The essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result.” (Yin 2003). Case-studies are a qualitative empirical research method which tries to reproduce and analyze a realistic context. Students can analyze case-studies with different sources of help and different analytical tools. (Yin 1984). Students’ case-study analysis doesn’t aim at finding a “solution” for the case. Case-study analysis is more about abstracting and generalizing, how to solve similar problems – similar cases. In case-study analysis, there is no “one and only solution”, it is more about gaining experience. Like in reality, students have to develop their own “solution”, they have to decide on their own, which step they have to take next. (Euler et al. 2004).

What can the methodology of case study based teaching facilitate in general?
As we discussed above, case-studies have diversified aims and can provide a lot of realistic information to students. In the middle of case-study analysis are decision-making processes – those from the main actors as well as those from the analyzing students. They have to balance different reasons and different consequences for different decisions. Case-studies aim to give both, a theoretical as well as a practical framework to understand, how to – in the case of Entrepreneurship –act entrepreneurial. Primary, case-studies help students to abstract from reality to general applicable solutions in reality.

The following bullet points answer research question number 3 in detail.
What can the methodology of case study based teaching facilitate in general?

- Describing situations from an decision-maker perspective
- Developing own solutions for concrete problems
- Discussion about students’ different solution approaches
- Educating arguing and decision making skills
- Education communication and leading skills
- Motivating students to make a difference through own solutions
- Identifying several solution alternatives
- Learning through failure
- Educating information research
- Education analytical capabilities

In conclusion, case-studies are able to facilitate both, practical skills which are important for acting entrepreneurial in combination with a theoretical framework to educate analytical capabilities. The most important part of using case-studies as a method is that it reproduces reality and therefore gives students of any subject the opportunity to learn with the help of real situations and decision making processes.

CASE-STUDIES IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

During the results of the previous discussed three research questions it was made clear that Entrepreneurship Education differs from the traditional MBA Education, especially in learning-targets and target groups. Additionally, didactics used in Entrepreneurship Education should vary from didactics used in traditional MBA Education, as mentioned with research question number two. Future Entrepreneurs should be trained in decision making capabilities, analytical- and communication skills. Educating potential Entrepreneurs in these fields requires a method, which does involve students into discussions. Research question number three showed, what the case-study method is able to facilitate. Regarding the results of these three research questions, we are now able to show, why using case-studies is one of the best methods to teach Entrepreneurship and helps future Entrepreneurs to gain the necessary skills to found their business and be successful. Therefore, the authors show in the following, how case-studies are able to facilitate the special contents and capabilities necessary for Entrepreneurship students. For this purpose, we show what Entrepreneurship Education should facilitate as well as what Case studies in Entrepreneurship Education are able to facilitate.

Why using case-studies in Entrepreneurship Education?

When you think about successful Entrepreneurs, you often think about charismatic women or men, who know how to be articulate, who know how to lead their team and their firm and are often very self-confidently people. Case-studies are able to teach students, how to act in an Entrepreneurial way. This method is able to do this through the following aspects:

Endorsement for leadership-culture through Case-Studies

As mentioned above, Entrepreneurship Education should endorse a leadership-culture, not a membership-culture like in the traditional MBA Education. Case-studies are able to facilitate such a leadership-culture by narrating situations and processes from an Entrepreneur’s perspective. This gives students the opportunity to follow this concrete decision-making process, directly from a decision-maker’s perspective.

Concentration on individual enhancements through Case-Studies

In the center of Entrepreneurship Education stands the Entrepreneur. He is the individual, who founds the business, who leads the firm and he or she is the person who manages the processes. Therefore, the enhancement of the Entrepreneur is here more important than in the traditional MBA Education. Through the usage of case-studies in Entrepreneurship Education, students are forced to develop own solution approaches for the case’s special problems. They don’t listen passively, they work active on own ideas enhance their analytical skills

Development of one’s self-confidence focusing individual insistency through case-studies

Working on case-studies in Entrepreneurship Education is about interacting. First, students have to develop their own solution approaches, second, they have to discuss, which approach is the best for the given situation in the case. Therefore, students have to defend their approaches against the Professor
and in particular against the other students. Hence, students’ arguing and discussing skills will be educated as well as their assertiveness – very important skills to be a successful Entrepreneur.

**Educating students’ leading-, motivating- and communicating skills through case-studies**

Intimately connected with the development of one’s self-confidence are the leading-, motivating- and communicating skills of potential Entrepreneurs. These skills are very important for successfully founding a business. Entrepreneurs face multiple challenges with leading the team, motivating the communicating with the team, communicating with partners, banks or venture capitalists etc. By using case-studies, students learn in an early stage, to communicate with other students, with the professor or for example talk in front of the class. Through taking this last aspect of the method triad – social competence – into consideration, students will be educated in these so called “soft skills” sector, which are actually “hard skills” for anEntrepreneur.

Additionally to the above mentioned personal skills like communication, discussing and leading skills, there are some analytical skills, which are very important for being a successful Entrepreneur, too. How these skills are able to be educated through the usage of case-studies in Entrepreneurship Education are mentioned in the following.

**Ability, to develop innovative and economical promising products or services through case-studies**

Case-studies always contain stories; often stories about successful Entrepreneurs, who weren’t successful at the beginning. But through hard work and the right decisions they become successful at last. Hence, students should be educated with smartness to develop products and services, which have to be economical promising – one of the most important parts of being an Entrepreneur. This happens through the usage of case-studies. Students learn, how other Entrepreneurs made the right decisions and developed the right products, which became economical successful. But this is not all. Through case-studies and the story “behind the scenes”, students are also able to comprehend, which decisions were wrong and through what decisions Entrepreneurs failed. Hence, students learn through failure and are sensitized, to be aware of the fact that mistakes could be made, but others should not be made.

**Ability, to make decisions even in insecure situations through case-studies**

Entrepreneurs, as mentioned above, face multiple challenges. One of the biggest challenges is to make the right decisions, even with incomplete information. Through different styles of case-studies, on the one hand with all the information needed to solve the problem which is described in the case-study, on the other hand without any information or with the same information-set the Entrepreneur had in that concrete situation, students learn how to deal with insecure situations and incomplete information. They learn on the one hand how to gain all the information they need to deal with the problems described in the case through detailed and structured information research, and on the other hand, how to compensate incomplete information.

**Ability, to apply analytical tools for analyzing firms, markets and industries through case-studies**

Analyzing competitors, markets, industries or just the own strength and weaknesses is very important for young Entrepreneurs and founding businesses. Case-studies can educate students to use analytical tools like “Porter’s Five Forces”, “BCG-Matrix” or other analytical tools for Business students. The advantage of using case-studies for practicing these tools is that case-studies persist of real stories. With all these above mentioned aspects, case-studies are able to prepare potential Entrepreneurs for the future. Case-studies are able to provide a theoretical framework as well as a practical framework. Thus, students get both, a theoretical based perspective and a practical perspective on what it’s like to be an Entrepreneur. Thereby, it is possible, to create synergies between theory and practice through the usage of case-studies in Entrepreneurship Education. Through different styles of case-studies, cases are able to facilitate all competencies of the method triad: specialized knowledge, methodological expertise and social competence.

**CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

As our research is still in progress and since this present research is explorative, the authors will give more results in a future version and during future research. Still, the authors would like to give a conclusion and some implications.

Intention of the present explorative study was to show, why the method of case-study based teaching is proper and one of the best methods to educate future Entrepreneurs in the complex field of founding a business. The authors could show that through the usage of case-studies in Entrepreneurship Education it is possible to facilitate both, a theoretical as well as a practical oriented framework of how to found a
business and of what it’s like to be an Entrepreneur. Through the medium of Entrepreneurship know how through the usage of case-studies specialized for the particular target groups, potential Entrepreneurs are able to achieve the knowledge they need to successfully found their business. As already mentioned above, the case-study method is able to educate future Entrepreneurs through creating an important synergy between theory and practice. They can facilitate both sides of Entrepreneurship. This is in particular due to the fact that through case-studies all three competences of the method triad are able to get taught, with focusing on the social competence and the so called soft skills. These skills are of great importance for Entrepreneurs.

For us, it is very important to make clear that we prefer the usage of case-studies in Entrepreneurship Education additionally to other methods of educating future Entrepreneurs like traditional lectures or internships. Additionally, the authors would like to ask not just for an increasing usage of case-study based teaching in Entrepreneurship (especially in Germany), but also for in increasing creation of case-studies specialized for the requirements of Entrepreneurship (in Germany).

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