

## NON-FORMAL ENTREPRENEURIAL UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM: EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES

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### Abstract

Rethinking the curriculum in general, especially the university one, is a major coordinate of educational reforms. The aim of these transformations is to adapt educational structures to the profound changes of the world where we live, emphasizing the proactive dimension of the educational effort. We proposed to analyze the evolution of the non-formal entrepreneurial university curriculum, highlighting university experiences in this regard. Entrepreneurial education (EE) is one of the fastest growing areas of education in the world. We integrate entrepreneurial education within “the new educations”. Investing in entrepreneurial education is one of the most profitable investments Europe can make: research shows that participating pupils and students are 3 to 6 times more likely to open a business later, at some point in their lives, compared to the ones who do not benefit from entrepreneurial education. One of the eight key competences established at the EU level (2006) was entrepreneurial competence. Research has led to the creation of the entrepreneurial university, which was under the sign of a triple helix: university-industry-government. The key to a knowledge-based economy is research, education and innovation. The communication presents concrete action directions for the development of students' entrepreneurial skills through non-formal activities at USAMV Iași (Student Entrepreneurial Society, postgraduate entrepreneurship education courses, funding projects, trips and visits to agricultural companies and firms, internships).

**Key words:** non-formal entrepreneurial curriculum, entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial university, entrepreneurship minor, entrepreneurial training of teachers

Entrepreneurial Education (EE) is one of the education fields with the world's fastest global development (Solomon D., 2007). We integrate entrepreneurial education into “new education” (Stanciu M., 2003). Investment in entrepreneurial education is one of the most cost-effective investments that Europe can do. Research shows that participating pupils and students have a chance of 3 to 6 times higher to set up a business subsequently, at a certain moment of their lives, compared to those who do not benefit from entrepreneurial education (European Commission, 2013).

Research showed that a superior educational level is corelated to successful entrepreneurship (Foley and Griffit, 1998; Lee, 1997; Lefter and Svedberg, 2005; Van der Sluis *et al*, 2003).

### MATERIAL AND METHOD

We have proposed a qualitative analysis of the evolution of the non-formal entrepreneurial curriculum by highlighting university experiences in this respect. Our communication has in view the real labyrinth of the curriculum concept which is a

key-concept of the contemporary pedagogy (van Bruggen J.C., 1992). The term was consecrated mainly due to the American pedagogy in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: John Dewey (1902), John Franklin Bobbitt (1918), Ralph W. Tyler (1949) and Hilda Taba (1962).

The contemporary literature shows us a new conceptualization of the curriculum concept (Pinar, 2004) (Jonnaert, 2015). The curriculum concept is “the Gordian knot”, an essential engine for the conception and the execution, the evaluation and the adjustment of the educational systems.” (Jonnaert, 2015)

By making a true bow over time, William Pinar will turn the noun *curriculum* into the verb “currere” as action, as a social practice (Pinar *et al*, 1995). We believe that the curriculum effort must be in the open area of “currere”, the one of practical action steps to implement a curriculum relevant to the Romanian society at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The theory of curriculum is under reconstruction (Jonnaert *et al*, 2009, note 2, p. 11), which exceeds the simple problems of rewriting curricula. They also distinguish two theoretical approaches of the curriculum: Anglophone (Tayler, 1950, Bobbitt, 1918 and

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1924, D'Hainaut, 1988) and Francophone (Reuter, Cohen-Azria, Daunay, Delcambre, Lahanier-Reuter, 2007). In this context, the conclusion has in view the complementarity of the two approaches.

The theory of the curriculum was outlined in a paper published by UNESCO: "take into account the educational process, the events that happen in the classroom"; it pays particular attention to

learning and enhancement of interaction between the components of this process: objectives, contents, learning methods, assessment methods and techniques" (Rassekh Sh., Văideanu Ge., 1987, 8, p. 136)

The approach that we presented is a systemic one the school curriculum regardless of the level (figure 1).

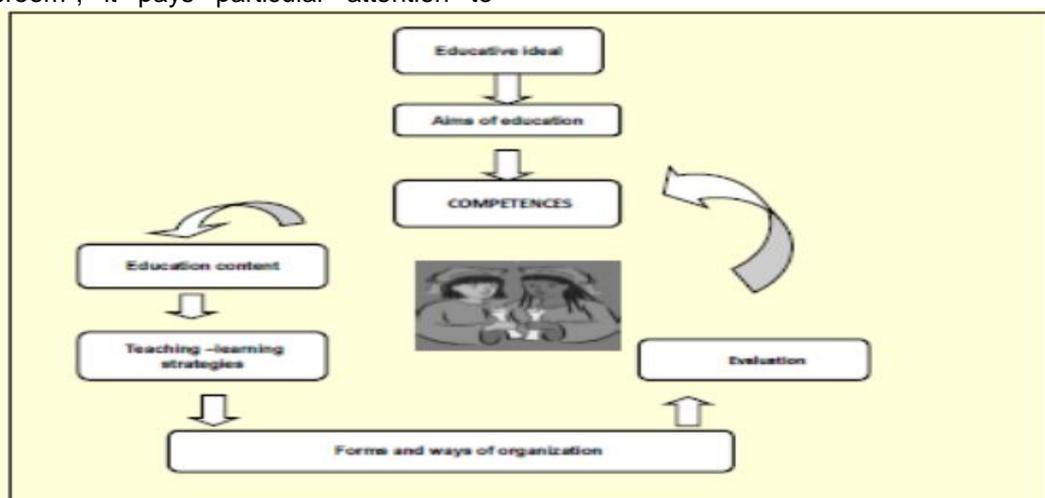


Figure 1 Systemic-holistic perspective on the curriculum (Stanciu M., 2018)

Another change of paradigm (Kuhn T., 1976) was to focus the educational approach on making competences (Vatier R., 1958; Le Boterf G., 1994, 1997 și Levy-Leboyer C., 1996). One of the eight key competences established at the level of the EU (2006) was **entrepreneurial competence** "Entrepreneurship education is about learners developing the skills and mind-set to be able to turn creative ideas into entrepreneurial action. This is a key competence for all learners, supporting personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability. It is relevant across the lifelong learning process, in all learning subjects and to all forms of education and training (formal, non-formal and informal) which contribute to an entrepreneurial spirit or behaviour, with or without a commercial objective" (European Commission/ EACEA/ Eurydice, 2016, p. 19).

Education is achieved through three interdependent types (forms): formal, non-formal and informal. Non-formal (extra-school) education has the following features: it has a voluntary or optional character. Pupils are involved in designing, organizing and doing these activities. There are no grades, there is no rigorous assessment. It allows adding value to the attitudes and interests of children and teenagers; it allows a variety of forms with flexible structures; it knows different ways of funding; it facilitates the promotion of teamwork and a multidisciplinary approach or an interdisciplinary one; it points out objectives of formative-educational type (Stanciu M., 2003).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The idea of the **entrepreneurial university** was imposed after the American sociologist Burton R. Clark had published two books on this issue (*Creating Entrepreneurial Universities*, 1998; *Sustaining Changes in Universities*, 2004) (apud Gjerding A., 2006). The creation of entrepreneurial universities has been under the sign of a triple helix: University-Industry-Governance (Etzkowitz H. and Leydesdorff L., 1999). Globalization of the political economy, government funding reductions, links with the business, industry and marketing of educational and business services have changed the nature of the academic work (Slaughter S. and Leslie L., 1997). In the context of a knowledge-based economy, academic capitalism and entrepreneurial universities can be manifested in varied forms, too (Jessop B., 2017). The key to a knowledge-based economy is research, education and innovation universities. "The economy of knowledge and society come from the combination of four interdependent elements: producing knowledge, mainly through research; their transmission through education and training; their dissemination through information and communication technologies; their use in technological innovation. (European Commission, 2003).

A university may be entrepreneurial in two ways: 1. Academic entrepreneurship (trading the knowledge and the results of the research):

Knowledge HUBs; Technology Transfer Centers; Innovation Hubs/Labs. 2. Entrepreneurial Education - the development of entrepreneurial competences; Entrepreneurial HUBs; Startup Garage.

An initiative of the European Commission, a DG Education and Culture and of the OECD LEED Forum, supported by a group of six independent experts is HEInnovate (2011). It is a free instrument of self-assessment for all the types of higher education institutions. In Romania,

the HEInnovate exercise will focus on 3 main dimensions:

- Entrepreneurial Teaching and Learning;
- Preparing and Supporting Entrepreneurs;
- Knowledge Exchange and Collaboration.

Moreover, the European Commission created in 2008 the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and organized the Conference of European Schools for Advanced Engineering Education and Research (CESAER).

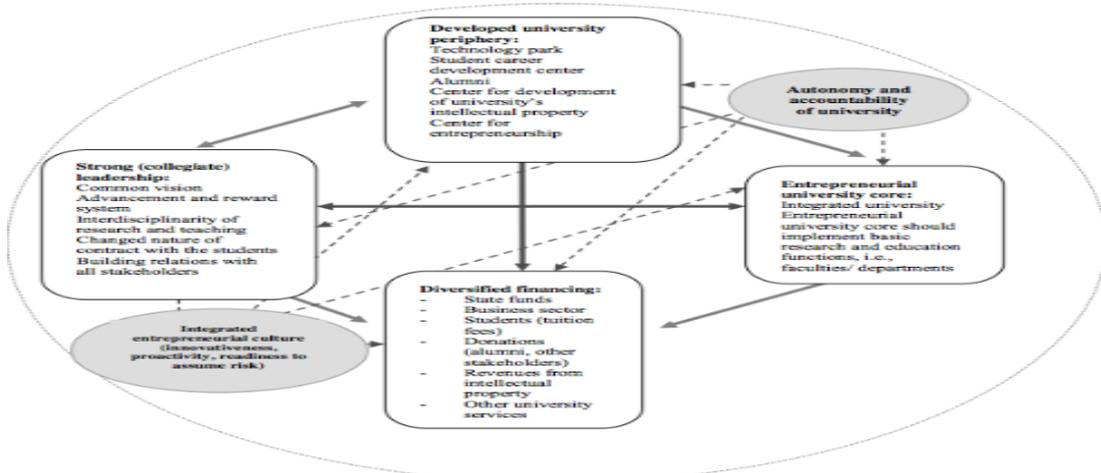


Figure 2 Model of entrepreneurial university (Oberman Peterka S, 2008)

In the communication of 2012, *Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes*, they focus on transversal competences and especially on entrepreneurial competences and they recommend: "Member States should foster entrepreneurial skills through new and creative ways of teaching and learning from primary school onwards, alongside a focus from secondary to higher education on the opportunity of business creation as a career destination. Real world experience, through problem-based learning and enterprise links, should be embedded across all disciplines and tailored to all levels of education. All young people should benefit from at least one practical entrepreneurial experience before leaving compulsory education." (COM, 2012, p. 4).

In "Entrepreneurship 2020. Action Plan" about the re-launching of the entrepreneurial spirit in Europe, it is mentioned that "business and entrepreneurial aptitudes and skills are key competences for lifelong learning and that, in response to low economic growth and high unemployment, more decisive short-term and medium-term measures are needed to promote and enable entrepreneurship, especially among young people (COM, 2013).

At the level of USAMV Iași was established Entrepreneurial School to Support Innovative

Business Initiatives for Students (SASIASI), in several projects FDI (2019), that aims at ensuring quality and at increasing the graduates' competitiveness on the labour market by developing competences and aptitudes with entrepreneurial character (<http://sas-usamviasi.ro/>). A Centre of Entrepreneurial Training was established at USAMV Iași. There were different activities with nonformal character in the development of entrepreneurial competences: theme conferences, workshops, meetings with successful business people, visits at farms and firms with agricultural character (ROSE project), internships, contests, microproduction workshops at USAMV Iași, the elaboration of business plans etc. The academic teaching staff will attend the postuniversity course organized by us: "Entrepreneurial Education - theoretical and practical innovative approaches". There are several prestige universities: Foster School of Business- University of Washington; H. Wayne Huizenga College of Business & Entrepreneurship- Nova Southeastern University Florida; College of Business- Iowa State University, College of Business, Fort Collins- Colorado State University, Hong Kong, Minor Agribusiness Entrepreneurship- McGill University and Texas University and others) where there are student courses that have nonformal character and that are

correlated to the formal curriculum. These offers of nonformal entrepreneurial training are called **curriculum minor**.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The systemic-cybernetic approach to the educational process is the paradigm that wants to highlight the complexity of this process and feedback mechanisms to ensure its efficient functioning.
2. The university must rethink its role and place in the dynamics of a society characterized by rapid changes, increasing globalization but also more and more complex economic socio-cultural relations.
3. More than ever, the universities especially the technical ones, must develop as entrepreneurial universities.
4. The coherence of the nonformal entrepreneurial curriculum with formal structures.
5. The acknowledgement and the validation of the nonformal experience of entrepreneurial type.
6. By promoting a pragmatic vision, the universities nowadays must prepare the youth to be agents of entrepreneurship at the micro level, but also at the macro level.

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