

Teachers' perspectives on "Entrepreneurship Education"

Bettina Backström-Widjeskog, EdD
Novia, University of Applied Sciences,
Vaasa, Finland

bettinabw@novia.fi

www.novia.fi

The purpose:

- To better knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurship education
- Investigate how entrepreneurship education is expressed in a school environment

Economy ➔ **Education**

What teachers think about entrepreneurship education (content- and value-orientation) and how they feel they are able to support students in their development towards an enterprising initiative (practice-orientation).

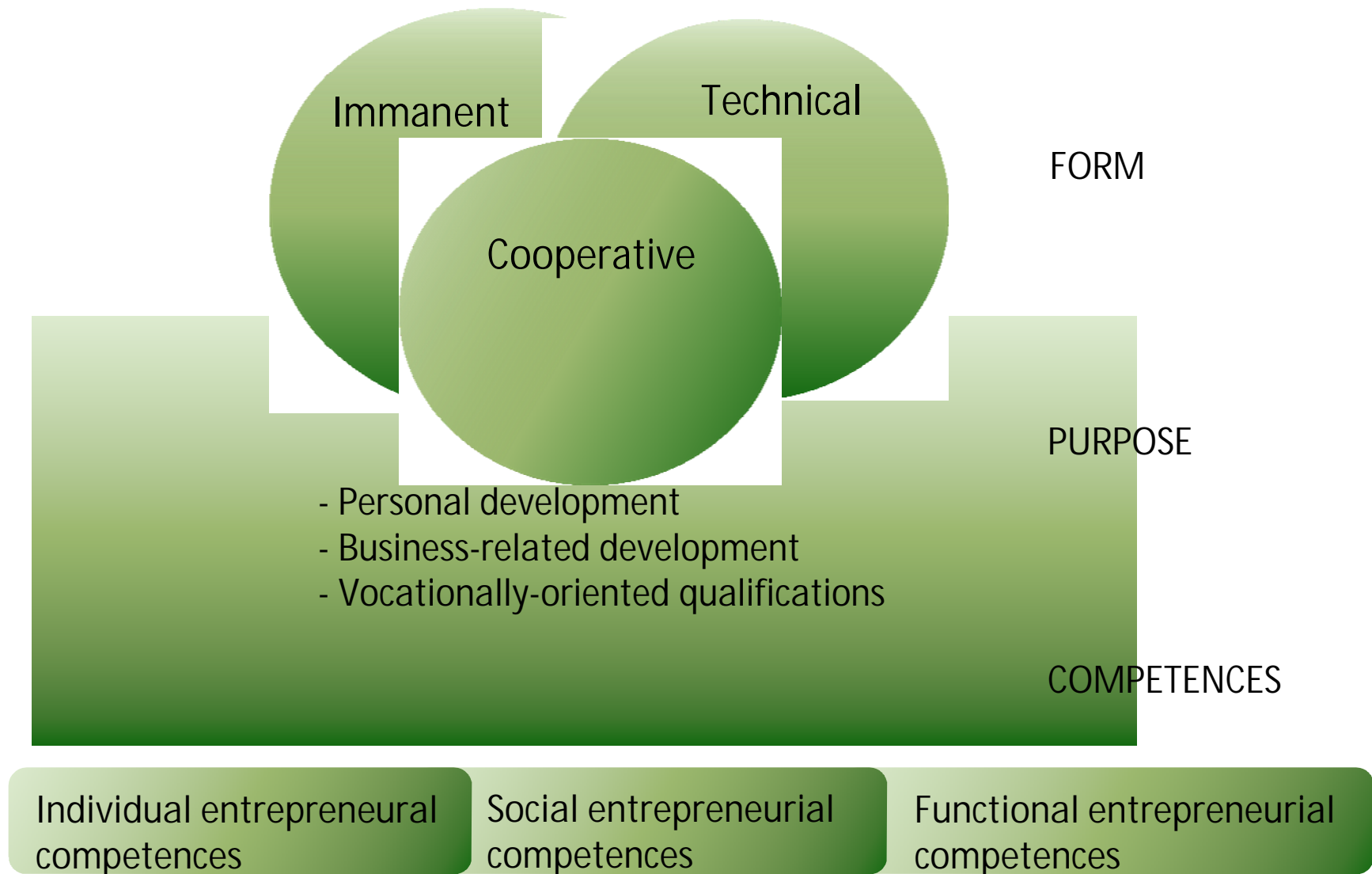


Figure 1: *Summary of the content of entrepreneurship education.*

(•) Ada:

*Entrepreneurship can **not only** be understood as knowledge about building your own business. But entrepreneurship may well be seen as the ability to get a job as an employee somewhere. That also requires an **enterprising manner...***

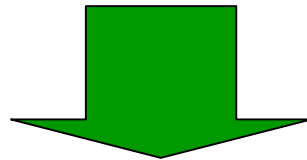
*I'd like to understand it as a **general view** on everything.. That entrepreneurship education include the whole school and everyone working here.. That everyone is able to cooperate in this – because **it is about the comprehensive/overall values for education and work**. Of course it is important that the students learn these subjects too, but you need to learn them in a way that you later are able to make use of the knowledge as well!*

*It comes **from yourself** – that you have to rely on what you do – and you need to believe in yourself. You also need to have strength to do your work. This is my definition on entrepreneurship.*

<i>Entrepreneurial competences/ Content</i>	Skills	Attitudes	Abilities	Pedagogical approach	Characteristics of learning environments aimed at entrepreneurship education
<i>Individual entrepreneurial competences</i>	Practical wisdom, autonomous increase of knowledge	Self efficacy, be appraisal of own strength and weaknesses	Enterprising, autonomous, creative, curious, motivated, purposeful	Experience-based learning that is personal and autonomous <i>Constructivism</i>	Individualized, student-centered and lifelong learning
<i>Social entrepreneurial competences</i>	Social and communicational knowledge	Respectful empathic and constructive attitude	Social ability, collaboration, friendly, sound judgement, original	Learning through collaboration <i>Sociocultural learning</i>	Problem- or project-based learning, collaborative methods
<i>Functional entrepreneurial competences</i>	Entrepreneurial, business-related knowledge, professional knowledge for working life	Tolerant to risks and instability, optimistic, determined, possibility seeker	Energetic resultoriented, profitminded, venturesome, efficient	Practical and pragmatic learning in an authentic environment <i>Situated learning Pragmatism</i>	Cooperation with society and industry, production- and/or business, working life orientation

Definition is crucial

- Variation in conceptions, perceptions, and understanding of “entrepreneurship education” are important regarding *how it is interpreted* and *put into practice* in the classroom.



- Offer relevant definitions and give the school system prerequisites and qualifications for implementing “entrepreneurship education”

How do students learn to become enterprising?

- Teachers define their own didactic actions in how to stimulate students towards enterprising initiatives
- Interesting turning point
- Definition of words: “enterprising” and “entrepreneurship education” don’t strive for the same purpose..

Researcher: - How do students learn to become enterprising?

(•) Hilde: - *Well, now I'm thinking of something complete different, of course.. (laughter) Now I'm thinking about it – that they **make up their mind to do something** and then it is of course this [thing] with project-based methods that is certainly important – that they **are able to think and act by themselves**.. that [we] do not serve up everything.. But.. I have never thought like this before.*

Researcher: - Really?

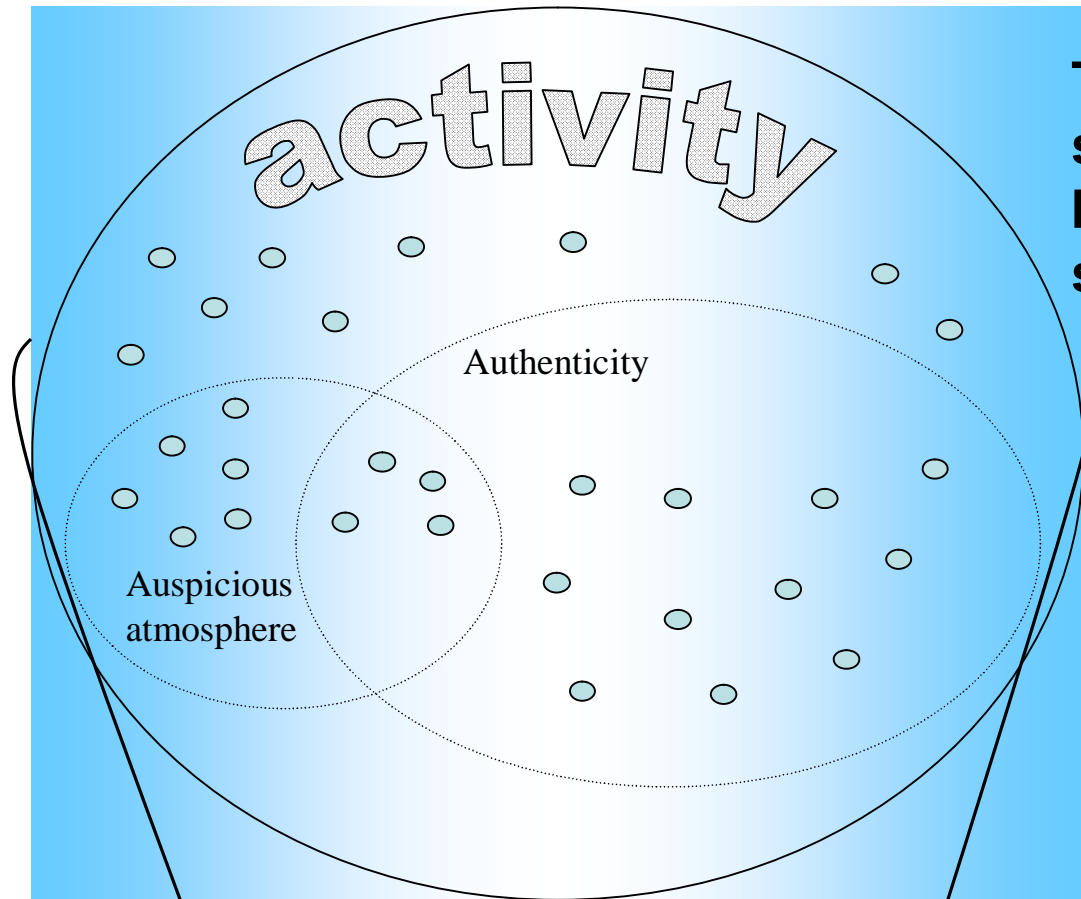
Hilde: - *Well.. That is to say.. I only thought that they will **be trained in starting a business**... Just think!! (laughter)*

Hilde: - *It's **a kind of own activity**. It does not need to be more complicated than that the student are interesting in what they are doing, and that they have the **courage** to search information, and don't be afraid.. Because it can be a barrier too, to look for these books or ask these people... It's like a kind of **courage to act**..*

(•) Leo:

“Every stupid rebellion against school rules is of course in fact an indication of an **enterprising initiative** (laughter). [An enterprising initiative] is about **breaking off and dare to start something new**, because not everyone can work [as an employee] at Nokia in the future. Instead we need **innovative thinking**. And when students write, they always write something new, they invent something themselves. You throw them into a situation like “*you are in New York all by yourself and have no money but you speak the language — what do you do?*” **Then they have to be so enterprising that they survive the situation.**

Any person in any work situation can of course show enterprising initiative ... because **regardless of where and in what profession they work** in the future it is important that they **themselves dare take initiative and actually work without** someone telling them what to do all the time. To continuously just wait for instructions must feel really meaningless ... That’s why it’s so important already at school to **take responsibility** for one’s work.”



Teachers' thoughts of how students can be spurred to become enterprising in the school context.

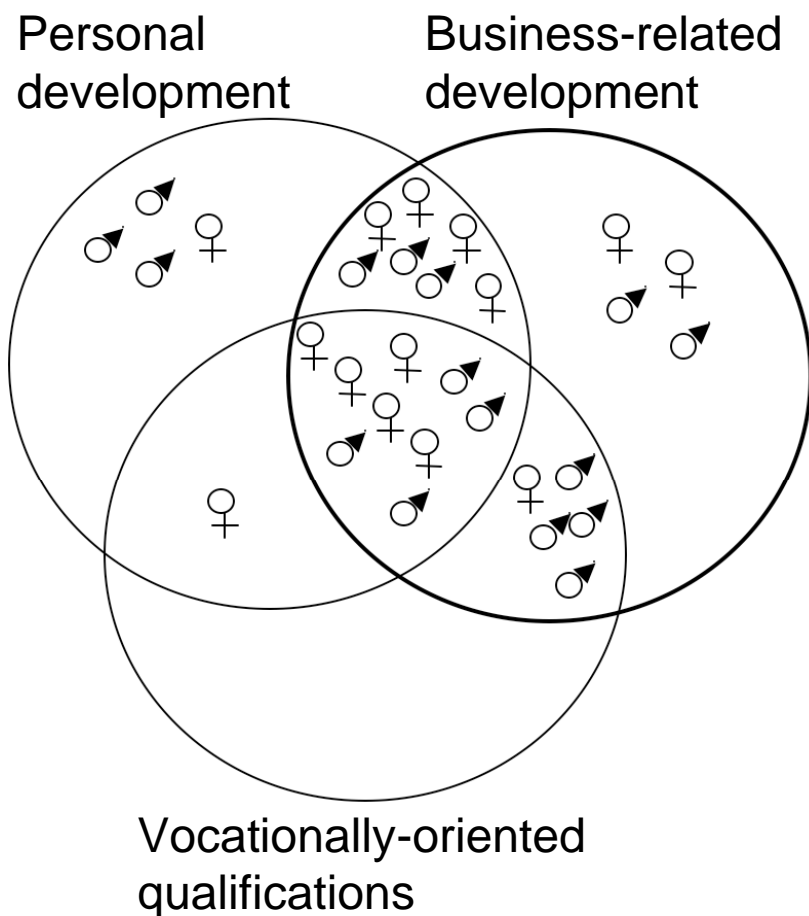
Enterprising initiatives are encouraged through **activity**.

Enterprising
Enterprising
manner

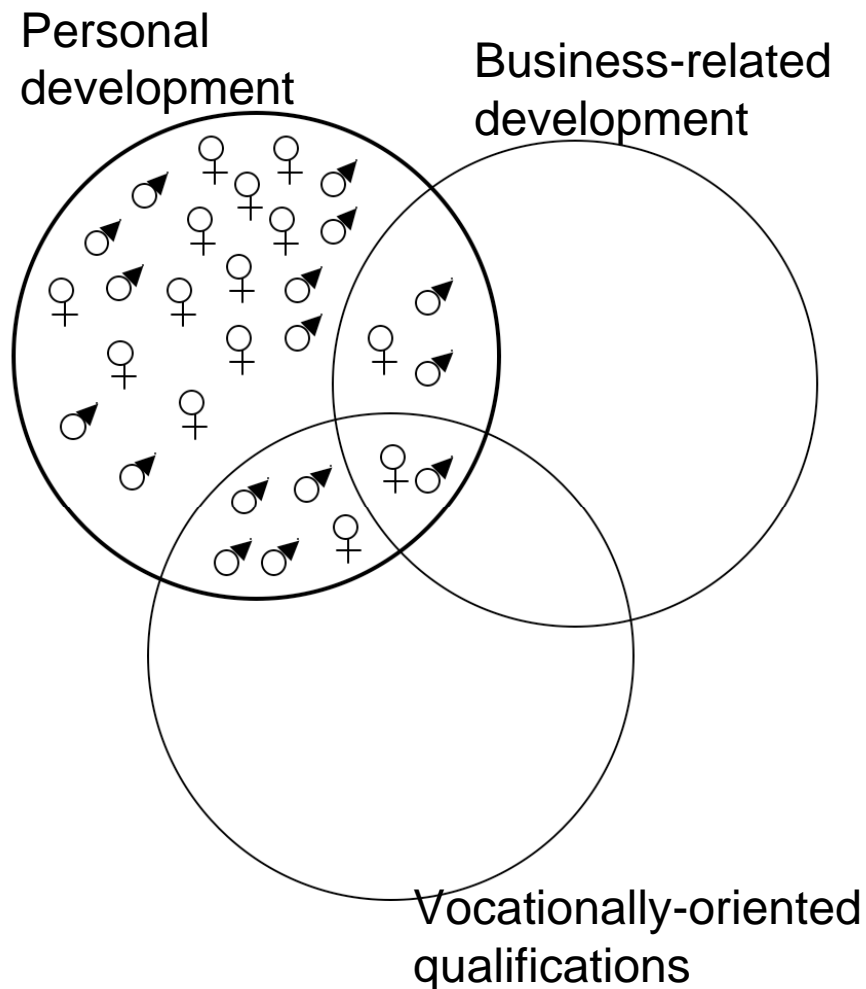
Teachers attitudes to enterprise education

- If the teachers experienced their first spontaneous definition as the "true" one and this *clashed* with their second, reflected-upon (ideal) definition, then enterprise education appears to be less important.

First definition (free association)

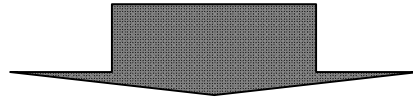


Second definition (ideal purpose)



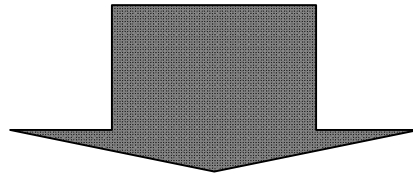
Teachers' conceptions of the purpose of enterprise education

Insecurity - lack of knowledge and absence of didactic tools



Negative attitudes

Knowledge and conceptual tools



**Internalized part of teachers'
professional competency**

A pedagogical perspective

Enterprising education

entails both an *attitude* and
a concrete *plan of action* in pedagogical work

- From passive/non-autonomous actions to activity and autonomy
- From a focus on the results to a focus on the process
- From reproduction to creation
- From a fixation on learning the details to an understanding of context, problem-solving, and life-long learning.

- Focus on teachers' conceptions and understandings
- Support and courage the teachers
- Reflections on pedagogical values and goals → Enterprising education is built on a **humanistic educational** ideal
- Provide the teachers with concrete foundations which to substantially and linguistically help them to manage their work in enterprising education in the school context.

More information

Teachers' thoughts on entrepreneurship education – Bettina Backström-Widjeskog

In: Creativity and Innovation – Preconditions
for entrepreneurial education

Kjell Skogen and Jarle Sjoevoll (eds.)

Tapir academic press