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*ХАНС ЕЛЬБЕСГАУЗЕН, РАГНХІЛЬД РІИС, АГНЕТЕ ЄНСЕН*

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## **ВИКЛАДАННЯ КУРСУ ПІДПРИЄМНИЦТВА В РАМКАХ МОДЕРНІЗАЦІЇ ВИЩОЇ БІБЛІОТЕЧНОЇ ОСВІТИ В ДАНІЇ**

### **TEACHING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS PART OF THE MODERNIZATION OF HIGHER LIBRARY EDUCATION IN DENMARK**

*Курс підприємництва є одним із обов'язкових предметів у Королівській школі бібліотекознавства та інформатики (Копенгагенський університет). Підприємництво визначено як щоденну практику осіб, котрі мають справу з ідентифікацією, аналізом та вирішенням нестандартних ситуацій.*

*Ключові слова: підприємництво, вища освіта, бібліотекознавство та інформатика, модернізація.*

*Курс предпринимательства является одним из обязательных предметов в Королевской школе библиотековедения и информатики (Копенгагенский университет). Предпринимательство определяют как ежедневную практику людей, имеющих дело с идентификацией, анализом и решением нестандартных ситуаций.*

*Ключевые слова: предпринимательство, высшее образование, библиотековедение и информатика, модернизация.*

*Entrepreneurship is one of the core subjects at the Royal School of Library and Information Science, Copenhagen University. The latter is defined as an everyday practice of individuals dealing with identification, analysis and solution of anomalies.*

*Key words: entrepreneurship, higher education, library and information science, modernization.*

#### **Introduction**

The discourse of modernization has accompanied education and curriculum development since the concept of knowledge has been considered essential for Denmark's ability to innovate and compete. The key argument, brought forward to accelerate the process of modernization in Higher Education, indicates that knowledge, especially innovative knowledge, is required for two very different reasons: Denmark is a country without any significant natural resources, except a bit oil perhaps. However, the lack of natural resources, the argument goes, can be compensated by more and more intelligent investments and investigation in those resources, of which there is plenty: knowledge and information.

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The second argument deals with the phenomenon of globalization and new opportunities or threats caused by the global economy. Two White Papers in 2006 and 2012 respectively have played a significant role in regard to the entrepreneurship discourse.

If Denmark shall take advantage of global opportunities, maintain a reasonable standard of living and avoid social segregation, the Danish society must undergo transformation and renewal according to a governmental White Paper, entitled «Progress, Innovation and Cohesion. Strategy for Denmark in the global economy.» launched in 2006. The overall strategy in the White Paper is to present more ambitious goals for the Danish society as a whole and creating better opportunities for growth and prosperity. A closer look on the memorandum reveals that eleven out of fourteen chapters deal with education, research and innovation respective entrepreneurship — which means, that more and better education is considered a premise for more economic growth.

The White Paper is a summary and justification of already adopted reforms- and changes in the educational sector. At the same time the White Paper indicated that further changes could be expected. In 2007 a major wave of mergers began in higher education. Formerly independent universities were merged into large administrative units. Critical voices were raised in regard to these mergers — mainly because the anticipated positive impact on research and teaching was not always visible.

In summary, one can say that the political system has used the global competition as an argument and lever in favor of modernizing the whole educational system. It was emphasized that education and training even more than in the past had to play a key role regarding Denmark's competitiveness and prosperity. The country's education potential should be tapped fully in order to make sure that Denmark can match the ever increasing international competition. The most significant consequences were:

- Universities should to a greater extent be organized like private companies;
- Competition should to a higher degree become a prerequisite for research and teaching at universities;
- All students in higher education should have the opportunity to take courses in entrepreneurship and enterprising.

Entrepreneurship education has within the last five years become a main concern in modernizing higher education establishments. We come back to this point when we discuss in more detail how entrepreneurship education has been implemented at the Royal School of Library and Information Science (RSLIS).

Management of universities via contracts, enhanced output control and marketization are concepts borrowed from new public management and intended to bring higher education in line with globalism and international competition. The outcome focus also implies that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education is part of the overall commoditization of research and teaching.

However, the discourse of modernization and of entrepreneurship education is to some extent blurred and unclear. Our hypothesis is that a policy strategy like entrepreneurship should be implemented in accordance with the essential values and norms of the educational system. If not, confusion and misunderstandings will be an unavoidable consequence. In the following we try to illustrate how entrepreneurship has been adapted to higher education establishments. We like to start with a brief description of the theoretical framework, used in the paper.

### **Theoretical framework**

Modernization is a complex concept. It refers to a set of interwoven structural changes that have altered the lives of individuals and groups fundamentally (Van der Loo & van Rejen 1997). Rationality is considered central — a process, in which education and knowledge play a crucial but paradoxical role.

But what is meant by modernizing the educational system in general and higher education in particular? This question can be divided into two sub-questions. First, one can ask which knowledge domains will be at the forefront when it comes to modernizing higher education establishments. Secondly, one can scrutinize whether, how and to what extent modernization may change the core values of the educational sector? In our paper the emphasis is on the second question.

Using an analytical distinction, made by Martin Trow, professor of public policy at Berkeley University, we try to answer this question. In the wake of the coming of the knowledge society Trow wanted to describe and analyze the transformation from mass education to universal education. By universal education he suggested that potentially all members of a society attend higher education establishments. To discuss the opening of the universities, he draws an analytical distinction between the autonomous and societal functions (societal termed popular in the original document) of higher education.

*The distinction is between those activities and purposes that the university defines for itself and those that it takes on in response to external needs and demands. The autonomous functions are intrinsic to the conception of the university and the academic role ... The popular function ... are best seen as services to other institutions of the society (Trow 1970; 2).*

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Trow outlined the autonomous function in accordance with the tradition and the self-understanding of the Humboldtian University. The basis of the autonomous university is

- The creation of new knowledge through independent research;
- The concept of general education in compliance with an universal humanistic philosophy;
- The certification of knowledge elites as a self-regulating form of social control (Freidson 1984).

The popular functions are derived from the societal demand for innovative knowledge. On the one hand Trow asserts that the erosion of the class structure in the industrial society is considered as the social basis for the opening of the universities. Therefore it should be possible for all talented people to attend universities. As a consequence, the social-integrative function of education has been highlighted. On the other hand, Trow by sociality understands that innovative knowledge, produced at the universities, should be overall useful and beneficial in political, social and economic respects. Moreover, scientists should be actively involved in solving social problems.

Besides, Trow states that it depends on a country's culture what priority is given to autonomy and sociality in the education system. European universities compared to those in the United States focus on the autonomous functions. Due to the pragmatism of American culture, universities in the United States have developed the popular or societal functions in a more distinct way. Trow underscores the significance of cultural roots when discussing the autonomous and societal functions of higher education. We find this is a very important statement. It can be argued if one wants to change the functions and tasks in higher education establishments that the cultural conditions for their mode of action have to be changed too.

Based on the categorical distinction made above, modernization can be seen as an attempt to rearrange the autonomous and societal functions in higher education. However, the process of reorganization must rest upon three issues: a) the self-understanding of the universities, b) the needs of society and c) the cultural roots. Moreover, it can be assumed that societal needs must be conveyed in a way which corresponds to the institutional identity, the self-concept in regard to the area of expertise and the cultural mission of higher education establishments.

Entrepreneurship education becomes part of an existing teaching culture at RSLIS

### **Entrepreneurship as a policy project**

The spread of entrepreneurship education has been one of the primary objectives various Danish governments have set in the past decade. Already the White Paper from 2006 highlighted the importance, which was ascribed to entrepreneurship and innovation. The entire education system — from preschools to research institutions — should address entrepreneurial issues. Courses in how to establish an enterprise, in economic planning and innovation didactics, the launch of special information centers for students in planning and achieving career goals were as much part of the policy initiatives as a dedicated research program for enterprise, innovation and entrepreneurship. A broad-based education program should promote economic growth and secure social and cultural welfare.

In a White Paper from 2012, entitled «Denmark — Country of solutions. Enhanced cooperation and better a supportive environment for business innovation», (Regeringen 2012) is stated that progress has been made. At the same time, new objectives were presented. One example is that education in entrepreneurship is not sufficient. From now on, innovative competence should be considered a basic element in each educational program — an ambitious goal, which can only be achieved by means of a fundamental cultural change in the education system and when entrepreneurship as well as innovation takes root in any educational institution.

Comparing the two White Papers dated 2006 and 2012 it appears, however that the focus in entrepreneurship education has shifted. Both memoranda share the outcome perspective. In 2006, however the emphasis was on a specific target group — people who were interested to learn how enterprises are founded. 2012 focus was not the clients but the entrepreneurial process itself. This was the new priority in the 2012 policy paper. From now on, mainly those skills should be taught in entrepreneurship education, which were needed to act and think like an entrepreneur. The focus was not on education in entrepreneurship, but on education for entrepreneurship. Changing the goal requires however, a transformation of the culture of learning in higher learning institutions. The client perspective has to be replaced by a process perspective. A more detailed description of the different concepts of entrepreneurship education can be found at Hannon (2005).

This transformation will not occur easily and overnight. Evidence thereof is very clearly expressed in an evaluation report on a major pedagogic development project at the University of Aarhus, which was established 2010 as *The Entrepreneurial University* at Aarhus University. *The*

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*Entrepreneurial University* was a project under the European Social Fund and has been supported by The Danish Growth Council and The Danish Business Authority. The project aims to generate awareness and interest in entrepreneurship among the university's faculties and centers and to ensure that students meet various forms of entrepreneurship during their studies. Furthermore, *The Entrepreneurial University* was meant to stimulate the education system and to cater for a theoretical framework useful entrepreneurship education. The midterm evaluation report mentions several conclusions, one is:

One of the biggest challenges for the project in the future is to make sure that entrepreneurial thinking really is rooted in the academic environments — both in breadth and depth. It is essential that efforts must increasingly be institutionalized and less dependent on a few enthusiasts. This requires priorities, made by the management, and a change of the culture among teachers. (Niras 2012)

Modifying an existing teaching culture appears to be a difficult challenge. It takes time and patience to persuade the academic milieu about the pedagogic relevance of entrepreneurship education. The autonomous and the societal functions in university education is still somewhat unbalanced and lack acceptance according to the report.

### **Introducing entrepreneurship education at RSLIS**

Introducing entrepreneurship education at the RSLIS was a double-edged process. Contradictions between the autonomous and the societal functions in higher education establishments strongly influenced the debate about the pros and cons. We experienced a great number of concerns. One was that entrepreneurship is not a proper academic discipline at all according to the critics. In this context it was held that the proponents were dealing with a hyped concept that will disappear and fade after a short time. The cynics even claimed that RSLIS blindly adjust to a political agenda and jumps on a bandwagon in order to find new sources of funding.

On the other hand reform activities in order to adapt RSLIS' teaching culture to the modernization of the education sector have been implemented. The background was an accepted view that the instructors' pedagogical skills and competencies needed upgrading to meet the mass university's requirement for efficiency, and simultaneously take account of the increasing individualization of student learning. Therefore teaching objectives and the methods have been specified in a project lasting two years. Instructor teams were established and their functions delineated. Simultaneously, new forms of dialogue between students and instructors have been initiated with the aim of creating a strong learning culture. To

sum up efforts have been made to renew RSLIS' teaching methods.

In other words, the context for introducing entrepreneurship education at RSLIS was quite ambiguous. It was crucial that the proponents didn't lose sight of the actual object for RSLIS's teaching and research activities. Hence it was stipulated that entrepreneurship by no means could be a coherent and independent discipline alongside with the library and information science. Instead of offering lessons *in* entrepreneurship, RSLIS's concept was geared to learn *through* entrepreneurship. Consequently it was assumed that entrepreneurship comprises skills, competencies and knowledge, which can also be learned and applied successfully in other than economic frames.

Over the past three years instructors at RSLIS have conducted a total of seven courses. Five on the master level, two on the bachelor level. In the following we hope to present a gist of what is meant by entrepreneurship education at RSLIS and how the concept was introduced.

The key idea of entrepreneurship education

Entrepreneurship is commonly understood as the combination of two phenomena. On the one hand, promising opportunities for entrepreneurial activity must be present. On the other hand, there must be enterprising individuals trying to realize those future-oriented opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Based on this nexus, entrepreneurship can either be seen as creative process, a strategic event or an everyday practice. If entrepreneurship is understood as creation, major focus will be put on the creative capacities of the individual. (Kupferberg 2006, Edwards 1986). If entrepreneurship is a strategic approach focus is on rationality and strategic reasoning (Drucker 1985). Seen as everyday practice entrepreneurship is as part of culturally based activity through which everyday practice is changed. (Spinosa, Flores & Dreyfus 1997). Depending on the theoretical frame the education in entrepreneurship will vary.

In this article we assume that entrepreneurship is a part of everyday practice. Normally everyday activities are not combined with increased reflexivity. Instead, they consist of institutionalized forms of social practice, which can be changed only with difficulty. Many things just happen. Furthermore the intentionality of actions often remains hidden. And yet everyday practice is the breeding ground for change and commitment, as Spinosa, Flores and Dreyfus argue in their book, «Disclosing New Worlds» (1997).

Everyday activity is the breeding ground for social change because societal anomalies and experienced disharmonies become visible within and through that practice. It is also the space where the skills, knowledge

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and identities are created and refined — skills, which are necessary to uncover new knowledge and to expose altered identities. Finally, practice are defined as spaces where the old and the new clash. This is how new worlds emerge.

Starting from these considerations, the idea of entrepreneurial activity can be described as a special manner and approach to be in the world. Its specificity is defined as skillful receptivity and characterized by sensitivity and persistence against anomalies and disharmony. These qualifications can be developed only because the actors are engaged in their world. «Skilled practitioners respond appropriately to small perturbations that rule-followers miss» (Spinosa et al. p. 179). Skillful practices requires however commitment and anchoring. Thus, entrepreneurial activity is mainly understood as a cultural phenomenon, not as a creative or strategic project.

To understand entrepreneurship as everyday practice has admittedly the great advantage that entrepreneurial activity can be assigned to various social and intellectual domains. That means that theologians, lawyers and librarians can work entrepreneurially and can be trained in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship conceived as the starting point of an independent pedagogy requires however a different teaching philosophy, a changed understanding of roles in the classroom, a flexible institutional framework and, most important of all, a new learning culture (Blenker et al. 2012). One consequence thereof is that teaching to a greater extent must be embedded in practice and in specific activity systems.

Entrepreneurship education is the expansion of everyday practice through a second-order practice. Compared to normal university education lessons in entrepreneurship are to a higher degree embedded in real life activity systems. The content and form of the second-order-practice therefore depend on the values and skills, prevalent in the respective activity systems. How these values and skills can be taught and acquired, will be outlined below with help of the concept of effectuation.

### **Teaching as an effectuation process**

Entrepreneurship education is challenging and provocative, compared to a popular understanding of how learning should be organized and knowledge integrated at higher education institutions.

The basic pattern of institutional learning processes assumes a clear correlation between course objectives, learning and anticipated learning outcome. Knowledge authorities determine in advance what will be taught and in what order. Instructors bring the course objectives into practice. Students act in accordance with the stated goals. Exams are used to monitor the outcome. This process has been portrayed as con-

structive alignment. In Danish higher education establishments Biggs model of constructive alignment has received an overwhelming response, since the elements and phases have been depicted as controllable and manageable. Despite its constructivistic approach the concept of alignment has been criticized as behaviorism. By using operant conditioning the learner is guided to create automatically predefined outcomes or products (Andersen 2010).

First of all, entrepreneurship education doubts the causal planning of learning processes. Instead it is stated that the knowledge to be learned can't be determined in advance. Rather it is the discovery and exploitation of new opportunities or the solution of anomalies that are in the center of entrepreneurial teaching. Engeström (2004) therefore concentrates on radical exploration of not-knowing, Löbler (2006) on «invent new 'road maps' for unknown territories» and Mezirow (1990) on «reassessing the presuppositions on which our beliefs are based and acting on insights derived from the transformed meaning perspective». Entrepreneurship education is excellent in preparing students to exploit contingencies in unstable environments.

The second prerequisite of conventional teaching is also questioned, namely the idea that appropriate prior knowledge is unimportant in regard to the content of the lessons. However, in our experiment «Entrepreneurship and Communication» three questions have been in the middle of classroom activity: «Who I am? What do I know? Whom do I know?» The students' answers to these questions were the starting point for the next learning step: «What I can do?» A main goal of our entrepreneurship education was to motivate the students to determine their own project for the entire course and then explore the project, taking the educational objectives into account (Sarasvathy 2008).

The strength of entrepreneurial education can be made clear by the following comparison. In traditional education the expected results are given and one is looking for the means to achieve these results. In entrepreneurship education some means are given. But the crucial point is to determine which goals that can be achieved by using the available resources. In the first case teaching is considered a linear process. The teachers are administrators and mediators of knowledge. In the second case teaching is dynamic and cyclical. In this case, the teachers change into advisors and facilitators. Focus is on controllable aspects in an unpredictable social environment. The challenge is to prove that entrepreneurship education is not only a politically motivated modernization project, but consistent with basic values of higher education where the explorative ought to be an important element.

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### Joint expertise as basis for educational modernization

As said, entrepreneurship education was alien for RSLIS. Moreover, the instructors should apply methods; they have not been familiar with. It was therefore necessary to carry out the whole course as a sequence of experiments. In the beginning, these experiments were organized as mutual supervision among colleagues.

The classes were conducted by three teachers; they were associated with three experienced colleagues. These colleagues took part because of their interest in experimental teaching methods. But what has been even better, they had no experience with entrepreneurship education at all. RSLIS's concept of peer supervision was well in line with the aims of the experiment and with the state of knowledge defined in the relevant academic literature. Supervision is an accepted method, which is tailored to the individual needs of teachers. According to the literature, the candidate defines some personal issues prior the meeting and makes her questions the basis for a respectful dialogue in the peer group. The central objective for peer supervision aims at mutual dialogue and appreciative criticism are the pivotal ethical aspects of this approach (see Andersen 2011; Bager 2011). Developing a constructive and open learning culture is the positive result.

Peer supervision functioned as expected. All participants, instructors as well as supervisors, have expanded their skills. They became more balanced in their understanding of entrepreneurship education. Nevertheless, it quickly turned out that supervision also had some serious limitations. In supervision attention is paid in particular to personal progress rather than to the development of a common object or process.

However, the peer group's co-responsibility for the entire course, their professionalism and dedication explain the reason why the tasks, processes and roles in the experiment were redefined. Halfway through the course our colleagues changed their focus from attention on the individual competencies to the concept that is the progression in the process and students' learning, and they clearly had had a critical eye on the process.

The new role of the peers can best be described as ardent advocates of contradictions and cross-purposes. Through their dissent they created space for debate. They addressed potential conflicts. And last not least they had the courage to persist and to resist too pragmatic solutions, proposed by the instructors. Most valuable however was that they managed to redirect the teachers' attention to the content of the course. Through their interventions they provoked a more radical and intensive

exploration of the meaning of entrepreneurship education (Elbeshausen et al. 2013).

Modernizing the culture of learning at RSLIS can be described best using Engeström's interpretation of the zone of proximal development (2009). The modifications were the result of a radical exploration of new teaching methods and a struggle for the right to build new trails in education landscape at RSLIS. The entire experiment was an attempt to create a synthesis between university autonomous and social functions. We tried to promote change on the basis of and not by the exclusion of analytical skills, basic skills and professional expertise.

#### Conclusion

The discourse of modernization has been predominant in Higher Education Establishments throughout the last ten years. Proactivity of the political system has enforced structural changes often against the will of the universities. Innovation and entrepreneurship is still prominent on the political agenda. Accelerating globalization and the lack of employment have been used as arguments to implement entrepreneurship as research and teaching activity in higher education.

Universities undertake their educational and research tasks in accordance with their tradition and their self-understanding. This includes autonomous and societal functions. We have argued that the interplay of the autonomous and societal functions depend on cultural factors. It was further assumed that political initiatives need to respect the autonomous and societal functions if a new point of balance shall be established.

It has been shown that the meaning of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education has changed in the policy papers. In the beginning, the discourses were mainly about entrepreneurship education, which was presented as an independent academic study mostly in a business school context. Then entrepreneurship was introduced for special target groups in order to prime individuals for entrepreneurial processes and thinking. RSLIS's approach to the subject can be described as teaching and learning *through* entrepreneurship, since entrepreneurship education was related to the core subjects of library and information science. The approach has been partly to define entrepreneurship as an everyday practice and partly to understand entrepreneurs as individuals who qualify the identification, analysis and solution of anomalies. Working as entrepreneurs means that specific entrepreneurial skills will provide the student with an approach of heightened sensitivity and skilled receptivity.

Over the past three years university teachers at RSLIS have conducted a total of seven courses. Five courses on the master level, two on the bachelor level. The obvious experience is the challenge and patience it

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demands to change to a deep-rooted learning culture, even in spite of the increasing interest in entrepreneurship education among the colleagues. The main reason might be that organizing lessons as an effectuation process is not always in accord with the principle of constructive alignment, upon which most teaching nowadays rests.

Experienced colleagues participated in the course first as supervisors than as ardent advocates of contradictions. They addressed potential conflicts and conceptual cross-purposes, when the teachers were implementing entrepreneurship education. Through their dissent they created a space for debate and functioned as co-contributors and bridge-builders. In short, transparency and openness became a main ingredient in teaching through entrepreneurship at RSLIS. This might be considered as a reconciliation of the universities' autonomous functions with the societal ones and as recognition of the Humboldtian ideal.

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