Identity Play in Entrepreneurship Education

How to create effective entrepreneurial learning environments in Higher Education? Research suggests that teaching should facilitate “identity play”: the crafting and provisional trial of immature possible selves (Ibarra & Petriglieri, 2010). Entrepreneurship education should train the capacity to imagine other ways of being and inspire students to re-story themselves (Harmeling, 2011).

This study: investigates the dynamics of identity play when applied as an instrument of entrepreneurial learning. It aims to understand the construction of the enterprising individual and how it relates to learning expectations and practices.

Method: Single case study of one 7 week mandatory entrepreneurship module for graduate business students at a Danish University.

Findings: Opposition between educator and students regarding the expectations of ‘what and how to learn’ and the level of authenticity required to be an entrepreneurship learner. Students seek to unlock the code of “right answers” resulting in the construction of “professor appropriate self-narratives” as evidence of learn-

Conclusions: The entrepreneur is constituted in class as both a collective as well as attractive individual identity. It is necessary to question the de-contextualization of a generic entrepreneur-identity since identity narratives are built from resources available and deemed valuable in context.

References: