Education and Entrepreneurship: Methods Associated to Teaching

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Abstract: The paper presents reflections related to the concept of entrepreneurship associated with teaching, where method is understood as a distinct perception of teaching and learning, especially regarding the issue of pedagogical practices that enable student engagement, building a sense of belonging and student leadership in the university environment.

Key words: entrepreneurship, education, teaching, student engagement

1. Introduction

In this article, we present some reflections and elements and the question that is commonly associated to the issue of teacher entrepreneurship regarding pedagogical practices: what is the method that defines it as entrepreneurial regarding pedagogical aspects, considering the actions/resources that enable student engagement?

We begin with some defining assumptions: a) the entrepreneurial professor should facilitate learning, the enjoyment of the process, to find oneself in it; b) to develop their internal, autonomous process, self-fulfillment and to live; c) to develop and cultivate love and the ability to love; and d) to understand fear and how it controls us individually and socially.

Over the course of this paper, we establish connections between the theoretical background and the authors’ experiences in order to incorporate these questions regarding the entrepreneurial professor to discussions previously published and debated in other places, in order to address the question that guides our research: is it possible to train an entrepreneurial professor? In this complex and thought-provoking context, we rely on the possible cartography and analysis of teaching experiences that merge in order to provide an original shape to the old and still complex dilemma between teaching and innovation. Are we willing to face this opportunity and this change?

Far from disputing the usefulness of current methods and disregarding the comfort they provide, the proposed narrative is a tentative analysis. It is a boldness to launch ideas in an era of competitiveness in the national academic environment, frequently hostile to new teaching proposals, especially on the part of professors, coordinators, directors, among others. In order to overcome this resistance, one should innovate and suggest how to take on endeavors in the classroom, in a process of fulfillment. This should be done without guilt due to excessive bureaucracy and operational costs, or due to the lack of activity spaces and program content misaligned with experience. Doing and redoing the same thing in order to find new meanings is the divergence that one looks

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for, a certain “indisciplinarity” that enables a breaking of paradigms in order to shift the idea-action-result circuit, creativity, that which is still not determined, which makes the new emerge.

Entrepreneurial education should guarantee its place with other disciplines, from other sciences, in order to fight against the obscurantist claims that reduce thinking or confuse imagination and creativity with the ability to observe, repeat and copy. From this perspective, the entrepreneurial professor needs to reinvent himself, learn to teach and correct himself, regardless of the error, because he is learning. Hyper-modernity and the virtual possibilities of reality break down the demands on customs offering to these new leaders the possibility of representing themselves in various ways, asserting a legitimacy of differences, changing people’s attitudes, since everyone knows what they want to be and what they are. We can live without knowing how to apply algorithms but, we cannot live without engaging, either in person or virtually coordinating their differences and the solutions that emerge in a new world with no guarantees and with no guaranteed reasons.

2. The Entrepreneurial Professor and the Method

In science, in general, the scientific method includes a series of coded steps that need to be taken, more or less schematically, in order to achieve a determined scientific objective. A method is the same as an action, algorithm, function, or procedure. More specifically, in object-oriented programming, it is an implementation of a code in response to certain messages. For Nascimento and Romero (2008, p. 51) “[…] the word method is usually used to define a set of procedures that outline the path(s) to be taken.” The method is a logical form of thought. Even when applied in the singular, the term method involves a set of techniques, not referring to only one of them. The method aims to answer the “how” of the work, while the objectives answer what is being investigated. The word method derives from the Greek methodos, formed by meta = to and hodos = path. Therefore, the method points out, or indicates, the path to be taken. However, some authors (Vergara, 2006; Collins & Hussey 2005; Gonçalves & Meirelles, 2004) use the two words, method and methodology. While method is a set of procedures used to solve a specific problem, a methodology can be understood as the study of the method, the science that studies research methods. Therefore, to explain what is meant by the entrepreneurial method, we briefly explain its etymology. We prefer in this sense, to apply the word method to indicate the set of procedures, techniques or operations, with a logic of thought and cognition, capable of building and supporting the process of scientific knowledge, answering a set of questions and thus accomplishing research goals or a proposed action. The method is also a process used by a trend in theatrical performance, in which the actor tries to recreate the conditions in which the characters operate within the work to be represented, in order to make the acting more plausible”.

On the explanatory path of the objectivity of how to do things, when they exist independently, if we or the students know them, and we or they know them or can learn them, or learn about them through perception or reason, it is important to make a reference here to René Descartes (1619) when we consider an entrepreneurial method. The entrepreneurial professor should make their work their greatest activism, to believe in the idea of co-creation as a continuous act of various moments of regeneration, to know how to enhance the moment of discovery because this is the learning moment: that instant of a few seconds in which the student involved in the experience forms an idea and an image and a concept without a determinant, which they never forget, because it emerged from experimentation and from doing. And it is here that Descartes (1999, pp. 53–69) claims, in the second part of Discourse on Method, to consider man in a historical context, the coherence of a position between an interpretation and an exposition, to see what the coherence is, to understand the limit and face the
impossibilities of everything and anything and to declare his intention to show his dissatisfaction and the paths that he took to answer his questions.

Descartes wishes to show the method that he chose, his exposition is not a model, but an intellectual autobiography: a narrative of past events in which an individual reports his reformation in the habits of rationalizing and perceiving the physical universe. The main rules of the method are in this part. Prevention and distrust are clear in relation to everything that was taught to us and that we learn subconsciously, before making full use of our reason. A suspicion that reveals the essence of Cartesianism, the belief in an atemporal reason, that would be possible to restore in its purity and integrity, as long as everything that is due to teaching, reading, and education were excluded from it.

3.1 Presenting the Meaning of the Entrepreneurial Method

When considering this still existing double process, tradition and entrepreneurial, we enter a period of great theoretical uncertainty, characterized by the sub-theorization of emerging phenomena and by the obsolescence of existing theories. This is the period in which we find ourselves. This theoretical deficit constitutes a major challenge for professors, students and social scientists, in short, educators. The presentation of this method is an attempt at a possible answer to this challenge. As claimed by Boaventura Santos (2000, p. 107) when referring to an ecology of knowledge; “[...] that a new emancipatory political culture aimed at society and at a high-intensity democracy is necessary. It indicates that we need to build a paradigm of prudent knowledge for a decent life.”

“The dominant paradigm” addresses the model of rationalism inherited from the 16th century and consolidated in the 19th century, which, for Boaventura de Sousa Santos (Filosofia Expressa, 2017, “Expressed Philosophy”), is a totalitarian method, in which it was believed that we could include all knowledge by using a rigorous scientific method. As an example, we have Descartes, who was extremely satisfied with his progress on the scientific path in pursuit of a universal truth.

This was a process of hyper-scientificization. To escape it and regain the knowledge and the emancipation, a second epistemological rupture is necessary in order to transform scientific knowledge (all-encompassing and anti-democratic) into a new common sense. Its main characteristics are its practicality and pragmatism, its transparency, its indisciplinary and non-methodical nature and, finally, this new common sense should be rhetorical and metaphoric (Santos, 2000, p. 108). It is in this perspective that the entrepreneurial method assumes the foundation of Santos (2000) by associating the dimensions of solidarity, participation, pleasure, authorship and discourse artifactuality. The dimensions of solidarity and participation are related to the principle of community and other experiences of imagination and creativity that are related to the aesthetic-expressive rationality. The dimension of participation is of particular interest to us, since it deals with an awareness of the limitation imposed by a strict definition of the realm of the policies of institutional norms and curricula, social placements to create a new imagination, a new creativity, an organism capable of imaginatively elaborating our experience, in other words, to walk towards another person, as an equal or as something different.

In presenting this meaning, in which theoretical-methodological contributions are proposed, we want to emphasize that the use of classical methodological elements cannot be abandoned because, while there is a perspective of enthusiasm for entrepreneurship on the life-freedom-path, one cannot forgo methodological procedures and precautions in a sudden, hastened, impulsive process. Since this proposal involves accepting the risk and dangers that it offers through individuality and responsibility in order to produce creativity, productivity and freedom, one should be protected from internal barbarism, to work on a self-confidence that is not shaken by
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the context and by intersubjectivity. Some literature sells the ideology that entrepreneurship is the solution for everything and anything is possible. It is in this sense that a method is considered in its strategic development, which is a “procedure” as a “methodological precaution”, to use a term by Foucault (1989, pp. 209–227), which is a guarantee, something important like a technique and is the element that limits discretion. It is the procedure that guarantees tolerance to the intolerant. Considering that there is something in our human condition that is excessive given the pluralisms and polyphonies that enhance situations, making tasks more complex. Therefore, strength will be necessary, because the decision that will be made is not always the best one. This is a concern that I want to explain regarding the methodological choice of the entrepreneurial professor.

In this proposal of a theoretical construction of the methodological procedure, that the entrepreneurial professor can use, two interpretations can be inferred. To elaborate the experience and the knowledge that will stimulate perception, representation and communication, which will enable students to elucidate our thoughts, to proposition internally and to other people, to analyze “saying” and “showing”. The philosopher Wittgenstein (1994, p. 112) distinguished these two methods of communication and representation in order to proposition. Saying, in the sense of making a proposition, is affirmative and requires a narrow association of the logical and syntactic structure with what is being affirmed. Showing is not affirmative. It presents information directly, in a non-symbolic way, but, as Wittgenstein was forced to admit, it does not have a grammar or basic syntactic structure. Communication strengthened by verbal language allow combinations of words without meaning, but the representation, showing, does not allow representations without meaning. Similarly, the language of design does not allow representations without meaning. Therefore, for some students, even if partly incapable of speaking or understanding language or speech, there can be a perfect perception of the experience if it is done or shown, preserving their intellectual capacity to think logically and systematically, to plan, remember, foresee and conjecture, preventing the professor from treating them as dyslexics or aphasics, despite their manifest intelligence.

Consider student talking to be a form of expression, a description of what they do with what they are feeling, which stimulates a more complete exploration of the experience. Theory, or science seen from the perspective of human experience, on a path that mixes, at the same time rigorously and affectively, technical information about hard or human theories, makes learning more pleasurable, despite inevitable dramas. Entrepreneurship is not a new “Theology” or a new gospel. Consequently, one should not talk in the classroom as if it were an act of faith or hope, mystical in nature, pedagogical or moral, that which represents and develops theater genres linked to magical thought. The entrepreneurial professor cannot be a preacher, wanting worlds that do not exist. The entrepreneurial professor does not propose an amnesia of identity, substituting an existence with fiction. But they should be aware of the need for and conservatism of thought. Consequently, the method of conversation. For Maturana (2002, p. 167) “[… ] the word converse comes from the union of two Latin roots: Cum, which means “with”, and versare which means ‘to go around with’ the other”. In this precise meaning, conversation or “going around together” with those who converse, there are emotions, language, a flow of recurring interactions, behaviors or body postures involved. They are like consensual elements in the flow of consensual coordinations of conduct, which form our perception, producing indelible, profound and permanent learning. In sum, what is done through conversation and parlance has consequences on our body dynamics and awareness. Said another way, conversations constitute operations in the domain of existence, as living things, for those who participate in language, such that the flow of their bodily changes, rationale and connection, posture and emotions, has to do with the content of their conversation and with reasoning (Maturana, 2002, pp. 168–169).
The challenge is not in doing what is best for us, but for those who will live in the future. Are we willing to face this opportunity? To this end, it is necessary to do and redo the same thing in order to search for something new, imagination and creativity. To develop a system capable of imaginatively creating our experience by working with the unique subject through alterity. Creativity in this sense is an attitude about life, a spontaneous manifestation of usefulness. In everyday life and in many learning systems, it is as if reason and the logic of reason had a transcendent foundation, and, as if this foundation attributed universal validity to our rational arguments. However, the transcendence that I want to highlight here in the entrepreneurial method is the ability to sacrifice (not in the religious sense) a new “sacred”, a new love in the name of a creation as a continuous act, of various moments of regeneration. Under these circumstances, it is the legitimation of risk, its acceptance and the dangers that it offers to individuality and responsibility. It is the nominalization of creativity, qualifying subjectivities, individualities, talent and effort, showing students that they can do what they have not been able to do. Any operation or change in how an organism operates in relation to an environment, in any domain in which the observer distinguishes this operation or change, is a behavior or action in this domain, which are products of acting on an attitude or behavior (Maturana, 2002, p. 171).

As this process takes place, in this flow, the experience broadens on a contingent path, emerging with life and creativity. It is a product of the moment of discovery that brings together talent and effort that presents something new, which changes the world. It is a need to transgress the truths that extend time and create new objects of dialogue causing surprise, thus generating creation. It is inventing. It is in this moment that the intervention of the entrepreneurial professor makes sense because it is this experience that generates creativity. Creativity emerges from doubts, uncertainty and questions; it comes from the productivity of wanting to work, from freedom in experimenting, playing and sharing. This is what changes attitudes, sharing information, thinking differently about how to face challenges in the future, and showing productivity. It is the emergence of a speaker’s ability to produce and understand an immense number of utterances, even those that have not been heard or uttered before. It is a freedom from fear and a sense of solitude. Entrepreneurial professors thus search for social gestures, stimulate the creative being in order to innovate, to do something different. They are teaching to invent and experiment. It is an exercise of the co-creation-interactivity-approximation circuit. It is an entrepreneurial attitude.

Entrepreneurial professors, more like counselors, need to provide support and emphasis to the leading role of students, to their direct, participatory and reflective involvement in all stages of the process by experimenting, designing, creating, inducing and deducing. Technology and flexibility, sharing spaces, times, materials and techniques constitute this process of strengthening competencies that adapt students to each personalized and shared activity, in which sharing produces a change in attitude in order to think differently, and this experimentation leads to productivity and innovation, which prepares them to live in the future and offers them the possibility of representing themselves in various ways. Innovation should be constant in the method in order to provoke the potential that it brings to students.

A necessary characteristic or condition of the entrepreneurial method that should be part of a professor’s set of intelligences is the ability and the potential to motivate their students and awaken their acceptance of belonging to something, to pursue engagement, whether on location, in knowledge, in their colleagues, in participation and social interaction. There is an identification of belonging to something, in which time is not wasted among them, that which does not alienate them, but lets them live knowing or learning about social, political and cultural factors that condition them and the intimate impulses that lead them to act the way they act. At the same time, they are enabled to discover themselves without being imprisoned in the way that others see them, though without a
doubt, without one another, they will be nobody. Belonging, or the feeling of belonging that creates the desired engagement is the establishment of an inter-subjective belief in a common origin that unites distinct individuals in a legitimate dream, an action, a cause composed of virtues, in order to consider themselves members of a collective in which symbols and achievements express values, fears and aspirations. This feeling may highlight cultural characteristics and integrate values, ideas, objectives, which creates a passion that is connected to “reality” or the “outside world”. They are observed through our desires and establish commitments. It is this continuous flow that leads to a cause, collectively making individual irrationalities rational, and transforming a power into action and cooperation. Belonging consists of a virtuous circle of pursuing an identification of belonging to something and, in order to belong to something, this desire must exist in others, to spend time with one another. It is about acceptance, what we are after, the desire to be desired as Lacan (1988) would say in removing the feeling of abandonment from their conventional context (denotative) and move it to a new field of meaning (connotative), a motive or need, a similarity existing between people. It is about helping others build their identity, to give meaning to their work and be responsible for their individuality, it is the personification of love. In other words, it is offering to others that which that cannot be given and that which is not asked for. In Figure 1, we organize a summary of our understanding of how these elements are connected (the behavior of desire and the need for belonging) in building a process of identification.

THE HUMAN NEED TO BELONG

Figure 1  The Need to Belong. The Awakening of Motivation
Source: Authors (2018)

These decisive dimensions in the part of identity and space occupied by the student and professor, in a relation between cared for and caregiver that brings the individual closer to the realities that surround them and the ability to satisfy a significant aspect of thinking that establishes the necessary coordinates for the unequivocal
determination of a point in space for doing. This validates the needs of students, individually and collectively, in a set of diagonals in a matrix and, in the sequence of matrices, that is, in the internal circuits of internal coders and decoders of each one, which transform the signs of primary molds in the matrix representation of a group, producing an indelible, permanent, original recording of sounds and/or images in the reproduction of copies in the form of attitudes, feelings and consequences, a memory that cannot be destroyed or any other support shown to be inclusive. It is about a purpose, value, importance of a duty to feel like part of something larger. Engagement produces and reproduces the diagonal matrix in which all elements of the diagonal are equal. It is the identity, square matrix in which all the elements are equal to zero, except for those on the main diagonal, which are equal to the unit, a diagonal matrix in which all the elements of the diagonal are equal to one; one unit, the unit matrix, is the belonging engagement. This feeling of belonging should be worked on from early on. In figure 1, the mention of the name Ford refers to Henry Ford, the major American industrial entrepreneur who had a dream of building a major enterprise in the Amazon in 1927, which could have worked if he had not encountered some problems. One of them was when he tried to implement the North American lifestyle among the Brazilian workers, providing homes in this style, food typical from the USA and a work model to which they were not accustomed. This was a major source of dissatisfaction and led to some conflicts, one of them becoming well-known due to the implementation of the American diet with spinach and hamburgers. Another problem that had a major impact was the inexperience in cultivating rubber trees. Without much botanical knowledge, the Americans had major problems with plagues in their plantations. In this sense, the dream was legitimate. What could have been taken advantage of in some way was forgotten and just became an abandoned place, due to arrogance, presumptuousness and ignorance of local, environmental and cultural identities, without the engagement of local workers who felt unsupported, belonging to something that did not make sense to them.

This is still a distant reality but it needs to be achieved if we really want to accomplish a potential development and an entrepreneurial pedagogy, which broadly involves the spheres of education, economics, politics, society and culture. We must focus on the need to stimulate the feeling of engagement and belonging, since it is lacking in our society. In this precise sense, it is a fact that the value that one puts on a place is fundamental for its development and for people’s learning.

Young people are the foundation of a nation and a nation begins in a location, whether urban or rural. They increase their participation and commitment when they take part and are involved, obligated to go along with it in order not to cause damage, obligated reciprocally to participate, value and demand a quality education, defending ideas, values or places that are felt beyond the walls, locations, cities or schools because this space belongs to them and this is where “we are”.

Therefore, this is the importance of knowing in order to value. Knowing the local history is a form of appreciating the present by finding in the past examples that inspire future actions. Those who know also care for and preserve that which produces the feeling of belonging. It may be a utopian theory, but it means that we need to feel like we belong to some place and at the same time feel that this place belongs to us. This is the embryo of a utopia, where we take a leap into the darkness of all that is known against everything that is still not known, which generates a dense space-time. This way, we believe that we can intervene and, more than anything, that it is worth intervening in the routine and in the paths of this place.

The feeling of belonging from a perspective of professor and student engagement is frequently guided by limits, uncertainties and concerns, whose guiding nucleus is the space/representation association of its production. A perspective that is in constant confrontation with institutions, curricula, experiences, locations, norms, etc., that
pushes forward and pushes back sensitivity, is the approach, acceptance and love of the subject in the face of each discovery, each comparison, every fear and every anger. This perspective, at the same time, limits, shows itself to be important to the necessary correspondence with the world and life. A correspondence that, as J. Ortega Y Gasset (1945, p. 96) claims, “[...] is established between the dynamic opening of life and the meaning that the world can offer to the aspirations of this perspective”.

4. Conclusion

The formation and training of an entrepreneurial mind and the feelings of belonging, in particular, is grounded in interactions of the “continually being” transformer that recognizes that it is in the world and does not dominate all variables. It is a mind that gives meaning to the world, which builds a network of senses, which is conscious of thinking and is alert against dehumanization, which is vigilant in relation to the choices it makes and knows where its responsibilities are. It is as Damásio affirms (2018, p. 38) “[...] It is a nervous system that does not form a mind on its own, but in cooperation with the rest of its organism, "that his brain is not the only source of the mind".

The engagement, the entrepreneurial action and the feeling of belonging, the subjective experiences in an entrepreneurial mind that unfolds the thinking, are the catalysts of the responses that initiate the entrepreneurial pedagogies that motivate the human innovations, which identify causes, ways of interacting, which transform and give meaning, sense, establish differentiations, make choices and take risks. We can say that these feelings associated with entrepreneurial practices and the teaching of teachers delivered to conjectures and Dazzleness are the mental representatives that give humans the aptitude to live with themselves and with others who identify that we are Plural and we have to bear witness to the uniqueness of others, recognizing plurality, testimony of the difference, is the exercise of freedom, political exercise of commitment to transparency; Is the commitment to myself and the other that are the ways in which teaching and learning face the drama of change, innovation and creativity. It’s the process of becoming. It happens when the goal for the individual walks when he is free and accepts himself and the limitations in which experience gradually becomes a more accepted interior reference point, to which one can return to obtain increasingly appropriate significations. The entrepreneurial teacher is the one who frees, who does not intend to teach, but let others learn, which appropriates the right to learn.

It is in this perspective that it is understood to be fundamental for the development of the entrepreneurial mentality that the entrepreneurial professor take their students to visit other environments, showing them what reality is like in other contexts, whether academic or corporate. This is done to understand the transformations of real life and how the complexity of this teaching adds value and interest, improving self-knowledge and, thus, broadening the perspective. This approximation develops one’s emotional intelligence from the point of view of optimistic realism, considering businesses and careers in the way to observe their day-to-day activities and how relations are formed and what is thought about the facts. The complexity of this teaching should increase to the extent in which students advance over time in search of their professional maturity and, on this path, it is worth connecting students with reality by taking them to visit spaces, factories, non-governmental organizations, among others. This way, they can learn about productive processes, planning, the factory floor, the office world, micro and macro-businesses, in order to calibrate their lens and produce their own projects of creating their own enterprise and a way of thinking about tasks that go from production to product sales, from a pedagogy on creativity, from planning to execution, going through all of the stages of environmental and social analysis,
strategic analysis, formulation and implementation. With this, it is not only entrepreneurship that is encouraged, but also the perspective of social contribution and a complete education of academics aligned with real life in learning something that has meaning for them, engaging them and restoring the notion that the enterprise of man is free and that their destiny is not limited to an economic dimension and to their biological condition, but to faith in life, love, friendship, dreams, a cause. They are not slaves searching for their maker, their leader to direct their activities. Function must be aligned with innovation and creativity; people forget most of the information that is passed on to them through talking, and this compromises learning. Therefore, we can imagine the importance of co-creation, interactivity and the approximation to design, differences, and how this is related to forms of teaching and learning. Finally, if it is connected to the feeling of belonging, it will reveal a perspective capable of contemplating the relation of embodiment between man and place.

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