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Autonomy as the guiding aim of entrepreneurship education

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710

Abstract

Purpose – This paper has three purposes: first, to present a vision of entrepreneurship education that has the student's capacity for autonomous action as its ultimate aim; second, to convince the reader of the timeliness and relevance of such an approach; third, to outline how this can be implemented.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper integrates several strands of literature: research on entrepreneurial autonomy, educational psychology, and entrepreneurship education.

Findings – The importance of autonomy is suggested by research on entrepreneurial motivation and satisfaction, as well as by a range of societal trends that favour increased self-reliance. Two perspectives, self-determination theory and self-directed learning, provide leads about how to put autonomy centre stage in entrepreneurship education. Several implementation-related issues are discussed. These include trade-offs between guidance and freedom, information and pressure, the self and others, and choice and relevance; the effects of student behaviour on autonomy support by faculty; and the suitability of autonomy supportive entrepreneurship education for different kinds of students and educational settings.

Practical implications – Teachers, schools and institutions wishing to adapt this approach need to adopt individualised, empowering approaches.

Originality/value – It is novel to conceive of entrepreneurship education as an exercise in the service of the capacity for autonomous action.

Keywords Entrepreneurialism, Education, Freedom, Students

Paper type Viewpoint

Autonomy represents an inner endorsement of one's actions – the sense that one's actions emanate from oneself and are one's own. Autonomy pertains to the striving to develop and realise personal goals, values and interests (Assor *et al.*, 2002). Autonomy extends beyond having decisional freedoms to being self-aware, knowing what one's dreams and aims are, and acting on those dreams and aims. This essay has as its central argument that autonomy can be a guiding aim in entrepreneurship education. There are three purposes to this essay. First, to present a vision of entrepreneurship education that has the student's capacity for autonomous action as its ultimate aim. Second, to convince the reader of the timeliness and relevance of such an approach. Third, to outline how this could be implemented. It starts out by presenting several arguments to support the view that student autonomy can be an ultimate aim of entrepreneurship education.

1. The relevance of personal autonomy for entrepreneurship education

Entrepreneurship research as well as entrepreneurship education are oriented towards explaining and furthering the financial performance of firms. Yet research of

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entrepreneurial motivation shows not financial gain, but autonomy to be the most often mentioned or most importantly rated motive to start a business (Shane *et al.*, 2003; Van Gelderen and Jansen, 2006). Recent research on work satisfaction shows that this finding cannot be taken for granted. These studies report that the self-employed (and entrepreneurs, as a subgroup of the self-employed) have a higher work satisfaction than the employed (Benz and Frey, 2008a, b; Bradley and Roberts, 2004; Fusch-Schundeln, 2009; Hundley, 2001; Lange, 2010; Prottas, 2008; Schjoedt, 2009). This relationship holds irrespective of income earned or hours worked (Benz and Frey, 2008a), level in the organisation of the employee (Schjoedt, 2009), differences in culture (Benz and Frey, 2008b), and type of business owned (both owners of businesses employing others and independent contractors have higher satisfaction scores)[1]. (Prottas, 2008). Even more interestingly, the difference in satisfaction, can to a large extent be explained by the level of autonomy enjoyed (Benz and Frey, 2008a, b; Hundley, 2001; Lange, 2010; Prottas, 2008; Schjoedt, 2009). Prottas (2008) shows that when employees have comparable levels autonomy, they also have similar satisfaction scores. In sum, the research shows that autonomy is not only a dominant entrepreneurial motivation, but also a dominant source of entrepreneurial satisfaction.

There are more reasons to put autonomy centre stage. According to Gibb (2002a, b), we live in a society where we increasingly need a capacity to cope with and enjoy an enterprising way of life. This way of life is characterized by uncertainty, change, and complexity on the one hand, and by freedom, individual responsibility, and the possibility to reap the fruits of one's own labour on the other. Gibb claims that more and more people are taking part in this enterprising way of life as a result of several powerful trends in the ways in which individuals relate to the state, organizations, and to other individuals, trends that strongly favour self-reliance.

First, some changes increase the attractiveness of the enterprising way of life, for example because of individualisation processes (Gibb 2002a, b). The capability for autonomous action is crucial in light of the "preference" trends. Entrepreneurship students can be expected to have elevated autonomy needs and to cry out for independent action. It is important to stimulate this spirit of autonomy, not to temper it. Second, there are enabling trends, such as the democratisation of production and distribution (Anderson, 2006), and the increased importance of services and knowledge-based business (Gibb, 2002a, b). Autonomy is essential in light of the trends that enable the enterprising way of life: in order to make full use of the possibilities, people must have the capacity for autonomous action. Finally, there are trends that force us into the enterprising way of life, for example, globalization, governmental budget cuts, reduced welfare spending, reduced opportunities for lifelong employment at a single organisation, and the increased use of short term contracts (Gibb, 2002a, b). Autonomy is also crucial for the trends that "force" the enterprising way of life: the capacity for autonomous action is essential to respond effectively to the demands of the world of work.

Autonomy is so strongly associated with entrepreneurship because of the decisional freedoms it entails: one can decide what, how, and when work will be done (Lange, 2010; Prottas, 2008; Schjoedt, 2009). These freedoms arise irrespective whether entrepreneurship takes the form of independent contractorship or businesses employing others. However, autonomy can also be a prerequisite for the fulfilment of other motives. Van Gelderen and Jansen (2006) asked business starters why they want

autonomy. Many indeed like autonomy for the sake of decisional freedoms. However, people also need autonomy because it is instrumental to the fulfilment of other motives. Some are motivated by negative freedom, in the sense that they generally dislike or had recently experienced a difficult boss or stifling organisational rules. Others emphasise the fact that they want to do “their own thing”: for them entrepreneurship offers the opportunity to work in accordance with their own goals, values, tastes and beliefs. Still others emphasise the opportunities that entrepreneurship offers for being in charge, for directing, and for leading instead of being lead.

When these motives are unfulfilled, some may not persist in their entrepreneurial ventures, and conversely, autonomy may spur others to continue on in spite of financial underperformance (Gimeno *et al.*, 1997). The attainment of autonomy cannot be taken for granted or assumed as each underlying motive is paradoxical: instead of working for a boss one has to deal with clients, suppliers, and other stakeholders; one may like to do one’s own thing but customers may like the entrepreneur to work according to their own specifications; one may be in control within one’s company but uncertainty in regard to stakeholders outside of the company can be severe. If autonomy is lacking, entrepreneurs may give up in spite of financial success. Given the fact that autonomy is a dominant motivation and source of satisfaction, far more attention should be paid in entrepreneurship research and education to whether and how autonomy is realised.

Neither can it be assumed that entrepreneurship education furthers autonomy. With an ever-increasing inevitability of the enterprising way of life, business education should not aim to produce graduates that look towards others to take responsibility, that are other-directed, that have an employee attitude. Yet if students do their course work only because they have to, because they feel obliged, or pressured, or merely because they want the degree; if students coursework consists of finding out the teachers’ expectation and then jumping over the required hurdles, then students are not strengthened in their autonomy. On the contrary, it conditions people to become docile followers who look at others to find out what and how to do things. Even worse, the risk of alienation looms, and it may be difficult for people to regain their capacity for autonomous action, as autonomy seems to work in a “use it or lose it” type of fashion (Baumann and Kuhl, 2005).

Entrepreneurship education should aim to get people ready for a leading role in the enterprising way of life, rather than a supporting one. This essay argues that autonomy can be a guiding aim for entrepreneurship education. How can this be achieved? What practices are conducive? Which trade-offs and issues are encountered? These are the questions that this essay will address.

The remainder of this paper reads as follows. First, two perspectives in educational psychology that give central emphasis to autonomy are presented: self-determination theory, and self-directed learning. Then empirical studies of autonomy supportive teacher behaviours and their consequences are reported. Finally, a range of potential implementation issues are discussed that can arise when applying this knowledge to entrepreneurship education.

2. Autonomy in educational psychology

2.1 Perspectives

Students’ motivation reflects both intrapersonal and interpersonal processes (Reeve and Jang, 2006). In general, psychological research has focused on individual

intrapyschic influences on motivation. In contrast, educational research has focused on the teacher behaviours that should be effective in promoting student motivation (Skinner and Belmont, 1993). At the intersection are theories that proceed deductively from the intrapsychic influences on student motivation to analyse the variety of classroom practices that influence these student attitudes and beliefs (Skinner and Belmont, 1993). Two such positions are now discussed: self-determination theory, and self-directed learning.

2.1.1 Self-determination theory. Self-determination theory (SDT) views humans as innately motivated to learn and to develop, as long as the social environment provides for the person's basic psychological needs (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2000). SDT postulates three of those needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The need for autonomy refers to the need to feel a sense of full volition and "choicefulness" regarding one's activities and goals, a feeling that emerges when actions and goals are experienced as emanating from one's authentic self. The need for relatedness refers to the need to feel closely related to other people. The need for competence is the need to be effective in one's interactions with the environment, and to feel that one is capable of mastering challenges (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2000). The theory is mainly concerned with the conditions that support or thwart the innate propensities to be autonomous, related and competent. SDT emphasizes the fact that students' motivation to learn can vary in its relative autonomy, from behaviours motivated by external rewards and punishments (controlled motivation) to those that are energized by interests and values (autonomous motivation)

SDT distinguishes four types of extrinsic motivation. Externally regulated behaviours are performed to satisfy an external demand or obtain an externally imposed reward contingency. A second type of extrinsic motivation is introjected regulation. Introjection describes a type of internal regulation that is controlling because people perform such actions with a feeling of pressure in order to avoid guilt or anxiety or to attain ego-enhancements or pride. A more autonomous, or self-determined, form of extrinsic motivation is regulation through identification. Here, the person has identified with the personal importance of a behaviour and has thus accepted its regulation as his or her own. Finally, the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation. Integration occurs when identified regulations have been fully brought into congruence with one's values and needs. Integrated motivation shares many qualities with intrinsic motivation. However, in intrinsic motivation behaviour is done for its own sake, whereas in integrated regulation behaviour is done for its presumed instrumental value with respect to some outcome that is separate from the behaviour, even though it is volitional and valued by the self (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2000). Both evidence and theory suggest that the more one's motivation is autonomous, the more quality of learning, persistence, and affective experience are enhanced (Niemic and Ryan, 2009).

The achievement of enterprising goals typically requires a mixture of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation: some aspects are intrinsically motivating but it is not all fun and games. Enterprising goals are typically mid-range goals that are effortful to enact work and often require the overcoming of obstacles, competing temptations, or just plain inertia (Sheldon and Elliot, 1998). Sometimes the goals may be intrinsically motivating but the means to get there may require internalization and identification.

Understanding how to facilitate autonomous motivation is a critical educational agenda in SDT (Niemiec and Ryan, 2009).

2.1.2 Self-directed learning. Where SDT is concerned with how autonomous motivation can be promoted through identification and integration processes, in contrast, self-directed learning (SDL) takes autonomous motivation as its starting point. It claims that the student has decision rights in the setting of learning goals, activities, and outcome evaluations (Knowles, 1975). Individuals select, manage, and assess their own learning activities, which can be pursued at any time, in any place, through any means, at any age. SDL involves, perhaps counter-intuitively, extensive collaboration with teachers and peers (Brookfield, 1985). Learning environments that foster SDL are believed to promote deep-level processing because learners have the freedom to choose what they learn and how they learn it (Knowles, 1975). SDL has been applied to entrepreneurship education by Bird (2002), who asks her students to design and execute a learning contract in which they identify the competencies that they want to develop, and the activities that are necessary for them to undertake.

In SDL, the teacher seems to have a mere facilitating role. However, SDL proponents have also made clear that without teacher support, students may stagnate in their learning (Brookfield, 1985), and that students need their teachers to help them become self-directed. Section 3.1 will go more deeply into the tension between guidance and freedom. SDT and SDL have inspired a wide range of autonomy supportive practices. These will now be discussed.

2.2 Autonomy supportive practices and their effects

A first practice of autonomy supportive teachers is to proceed from the aims, abilities, and preferences of the student. They ask, inquire into, and acknowledge what their students want and need, what their goals, values and interests are; and proceed from there (Reeve and Jang, 2006). Learning activities are then tied to each person's individual context. Whenever possible, the educator takes actions that help students to grasp the contribution of their work to the realisation of their personal goals, interests, and values. Thus, the personal relevance of learning activities is made explicit (Assor and Kaplan, 2001; Assor *et al.*, 2002; Skinner and Belmont, 1993). Autonomy supportive teachers are also open to feedback and critique from students as this allows them to link educational activities to individual circumstances, interests and aims (Assor *et al.*, 2002; Reeve *et al.*, 2004).

Sometimes educational activities cannot be integrated into a student's aims, ambitions or needs because these have not yet been developed by the student. In this situation, autonomy supportive teachers aim at identification, the next type of autonomous motivation according to SDT. Rationales are offered why the activity is important (Reeve *et al.*, 2004; Reeve and Jang, 2006) without referring to the student's unique personal situation (Stefanou *et al.*, 2004).

The provision of choice is also an important autonomy supportive practice, especially if it allows the student to choose those activities that are personally relevant (Assor *et al.*, 2002). Self-initiation of learning activities is stimulated (Grolnick and Ryan, 1987). Encouraging independent thinking (Assor and Kaplan, 2001) and allowing students to find their own solutions to puzzles or problems (Stefanou *et al.*, 2004) are other examples of autonomy supporting practices that provide students leeway. Choice can also refer to organisational or procedural aspects, such as seating

arrangements in the classroom, deadlines, working methods, and sequencing (Ames, 1992; Reeve and Jang, 2006; Skinner and Belmont, 1993; Stefanou *et al.*, 2004). Research has repeatedly shown that choice by itself is not enough to support student's autonomy, and is of lesser important to the provision of (personal) relevance (Assor and Kaplan, 2001; Assor *et al.*, 2002; Stefanou *et al.*, 2004). Section 3.4 will delve deeper into this issue.

Autonomy supportive teachers minimise the use of controls (Katz and Assor, 2007; Reeve and Jang, 2006; Skinner and Belmont, 1993). This applies both to controls aimed at extrinsic motivation (punishments, bonuses) and at introjected controlled motivation (inducing guilt, shame, public comparisons with peers). They refrain from close surveillance and frequent intrusions (Assor and Kaplan, 2001; Assor *et al.*, 2002). In contrast, controlling teachers influence students' ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving in ways consistent with behaviour modification programs. For them, the idea is to establish an agenda of what students should and should not do and then shape students toward that agenda by using external contingencies and pressuring language (Reeve and Jang, 2006).

In terms of evaluation practices, autonomy supportive teachers emphasize individual improvement and development (rather than generic norms), and to this end they provide informational (rather than controlling) feedback (Ames, 1992, Reeve *et al.*, 2004; Reeve and Jang, 2006). They recognize effort, and they allow for errors to be made as mistakes are seen as part of learning (Ames, 1992). Self-monitoring is strongly encouraged. Evaluations are kept private rather than ranking classmates in percentile scores. Finally, autonomy supportive teachers typically do not practice the above in isolation but also create a warm, safe climate (in response to relational needs) and make sure that challenges are optimal to each person (in response to competence needs). Learning is seen as a social activity and students are encouraged to share and to learn from each other.

The primary aim of autonomy supportive practices is to allow students to work from their own inner motivational resource base. Contradicting the expectancy-valence approach to achievement behaviour, which does not distinguish between autonomous and controlled motivation, research finds that autonomous motivation is related to increased levels of engagement (Niemic and Ryan, 2009; Reeve and Jang, 2006; effort, persistence (Reeve and Jang, 2006; Sheldon and Elliot, 1998), self-directedness, flexibility and creativeness (Sheldon and Elliot, 1998), deep-level learning (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Niemic and Ryan, 2009), personal goal attainment (Sheldon and Elliot, 1998), and well-being (Reeve and Jang, 2006). These outcomes are directly relevant for enterprising behaviour, as this tends to be risky and effortful to enact, encounters obstacles along the way, is self-starting, requires flexibility, creative approaches and continuous learning, and is tied to personal goals and beliefs (Gibb, 1993).

3. Implementation trade-offs and issues

3.1 Guidance and freedom

Autonomy as the guiding principle of entrepreneurship education may appear to suggest that students are best left alone to pursue their own learning processes. However, autonomy support is not about undirected, unguided learning (Grolnick and Ryan, 1987; Loyens *et al.*, 2008). In fact students, paradoxically perhaps, want their teachers to help them become more self-directed (Loyens *et al.*, 2008). As Assor *et al.*

(2002) state, autonomy support is not about the minimisation of guidance and consultation by educators, so as to leave sufficient space for the emergence of the student's true self, but about taking an active emphatic role in helping them to develop and realise personal goals. Individuation and identity-formation processes do not require detachment from supportive others (Assor and Kaplan, 2001). Teachers can offer new vistas, alternative ways to view the world (Brookfield, 1985). Students may be caught in narrowly defined frameworks of thought and action (Brookfield, 1985). Moreover, their goals may be emergent, rather than known. Without teacher guidance, learning may stagnate (Mezirow, 1985).

The question is therefore how to balance guidance and freedom: to optimise individual autonomy whenever possible, without excluding guidance. Solutions to the tension between instruction and autonomy can be found in course design features that individualise entrepreneurship education. One solution is, paradoxically, to require students to develop goals and tasks that they are motivated to do. Another one is to assign a right to students to replace assignments and readings with ones that they feel to have a better fit. The opposite problem may also arise, namely where the teachers intends to support autonomy but the student demands teacher-directed learning. Section 3.6 delves into this issue.

3.2 Information versus pressure

Autonomy supportive teachers aim to provide feedback that relates to each person's circumstances and psychology. However, there is a thin line between informational and controlling feedback. Two examples are the use of praise and hints. Praise can be used as a controlling extrinsic reward in which social approval and positive evaluation act as contingent rewards for right answers and acceptable behaviours. Teachers also use praise as positive informational feedback to affirm the student's progress, improvement, or task mastery (Reeve and Jang, 2006). Similarly, hints represent a teacher's instructional effort to provide students with information when they are stuck. Hints can support the student's own learning processes. However, they can also be taken as directives and as indications of "the right answer". The difficulty is that whether praise or hints act in support of autonomy or becomes controlling depends on the perception of the student. Praise and hints may be intended as supporting autonomy, but can be interpreted as controlling, perhaps especially by independence-driven entrepreneurship students. Autonomy supportive teachers stress the informational value of their feedback.

3.3 The self and others

Autonomy may carry an association with singular, soloistic behaviour. Both SDT and SDL emphasize that this is not the case. SDT posits three basic needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Ryan and Deci (2000) argue that autonomy without relatedness is problematic, just as the next section, 3.4., will discuss that autonomy without competence is problematic. SDL research shows that successful self-directed learners place their learning within a social context, and other people are cited as the most important learning resource (Brookfield, 1985). A personalised approach makes it interesting to engage with other students. Peers and fellow learners provide information, serve as skill models, and act as reinforcers of learning and as counsellors at times of crisis (Brookfield, 1985). A community of learning thus emerges.

This focus on social embeddedness fits well with the enterprising way of life. Being enterprising is about creating value for others, especially in the case of social entrepreneurship. Moreover, the enterprising way of life strongly requires networking and influence competencies. A community of learners can practice these competencies, and itself becomes a vital and important network of enterprising individuals.

3.4 Choice and relevance

Research has shown that organisational or procedural choice by itself is not enough to support student's autonomy, and is of lesser importance than the provision of (personal) relevance (Assor and Kaplan, 2001; Assor *et al.*, 2002). Teachers who provide choice create a space that allows students to exercise their autonomy. However, it is possible that many students do not know what to do in this open space. Encouraging independent thinking (Assor and Kaplan, 2001) and allowing students to find their own solutions to puzzles or problems (Stefanou *et al.*, 2004) also presuppose a certain level of competence.

Choice must thus not only support autonomy but also competence. Just as Ryan and Deci (2000) argue that autonomy without relatedness is problematic, so too is autonomy without competence. Competence can be enhanced by creating challenges that are neither too easy nor too difficult. An individualised approach helps to match choices to each person's capability, circumstances, and zone of proximal development.

3.5 Reciprocal effects: influences of students on faculty

Thus far this analysis has reported autonomy supportive practices that have been found to influence students. The question arises whether student behaviour influences autonomy support of faculty. If a student does not respond well to autonomy support, will the teacher step up his or her efforts, or instead resort to more controlling methods? Skinner and Belmont (1993) found evidence for the latter pattern. Students who show higher initial levels of behavioural engagement receive even more subsequent autonomy support, and students who show lower initial levels of behavioural engagement subsequently receive less. Skinner and Belmont (1993) acknowledge that passivity can be interpreted as lack of internal motivation, which leads teachers to apply increased coercion to participate in classroom activities. Although understandable, this suggests that students who are behaviourally disengaged receive teacher responses that undermine their motivation even further. Most notably, students low in autonomous self-regulation have been found to benefit from autonomy support (Black and Deci, 2000). This raises the question whether each and every entrepreneurship student is ready for autonomy support.

3.6 Is autonomy support suitable for every student?

A lack of readiness for autonomy support may arise out of preference or out of inability. First, as noted by Bird (2002), students often prefer teacher-directed learning, having a long history of passive learning. Many want to know exactly where the bar is set to get an "A", "B" or "C", and to follow the most efficient pathway to that goal. Business students may be especially susceptible to having extrinsic goals (Vansteenkiste *et al.*, 2006). Just like other students, entrepreneurship students want to graduate and they like to know what gets them there. However, an entrepreneurship student without a drive for autonomous action is a bit of a contradiction. It is difficult

to see why someone who is strongly other-directed would want to graduate as an entrepreneurship student. If students are not ready for autonomy support because they prefer to be teacher-led, then they may be asked to reflect on their suitability as entrepreneurship students.

A second issue is that students may feel unable to cope with entrepreneurship education aimed at furthering the capacity for autonomous action (Stefanou *et al.*, 2004). As discussed in section 3.4., course activities need to be tied to individual levels of academic competence. Moreover, students are asked to develop a strong sense of self as autonomy pertains to striving to develop and realise personal goals, values and interests (Assor *et al.*, 2002). Students may not yet know themselves sufficiently enough. But this is exactly an area where autonomy supportive teaching can explore and experiment. Students may have possible selves (Markus and Nurius, 1986), which they might like to explore in the context of entrepreneurship. Depending on their outlook, they may design the type of entrepreneurship that is right for them (Sarasvathy, 2004).

3.7 Is autonomy support suitable for every type and level of entrepreneurship education? Gibb (1999) distinguishes three aims of entrepreneurship education. The first is to learn to understand entrepreneurship: what it is, what entrepreneur's do, why they are needed, and such. The second aim is to become entrepreneurial as a person: to take responsibility of learning, career, and life. The third aim is to become an entrepreneur: how to start and manage and business. Entrepreneurship education as an exercise in the strengthening of autonomy refers foremost to the second aim, learning to become entrepreneurial. However, the other two aims are obviously important if enterprising initiatives want to do well. Having the central focus on the capacity for autonomous action will mean that the personal relevance of course activities serving the first and the third aim are enhanced, which furthers integrated and identified regulation.

Another issue is whether autonomy guided entrepreneurship education may be especially suitable for students at university. In comparison to students in vocational education, university students are trained to develop independent and critical thinking skills, and rely more on self-management to conduct their studies. In these respects university students may have a head start. On the other hand it should be noted that students in vocational education live the same enterprising way of life (Gibb, 2002a, b) as university students do. They are equally in need of a developed capacity for autonomous action.

4. Conclusion

What does it mean if an entrepreneurship student graduates with straight As? Obviously, one expects this student to have gained knowledge about various aspects of entrepreneurship in general and of setting up a new venture in particular. But unlike a medical doctor, an engineer or an accountant, the fulfilment of graduation criteria does not result in a qualification for the profession. Perhaps foremost, the top student in entrepreneurship can be expected to have a developed capacity for autonomous action. This paper has presented several arguments for putting autonomy centre stage, has offered theories and practices that aim at autonomy support, and discussed various implementation issues.

Key to students experiencing and exercising their sense of autonomy are educational processes that individualise and empower (Gibb, 2007). Autonomy may serve as a generic focus for entrepreneurship education, yet it can only be practiced and developed in circumstances and conditions that are unique to each individual. Rather than decontextualising education in the belief that learning in abstract form will promote generalization, autonomy supportive teachers, attempt to present learning activities in individualised contexts (Cordova and Lepper, 1996).

Unfortunately, today's pressures on the educational system put severe strains on the individualisation of education. Budget cuts typically result in standardisation and less attention for individual student circumstances, needs and preferences. Increased use of high stakes testing has been documented to result in teachers and schools feeling pushed into implementing controlling strategies rather than being concerned with individual students' self-determination. Entrepreneurship education without a strong focus on autonomy is doing individual students and society at large a disservice. The entrepreneurs of tomorrow face elevated levels of uncertainty and risk. They need a fully developed capacity for autonomous action to have a fighting chance.

Note

1. In this paper the term entrepreneurship refers to both.

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