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# Games in Entrepreneurship Education to Support the Crafting of an Entrepreneurial Mindset

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## **ABSTRACT**

Nowadays, an increasing number of education institutions, including many universities and colleges, are offering entrepreneurship education. This development is driven by the hope that more entrepreneurs could be 'created' through such efforts, and that these entrepreneurs through their newly founded ventures will contribute to economic growth and job creation. At higher education institutions, the majority of entrepreneurship courses rely on writing business plans as a main pedagogical tool for enhancing the students' entrepreneurial capabilities. In this chapter, we argue instead for the need for a pedagogy which focuses on supporting students in crafting an entrepreneurial mindset as the basis for venturing activities. We discuss the potential role of games in such entrepreneurship education, and present the example of an entrepreneurship game from the Swedish context, which was developed by a group of young female entrepreneurs. We describe the game and discuss our experiences of playing it with a group of novice entrepreneurship and management students at the master's level, and we review the effectiveness of the game in terms of how it supports students in crafting an entrepreneurial mindset. We conclude the chapter by outlining how entrepreneurship games could be integrated into a university curriculum and suggest some directions for future research.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Since the 1990s, many universities worldwide have initiated entrepreneurship education, which mainly aims at increasing the number of potential entrepreneurs (Kuratko, 2005). This development follows the commonly shared understanding that new ventures play a crucial role in achieving economic growth and value creation, as well as that young growth firms create the majority of new jobs (e.g. Kirchoff & Phillips, 1988). As pointed out by Katz (2003), homogeneity as to what is considered to be appropriate content for entrepreneurship education has increased over the past years, and today there exists a widely shared agreement that such education should 1) increase the understanding of what entrepreneurship is about (leading to a concern for economic wealth creation); 2) focus on the entrepreneurship process, which entails learning to become entrepreneurial; and 3) prepare individuals for careers as entrepreneurs. Here, business plan assignments are typically used to imitate 'action learning' – although the 'action' is largely restricted to the linguistic exercise of developing a business plan document without much 'real' action related to it.

Our point of departure is the need for a pedagogical approach that centres on the crafting of an entrepreneurial mindset, and enforces this process through different types of pedagogical tools. Following the American Heritage Dictionary definition, we associate mindset with “[a] fixed mental attitude that determines one’s responses to and interpretations of situations”. An entrepreneurial mindset is not only relevant when taking on a narrow definition of entrepreneurship as a new venture creation, but is equally (if not more) important when recognizing the potential of entrepreneurial activities for all types of creative organizing in public as well as in private life. Nevertheless, we argue that having an entrepreneurial mindset does not mean that the individual immerses into an entrepreneurial identity that directs all existential choices. Rather, students can craft their entrepreneurial mindsets without directly becoming entrepreneurially active in venture creation, i.e. without enacting their entrepreneurial identities at this point in time. We argue that such a mindset is the prerequisite for the later crafting of an entrepreneurial identity which takes place when immersing ‘in’ entrepreneuring (rather than learning ‘about’ or training ‘for’ entrepreneurship). For the context of formal educational settings, such as university, we think that influencing attitudes towards crafting an entrepreneurial mindset, supported by tools such as games, is a realistic ambition.

In many entrepreneurship courses, students are asked to write business plans for real, rudimentary or fictitious venture ideas, hoping that this exercise would simulate the real world of entrepreneurship as a practice. The predominance of this approach was confirmed by Honig (2004), who found that 78 out of the top 100 US universities offered courses that specifically referred to business plan education. The proposed experiential learning is assumed to inspire students to start their own (business) ventures after the program. There are, though, some fundamental flaws in the underlying assumptions of such a programme design when it comes to helping students to (re-)discover their talents as entrepreneurs.

First, it is taken for granted that all students are already interested in entrepreneurship as a career choice, since they are already equipped with an entrepreneurial mindset. However, this is typically not the case. Through socialization and formal education they have most probably ‘unlearned’ their entrepreneurial mindset and the playfulness that they once had as children (Johannisson, 2010). Thus, for this (usually large) group of students, entrepreneurship education needs to provide an arena which supports students in crafting (or rediscovering) their entrepreneurial mindsets.

Second, for the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education (in the sense of leading to a higher number of successful start-ups), it is probably fundamental whether students consider entrepreneurial activities to be simply a part of their educational journey, an element in their emerging careers or associated with those existential issues that subsequently build an entrepreneurial identity. For students who already know that they want to become entrepreneurs, business plan assignments can be a helpful learning tool for important aspects of entrepreneurial life. However, many students enrolled in entrepreneurship courses have in fact not yet had the chance to craft an entrepreneurial mindset and associated action orientation.

Third, business planning is a crucial component in a management logic that in many respects contrasts with that of entrepreneurship (e.g. Hjorth, Johannisson & Steyaert, 2003). Formal planning only makes sense when the future is foreseeable and thus can be controlled. From, for example, chaos theory we know that that is not the case (Stacey, 1996). A generic assumption in entrepreneurship is instead that the (future) environment can be enacted, meaning that it is possible to co-construct it together with other actors. This calls for experimenting and intense interaction, which are activities that are certainly different from business planning as an analytical exercise. Even in education programmes which include internships in entrepreneurial firms, such practical experiences are usually not enough to turn students into entrepreneurs. Rather, this experience might train students to become administrators who know how to help business leaders to remain entrepreneurs (Johannisson, 1991).

Fourth, an entrepreneurial mindset can be applied to a much broader context than that represented by the common, narrow view on entrepreneurship as a profit-oriented activity, which is typically in focus in business plan exercises. While an entrepreneurial mindset is applicable to most spheres of life, it is also important that entrepreneurship education embraces other highly relevant types of entrepreneurial endeavours, such as those taking place in the social, cultural or public sphere (e.g. Berglund, Johannisson & Schwarz, 2013; Fayolle & Matley, 2010; Klamer, 2011).

Elsewhere we have presented our view on how the academic setting may be turned into a learning context for entrepreneurship (Achtenhagen & Johannisson, 2011; 2013b). This view includes, among other aspects, the need for a learning context that offers diversity and variety and recognizes that the boundaries between the university and society must be permeable, inviting dialogues with different stakeholders. In internationally diverse student groups (as is common in many study programmes today), such variety with respect to (cultural) outlook, family backgrounds and academic profile is provided by the student cohort itself, but can be amplified by different modes of organizing (for example, in group assignments conducted by mixed student groups). To make the university's boundaries more permeable, interaction with different external stakeholders can be nurtured. For example, students' experiential learning will increase if they conduct company projects addressing challenges identified either by the companies (or mediating organizations) or by the students. Such collaboration will help the students to gain an insight into how companies work and will make them realize how theory relates to practice. Participating organizations can not only get ideas for their own development, while connecting firms and students, but also access to a group of potential recruits.

The discussion so far has underlined that sets of experientially oriented pedagogical tools appear to be well suited to guiding students on their journey of crafting an entrepreneurial mindset. Games can be one useful pedagogical tool to facilitate this process.

To avoid misunderstanding, it is important to point out that an entrepreneurial mindset does not include the assumption that entrepreneurs have a tendency or like to act as 'gamblers'. Despite the fact that entrepreneurs certainly thrive on chaos, this does not mean that entrepreneurs typically tend to take risks that cannot be calculated, something that in economic theories, such as game theory, is associated with uncertainty. We rather ascribe to entrepreneurs the ability to cope with ambiguity. The difference between risk-taking, dealing with uncertainty and managing ambiguity was explained very well by Sarasvathy (2001). Describing the logic that experienced entrepreneurs tend to apply in their decision-making, she very pedagogically uses the example of an urn that cannot be looked into and that contains balls of different colours. If the colour of the balls and their proportions are known, risk refers to the probability of picking a ball with a certain colour out of that urn (i.e. the probability can be calculated). A situation characterized by uncertainty, such as that of gambling, means that the colours of the balls are known, but their proportions are not. This means that the probability of picking a ball of a specific colour cannot be calculated. An example of an uncertain situation is the commercialization of a radical innovation where what to do is known but not the outcome of the action. Sarasvathy (2001) argues that while human beings in general, including managers, prefer the 'risky or known distribution' over the 'uncertain or unknown distribution' urn, entrepreneurs might have a preference for a third situation, namely that of ambiguity. Then the colours of the balls in the urn are not at all known, but by keeping to add own balls of a certain colour, over time that colour will dominate that of the balls originally in the urn. Thereby the whole situation is changed in a mode that is partially controlled by the actor. Entrepreneurial activities often call for creativity and innovativeness, and no probabilities on their outcome can be calculated before embarking on them. Coping with ambiguity demands, among other things, experimenting and interacting in order to influence and 'enact' the context of the venturing activity. Playing games in entrepreneurship education can help students to experience such experimentation and interaction in a 'safe' setting.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, we present our view on entrepreneurship and the current state of the art of entrepreneurship education in the contemporary university-level business school setting (in Sweden) and review the mainstream pedagogical paradigm underlying much of that teaching, and we position the entrepreneurship game approach as one tool in an alternative approach to entrepreneurship education. Then we tell the story of a game developed by young Swedish entrepreneurs, arguing that despite formalized rules, a game can contribute to rediscovering the creativity typical of play. Following the presentation of the game, we reflect on the role that this game can play in entrepreneurship education. We evaluate the impact the game has had on our current student cohort in a master's-level class on entrepreneurship, by assessing the course evaluation as well as reflective blog entries (for elaborations on this pedagogical setting, see Achtenhagen & Johannisson, 2011), in which the students discuss their experience and learning from playing the game. We conclude with lessons learned and reflections targeted at entrepreneurship educators about in which contexts and related to which contents this entrepreneurship game might be beneficial to use.

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP – AN INSTRUMENT OR AN APPROACH TO LIFE?**

In the search for legitimacy as an academic field in its own right (rather than continuing to be viewed as a subsection of strategic management, small business management or similar areas), entrepreneurship scholars have created a rather high level of institutionalization of the field, for example with regard to the number of teaching programmes, professorships, conferences and scientific journals and that institutionalization has also contributed to a standardization of pedagogical approaches, as has been confirmed for the United States by Katz (2003) and Honig (2004), and more generally by Kuratko (2005).

However, for example in Europe alternative images of entrepreneurship have emerged that, for example, widen the common perspective in the entrepreneurship field to focus on different learning approaches (e.g. Hjorth & Johannisson, 2007). Taking such a perspective decouples entrepreneurship from the stereotype of entrepreneurs as white, male heroes with superior personal attributes (Ogbor, 2000), and also liberates it from the focus on for-profit business ventures (Berglund & Johansson, 2013). Instead, such a perspective allows us to view entrepreneurship as generically associated with the creative organizing of people and resources according to opportunity, which stretches into the mundane settings of everyday life (e.g. Steyaert, 2004). Thus, we acknowledge that entrepreneurship is intimately associated with human activity, complementing the questions of who the entrepreneur is, what happens when entrepreneurship is carried out and how entrepreneurship is enacted. As much as entrepreneurship brings commercial and social innovations to the market and society, it also expresses intrinsic human characteristics that are deeply embedded in our existence. Thereby, we complement the common instrumental dimension of entrepreneurship with an expressive one. This activity-centred perspective on entrepreneurship can more accurately be labelled ‘*entrepreneurship*’.

Elaborating upon the expressive dimension of entrepreneurship, we can recall what we as human beings all were before we were socialized into society (not least by institutions like the school system). We were born as entrepreneurs (Johannisson, 2010). As children we all practise entrepreneurship, or rather entrepreneurship (because it is an ongoing activity, see above), in our play. Typical dimensions of our play as children are being creative, imaginative and courageous, and taking initiative and responsibility, while collaborating with others. The role of the context, in particular family members, but also (pre-)school teachers, then, is to provide a feeling of security that allows us to immerse ourselves in the practice of entrepreneurship (Winnicott, 1971). As pointed out by the Swedish author and mathematician Helena Granström, children’s play does not need any language but is genuinely embodied (Granström, 2010: 43). Just as the young child is literally illiterate, the grown-up is bodily illiterate (p. 49). This means that children are able to spontaneously practise entrepreneurship. While grown-ups associate play with relaxation, children seem to see it both as a voluntary and as an existential necessity. Yet, adults play for

instrumental reasons – in order to have fun (or, in some cases, for money) – while children play for expressive reasons, for its own sake.

Huizinga (1938), with his seminal work *Homo Ludens*, puts the spotlight on play as a generic feature in human life. Although the brief title signals play as the core feature of human self-identity, adults' play is very much reduced to an activity that makes grown-ups temporarily break away from everyday life and behave foolishly on special occasions, such as carnivals, or in special places, such as clubs. But such limits in time and space represent a kind of regulation. Huizinga thus associates play with a 'game' which signals a planned (inter)activity. Rules are stated above the head of the players involved before the exercise starts and the designed activities are demarcated in time and space, play being explicitly a game of make-believe, usually representing established cultures. As with any other human activity, play and game are thus enforced and/or restricted by their institutional setting, which also defines what type of entrepreneurship is appropriate (Baumol, 1990). Institutions provide 'the rules of the game' (*sic!*) (North, 1990) which offer a basic order as a platform for the spontaneity and improvisation that characterize entrepreneuring. In contrast to this understanding of the 'playful' (adult) human being, for children, play is the core of their existential being. Play makes childhood unique. When children play, rules may be established, but usually by the children themselves and then only for occasional and local use. Besides, children's play often takes off spontaneously. Children play at any time in any place, and what is considered to be fact or fiction in children's play remains ambiguous in the potential spaces that the presence of a caring and trusted adult provides. While play is exciting to adults it is self-evident to and, as indicated above, embodied by children. In many societies, parents play parlour games with their children, which often have aims beyond having fun together – namely, during these games parents try to familiarize their children with institutionalized 'rules of the societal game' through restricting the parlour game by following its established rules.

The discourse above has at least three implications for what we will discuss in more detail below. First, the rules that accompany a game as a tool in entrepreneurship education should not control or streamline the activities concerned, but rather communicate a feeling of comfort that invites entrepreneuring. Second, in an academic setting, entrepreneuring could fruitfully be taught by focusing on helping students recognize and craft the entrepreneurial mindset they all once had as children. As indicated above, if such a foundation is not firmly built, activities such as writing business plans may rather put students off entrepreneurship – as they often at this stage have not yet crafted their entrepreneurial selves. Thus, we propose that for students with unclear entrepreneurial aspirations (as well as for students with clear entrepreneurial aspirations but a lack of confidence to put these into practice), focus might be put on guiding students in crafting an entrepreneurial mindset. Then it is important to experience entrepreneuring through a variety of exercises and tasks. An important aspect of entrepreneuring is reflexivity as a mode of building actionable knowledge (Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2006). We argue that despite their rules, games can contribute to rediscovering the creativity typical of play (for elaborations on a pedagogical setting which fosters reflexivity, see Achtenhagen & Johannisson, 2011), in which the students discuss their experience and learning from playing the game. This is a kind of self-reflection that we would like to associate with all education for and in entrepreneurship.

If successful, the game activity has to be contextualized into the social setting of the students. This has to be done both in a systematic way jointly by the course organizers and by the students themselves in the interface between their public and private life spheres. In Table 1 below, we position the game in relation to alternative approaches to enforcing entrepreneurial learning and the crafting of an entrepreneurial mindset. Five such pedagogical approaches are presented in order of declining control over the process by the programme management and, accordingly, increased student self-control (but also increased difficulties of evaluating learning outcomes in established ways).

*Table 1 Positioning the game as a mode of enforcing entrepreneurial capabilities*

The teaching of ‘business planning’ has, despite the criticism we present above regarding the overreliance on this approach in settings that invite entrepreneurship, some strengths also in the context of venturing. One is that it helps develop analytical skills and holistic perspectives. Another advantage is that its causal logic makes it easy to communicate and points out the importance of not just the uniqueness of a venture concept but also the significance of building legitimacy among different stakeholders (Honig & Karlsson, 2004). The cognitive normative bias of business planning, however, means that practical skills, needed to move from decision to concrete action, are devalued. As pointed out by Sarasvathy (2001), entrepreneurial venturing is guided by a logic of effectuation that is by ‘making do’ whatever the means are.

‘Games’ can be appropriate for developing specific skills, which have been demonstrated to be important in feeding entrepreneurial processes, such as creativity, decisiveness and social skills. Entrepreneurial processes of ‘becoming’ often call for instant action, and time pressure can be integrated into games. However, entrepreneuring even calls for timing (*kairos*) (Johannisson, 2011), a capability that is difficult to encourage considering that games are arranged in a laboratory setting, which by definition is decontextualized from all the coincidences that invite alert action to turn coincidences into opportunities. Having said this, the ability of games to enforce hidden capabilities such as creativity and decisiveness feeds self-confidence, which is a basic requirement when crafting an entrepreneurial mindset and subsequently activating it in real situations.

‘Internships’, where students spend part of their time in a partner firm, have been practised in Sweden in academic programmes in small business management and entrepreneurship since the 1970s (Johannisson, 1991). Internships, of course, invite experiential learning, where theoretical frameworks are challenged by industry and organizational practices. However, not all (small) organizations are entrepreneurial, and to contribute to entrepreneurial learning, the approach requires a guided reflection about practice (Cunliffe, 2004; Gray, 2007). Internships also trigger students’ own networking, crucial for future venturing (e.g. Johannisson, 2000; Sarasvathy, 2001). However, internships are challenging to organize and administer, and they need to be combined with academic contents in order to qualify students to receive credit points.

Some programmes in entrepreneurship may invite students to ‘enact an own venture’, that is to take control over their own creative organizing of resources according to an opportunity they have imagined. In order to be able to state the business or social value of that emerging venture, of course, students have to interact with actors outside the university and create practices beyond existing routines. Students have to take responsibility for the development of both the venture itself and the social skills that are needed to build a context that supports the emerging organization. However, while the business plan approach runs the risk of remaining an intellectual exercise, enacting an own venture may imply that practicalities absorb most of the available time at the expense of the reflexivity that is needed to build a sustainable venture. Nevertheless, the very attempt provides relevant lessons with regards to social learning and the importance of building commitment, both personally and among different stakeholders.

As indicated, entrepreneuring as a verb reflects an existential approach to life, ‘an everyday practice’, where ongoing change is considered to be a natural state. This attitude is generic and should frame even the other approaches mentioned above, as long as it is not restricted to different roles, for example that of a student or a project leader, but concerns building an entrepreneurial mindset that guides the student when s/he crafts her/his identity. Learning and entrepreneuring then become interchangeable with each other. Although some part of what energizes the ongoing identity-crafting process may be subconscious, hidden also to the student her-/himself, this approach means that the boundaries between public and private lives dissolve. Of course, it is difficult to teach such existential challenges, even though this practice was once, when we were children, natural to all of us. Our experience tells us that the teacher her-/himself has to adopt such an approach to life in order to be trustworthy and accordingly listened to.

Keeping this positioning of the game approach in mind, we now turn to the presentation of a Swedish game that, properly managed, can serve as a facilitator to support students in crafting their entrepreneurial mindsets.

## THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP GAME

Here, we present an entrepreneurship game, in Swedish ‘Entreprenörsspelet 1.0’, and its integration in a master’s programme at Jönköping International Business School, internationally recognized for its entrepreneurship research and education. This tool was developed by a group of young (female) entrepreneurs in Sweden, with their venture ‘Go Enterprise!’. The game is played in seminar groups of around 25 people, divided into five teams. Based on a real company case, the teams have to complete a number of tasks to develop solutions for that case under high time pressure. The tasks trigger a number of key entrepreneurial competences, such as being analytical, reflective, creative, courageous, strategically realistic, communicative and daring. After each task, the groups present their solutions (again within strict time limits) and then the groups and the facilitator jointly vote for the best solution. At the end of the game, the team with the best overall ranking wins. Below, we will first introduce the company and its business model, before describing the game in more detail.

In order to evaluate the feasibility of the academic teaching about/for/in entrepreneurship we think that it is important to be informed about the societal context in which the educational activities take place. In 2009, the Swedish Government gave the National Agency for Education, as the central administrative authority for the public school system, the publicly organized preschooling, school-age childcare and adult education, the task to develop means to stimulate the work with entrepreneurship in the school system. With the clearly expressed aim that schools should pay more attention to supporting pupils in crafting their entrepreneurial mindsets, the game developed by Go Enterprise! had a good starting position, offering a tool aimed at pupils and students at high school and in higher education. However, despite the lip service paid by the government and many schools to foster entrepreneurship through focusing on entrepreneurship in education, in practice rather little change has happened – not least because the teacher education programmes were, and still are, not adjusted to prepare future teachers to handle entrepreneurship or enterprising contents.

*The company: ‘Go Enterprise!’*

The founders of the company Go Enterprise! tell the story of how they came up with the idea for the entrepreneurship game as follows on their home page:

“Three entrepreneurs went on a combined travel trailer holiday and parlour game tour. With around 40 different games in our cupboards, we parked in front of our friends’ houses and invited them to spend the evenings playing games with us. These evenings were a great success, and the competitions, laughter and companionship made the windows foggy and the time fly by. It was during one of those evenings that the idea was born – to produce our own parlour game. Partly, we enjoyed playing, and partly we were fascinated by parlour game as a tool and the emotional involvement it creates.

As dedicated entrepreneurs, for many years we have wanted to stimulate other people to make use of their entrepreneurial skills. In our business, we work with inspirational concepts and presentations. (...) With this background, identifying the opportunities of games became a business idea. Just imagine if we could develop a parlour game which inspired people to entrepreneurship. Now we have developed the idea further, and in summer 2009 we launched the Go Enterprise! entrepreneurship game”

(<http://goenterprise.se/historien-bakom-spelet>; our translation).

The founding team successfully participated in the Swedish version of the TV programme *Dragons' Den* (in which entrepreneurs pitch their ideas to a group of risk capitalists for financing) and received venture capital. This success for the young, female entrepreneurs created much media attention, which facilitated the marketing process, and especially brand-building. In order to refine the concept and gain further legitimacy, the female entrepreneurs invited a number of experts – including one of the authors of this chapter – to a process evaluation of a prototype of the game (implying participating in a game session).

### *The business model*

The entrepreneurship game is based on a twofold revenue model. First, licences to play the game (including a game case with materials) are sold to schools and higher education institutions. However, this revenue model alone would be very difficult to scale up, as market saturation would be quickly reached. Also, cases to play need to be continuously updated and renewed. Therefore, Go Enterprise! offers companies and other types of public and private organizations the opportunity to have cases on their organizations. They pay a fee to Go Enterprise! – receiving in return not only higher visibility among Swedish pupils and students, but also solutions developed by teams playing the game, uploaded on the enterprise's home page. In other words, entrepreneurship educators who purchase the licence for playing the game receive a code which can be used to enter an online community (at <http://community.goenterprise.se/>). Here, pupils and students have the opportunity to upload their solutions and receive feedback on them from the companies and other participants. However, the decreasing activity on this site demonstrates the challenge of maintaining such an interactive community site, which is highly time-consuming for the moderator and of limited interest to participants in the game. Based on the underlying concept of the entrepreneurship game, the company Go Enterprise! also offers consulting, training and coaching services around entrepreneurship and innovation to private and public organizations, as well as competence development sessions for schoolteachers.

### *The rules of the game*

At the beginning of the game session, the game leader presents a case, which the teams of 'entrepreneurs' will work with and solve during the session by drawing on their creativity, communication skills and courage. During the game, eight 'activity cards' challenge the 'entrepreneurs' to make use of their skills to solve the case. Their achievements are evaluated by the group and the teacher who give points for the best presentation after each activity. These points are tracked by the teacher on an 'entrepreneur barometer' throughout the game, and the team with most points on the barometer wins. An Internet community is linked to the game, where the teams could upload their case solutions, receive comments on them and compete with other players (at [community.goenterprise.se](http://community.goenterprise.se/); however, this site shows very little traffic, see above). The number of players can vary between 7 and 30 in one session, which can take one to two hours of playing time.

The game proceeds as follows. The game leader is the person in charge of ensuring that the game is played according to the rules (usually the entrepreneurship teacher). Four to five teams of two to six 'entrepreneurs' (a more 'ideal' number is three to four players) are formed and spread out in the room. The game outline is fastened to a whiteboard in front of the class, displaying the 'start', phases 1, 2, 3 and 4 and the 'finish'. Each phase focuses on one area (i.e. research, idea, concept or action), and 'plays with' two different entrepreneurial skills associated with each phase respectively (see below).

#### Phase 1: 'Research'

At the beginning of this phase, the game leader instructs the 'entrepreneurs' to get familiar with the written case (which is about one page long). The participants are told that the two entrepreneurial skills 'played on' in this phase are being *analytical*, i.e. analysing the case in a mature, reflective manner and seeing it in its context, and being *reflective* of the environment, making smart use of available

information. The first activity card asks the players to be analytical by summarizing the case in one sentence, focusing on what the case company wants to get help with. Each team gets four minutes to jointly write down the sentence, with the game leader strictly keeping time. When the time is up, each team gets to read its sentence to the entire session group, without providing any further explanations. Then each team, as well as the game leader, must vote for which presentation they liked best. The votes are written down and held up at the same time. One or a few teams are asked to explain the reasons behind their vote (and/or the game leader provides her/his explanation). The second activity card asks the teams to be reflective by identifying which target group the case company wants to address. Again, the teams are given a short time (three minutes) to write down a sentence, which they read for the entire group without further explanations, followed by the voting procedure described above.

#### Phase 2: 'Idea'

Moving on to the second phase of the game, the game leader announces to the participants that the focus will now be on developing several solutions to the case's challenge. The key skills to make use of in this phase are being *creative*, thinking outside of given frames and generating ideas, and *courageous*, daring to take charge of one's and others' ideas. The first activity card in this phase asks the players to be creative and develop three different solutions to the case's challenge. The teams are asked to write down one key word for each solution, which should be creative and presented after only two minutes of working with this task. Again, each team votes for the best solution. The second activity card in this phase asks teams to be courageous and develop a solution, assuming that no resource restrictions exist, within two minutes. With the support of a maximum of three words written down, each team then presents the solution. Again, the best solution is voted for.

#### Phase 3: 'Concept'

In this phase, an idea is chosen to be further developed towards feasibility. The focus is on how the idea could be implemented. The two entrepreneurial skills to 'play with' in this phase are being *realistic*, i.e. developing ideas which are feasible, and *strategic*, i.e. planning implementation and preparing for different kinds of situations. The first activity card for this phase asks the teams to choose one of the ideas presented (by themselves or another team) in the previous phase and to further develop that to make it realistically feasible. They have four minutes to fulfil this task and present their solution, based on the three words written down. After the usual voting for the best solution, the second activity card asks the teams to develop, within two minutes, a five-step strategy for its implementation, again followed by presentations and the voting procedure.

#### Phase 4: 'Action'

This phase is introduced by pointing out the focus on developing a storyline around the solution before the final pitch. Thus, in this phase teams work with justifying why their own solution is best. The two entrepreneurial skills to draw on in this phase are being *self-confident* and being *communicative* in a pedagogical and concrete manner. The first activity in this phase asks the teams of 'entrepreneurs' to write down, in two minutes, one selling sentence about why the team's solution is outstanding. When each team has read their sentence to the group, the best solution is once again voted for. The last task for each team in this phase is to draw an easily understandable picture representing their solution within two minutes, supported by three keywords.

After the voting, following the presentation and explanation of the pictures, all teams have three minutes to prepare their final pitch. This 45-second pitch will present each team's own solution to the challenge that the case company is facing. These pitches are evaluated through two rounds of voting, one for the best presentation and one for the best solution.

The game leader has updated the ‘barometer’, which keeps track of the points of each team, throughout the game, and can announce the winner. The case solutions can then be uploaded onto Go Enterprise!’s home page, where even the other case solutions can be read.

## Experiences with Playing the Game

We have experimented with playing the entrepreneurship game in different entrepreneurship courses at Jönköping International Business School (JIBS) in Sweden. It is JIBS’ strategy to focus on entrepreneurship and business renewal in its activities. The game is now included in the curriculum of an introductory course to the master’s programmes on entrepreneurship and management. This course is called ‘Introduction to Business Creation’, and its main focus is on crafting an entrepreneurial mindset. (For more information about the pedagogical approaches to this course and the entrepreneurship master’s programme, see Achtenhagen & Johannisson, 2013a, forthcoming; 2013b, forthcoming.)

Here, we report students’ experiences from playing the game. According to the course evaluations and meetings with students acting as course developers, the entrepreneurship game was highly appreciated. The following quotes from blogs which students wrote during the course illustrate their own reflections on the game:

“I particularly liked the game where we had to practise creativity. It is amazing how quickly a group of people can come up with ideas, however it is also important to remember to further analyse and evaluate how feasible the idea really is” (Swedish student, female).

“After having the seminar where we played the entrepreneurial game and the one by Science Park, many new aspects came to my mind that got my brain working. Combining these inputs with the articles from de Bono (1995) and Ko & Butler (2007) widened my knowledge of how to act creatively. (...) To be creative you must practise being creative” (Austrian student, male).

“Being creative and innovative is probably the hardest and most challenging part (as experienced in the game) in a new business set-up. After the mentioned game and the guest lecture from the guys from the Science Park I realized how important it is to think out of the box and go unusual ways in order to create unexpected ideas, which in the end are the basis for entrepreneurial success. (...) In the end, my awareness towards creativity sharpened regarding its various facets and I think it will be helpful in any kind of solution finding in everyday life, not just business ideas” (German student, female).

“During the entrepreneurship game (...), I came to the conclusion that creativity can often be found (and tested) when you ask people, under time pressure, to think and come up with different ideas and ways to go about things. For some, thinking of something on the spot wasn’t difficult, but for others, it proved to be a bit of a struggle” (Dutch student, male).

“The entrepreneurship game we played in class actually gives one the feel of being an entrepreneur, trying to provide solutions to business problems taking into consideration the challenging factors that restrict the process of achieving your business objectives. This kind of activity helps to develop one’s creative ability” (Ghanaian student, male).

“I do understand your point, however what I meant by ‘teaching and trying to encourage’ people in order for them to be more entrepreneurial and more interested in entrepreneurship is that the method of teaching should be more like the one we used in yesterday’s seminar – The Entrepreneurship Game. So, I would

like teachers to use a more practical and fun way of encouraging people, instead of having boring theoretical lectures. Personally, I had lots of fun in yesterday's seminar and I actually got more interested in this subject and entrepreneurship overall than I was before" (Turkish student, male).

"However, during the Science Park lecture and the entrepreneurship game we certainly must have used creativity, since we all came up with some pretty good ideas. Perhaps in order to be creative we just need a hint, a different environment or a game like in the seminar. I'm starting to believe that people possess more skills than they actually know about" (Swedish student, male).

"The entrepreneurship game really trained the brain in being creative and to think fast. [I believe ...] that we are all born creative. But it is like a car or physical health, you need maintenance. You need to keep the creativity going or it will slow down. And just like physical well-being I think you can get better at it" (Swedish student, female)

Thus, when the students reflect on their own learning from the entrepreneurship game, they bring up a number of aspects which we consider to be important for, and fully in line with, crafting an entrepreneurial mindset. These include the positive experience of practising creativity, which leads to surprising solutions, reflecting on which skills one already feels comfortable with and which skills might deserve more practice, and developing trust in one's own skills. The experience of playing the game provides input into further reflection on entrepreneurship, creativity and the link between theory and practice. The increased understanding of the usefulness of an entrepreneurial mindset, even for everyday life, is also important.

A relevant aspect of how the game enhances the crafting of an entrepreneurial mindset is that playing the game is considered to be fun, while recognizing that it reflects the 'feel' of entrepreneurial activity to some degree. 'Experiencing' entrepreneurship in this way as a practical activity (rather than in theoretical exercises only) is viewed as valuable, triggering further interest in the topic of entrepreneurship.

## **CONCLUDING DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

The report from and evaluation of the game presented above confirm the usefulness of playing it as one activity (among others) to help students develop an interest in entrepreneurship and rediscover their entrepreneurial selves. More precisely, playing this game (or similar ones) has the potential to arouse interest in the topic of entrepreneurship for novices, thereby facilitating their learning journey towards becoming an established (social) entrepreneur or business person (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986; Markowska, 2011). Thus, in a university setting, this game can be fruitfully used in introductory courses to entrepreneurship or corporate entrepreneurship (i.e. focusing on entrepreneurship in existing organizations). Due to the need of companies to strive for constant innovation of products and/or processes, it becomes increasingly important that employees have an entrepreneurial mindset. Therefore, this game can also be used as a pedagogical tool in management classes to support students in crafting such a mindset. While in entrepreneurship classes the imitated entrepreneurial setting reflects the entrepreneurial process, from developing a venture idea to making it feasible to be enacted, in management classes the same process can be linked to mirroring improvement processes in existing organizations. In any case, the explicit rules of the game serve as a safety structure which lets students experience entrepreneurial skills in a setting with clearly stated goals. While playing the game in collaboration with fellow students, the students become aware of their unique capabilities, which in turn will increase their self-confidence – certainly an asset which will inspire and help with enacting an entrepreneurial career or acting on their entrepreneurial mindset to improve existing organizations.

Considering the very diverse backgrounds of the students, culturally, socially, as well as with respect to (lacking) prior education concerning entrepreneurship, we find such a controlled approach to help the

students to craft their entrepreneurial mindsets appropriate. In many countries academic teaching is still dominated by hierarchical models, far away from the bottom-up approach that entrepreneurial training calls for. In addition to facilitating self-reflection regarding the own set of entrepreneurial competences and identity, the game also invites the student on the laborious but necessary journey where learning by trial/experiencing and learning by reflection must be combined (see the seminal work by Schön, 1983). In an entrepreneurial context, creativity, so often alluded to by the students when commenting on the learning experiences from the game, first has to be turned into ‘creativity’, that is integrated with different hands-on measures to become new ‘actionable’ knowledge, feasible for entrepreneurial projecting. Once instigated, such venturing must be reviewed, in the case of students reflecting with the help of appropriate course literature.

Reconsidering the lessons with respect to their implication for the curriculum, that is the content of educational programmes, and processes such as pedagogy and teacher-student relationships, the game implies a different kind of critical and reflective conduct that is usually argued for in the management and entrepreneurship literature (e.g. Reynolds, 1999). At least when it comes to the use of games for training in entrepreneurship, the student’s ability to imagine new openings and enact new opportunities becomes more important than revealing hidden assumptions and dominant power relationships. Accordingly, ‘process’ is more important than ‘content’, which, for example, means that course literature should be used to reflect, individually or in a group, upon the ‘gaming’ and how it evolved rather than for preparation of the game activities. As regards the importance of socio-cultural considerations, we think that the fact that the game was constructed by young women, that its content is recreated in collaboration with real corporations, and that its playing takes place in a very heterogeneous setting with respect to students’ cultural and educational backgrounds, continuously feeds reflection. We also think that the close relationship between students and committed teachers stimulates reflexivity that is not just intellectual but existential as well – although we, as indicated, do not elaborate further on this aspect here.

The role of the game approach in the successive crafting of an entrepreneurial mindset among the students as presented in Table 1 can be reconsidered in view of the lessons learned from our experiences at Jönköping International Business School. Most master’s students have previously experienced, with different subject foci, education that has been dominated by a linear management logic (i.e. belief in decision-making rationality, systematic planning and quantitative analysis). When continuing with such logic, it seems feasible to introduce students to the field of entrepreneurship by giving them the opportunity to write plans for the enactment of a new venture, as done at many business schools. Being able to use the management tools that students are used to can construct a bridge between the contrasting logics of management and entrepreneurship. However, business plan writing then represents more of the same type of educational logic that these students have already been exposed to. And while such an exercise can provide legitimacy, which can indirectly add to self-confidence, crafting an entrepreneurial mindset provides a different approach to entrepreneurship as well as management education.

Introducing the game approach, even in a setting dominated by a more critical management logic (e.g. Alvesson & Willmott, 1996), will still cause a rupture as regards the understanding of how controllable the environment is. Since this learning experience, as outlined above, is embedded in different measures which communicate safety, reflexivity rather than anxiety will be enforced. This in turn helps the students to meet the real world of (social) enterprise, for example by getting involved in internships. Then they will encounter a reality where their conceptually dominated training will become challenged by the everyday life of organizing people and resources. What has been learned in the game setting, such as the need for alertness, immediacy and decisiveness, will then be expanded into insights as regards the need for coping with ambiguity and practising timing. The students will also get the opportunity to train their entrepreneurial skills, which are indispensable when they move on to take responsibility for their own venture. This, however, does not have to be the beginning of an irreversible career as a business or social entrepreneur. Rather, testing one’s capabilities and potential by launching a venture may ‘just’ be the final

step in the creation of an entrepreneurial mindset – namely building an identity that makes the individual approach (even everyday) life as an adventure, with the responsibility and the opportunity to make a difference.

The game as designed and played in the course above can easily be elaborated with respect to both content and process. As regards the former, the inclusion of cases that cover social and cultural entrepreneurship will not only broaden the scope of the game as a means for professional training, it will also give students more opportunities to integrate private interests in their academic education and invite students outside the business school context to practise and reflect upon entrepreneurship. Obviously, the game as a pedagogical tool is able to mobilize not only cognitive but also other human powers, such as mobilising passion, and then takes the learning experience beyond that of training certain attitudes. With respect to goals other than that of enhancing skills, the game as practised in our education also gives the students an opportunity to take responsibility for their own evaluation. This in turn challenges the norm in both formal and informal learning settings – that the more experienced (teacher) should take the lead (e.g. Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986). Here, the students are invited to bring in their own criteria related to assessing the specific task solutions in relation to the practised ‘skill’ when making collective choices about the vote.

Future research could attempt to operationalize and measure the learning outcome of playing such games at different educational levels from high school to university, with the aim of statistically validating our claim that it contributes to enhancing pupils’ and students’ entrepreneurial mindset.

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## **KEYTERMS & DEFINITIONS**

**Entrepreneurship:** The creative organizing of people and resources according to opportunity, not only related to the founding of for-profit start-ups, but also in all different types of existing organizations and societal settings as well as the personal life-sphere.

**Entrepreneurship:** Activity-centered perspective on entrepreneurship, which acknowledges the existential dimension of everyday entrepreneurial practices as ongoing processes.

**Mindset:** A fixed mental attitude that determines one’s responses to and interpretations of situations.

**Entrepreneurial mindset:** An individual’s attitude to identify and act on opportunities for entrepreneurship in everyday situations.

Table 1 Positioning the game as a mode of enforcing entrepreneurial capabilities

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Contributions to crafting of entrepreneurial mindset</b>
<b>Business plan</b>	Systematic analysis including stakeholders	Cognitive/normative bias denies role of hands-on experience	Points out the importance of legitimacy
<b>Game</b>	Develops creativity, encourages teamwork, coping with time pressure	Decontextualized laboratory setting, little concern for timing	Reveals a hidden creativity potential, builds self-confidence
<b>Internship</b>	Combines action and reflection, bridges academia and community	Partner organization may not be role model; time- and resource-consuming	Develops responsibility and social skills
<b>Enacting an own venture idea</b>	Develops personal responsibility and social skills	Practicalities absorb most of the time, no space for reflection	Enforces social learning and commitment
<b>Everyday practising of entrepreneuring</b>	Ongoing identity building, networked reflexivity	Some parts of the private sphere remain closed	Integrates public and private life spheres